THE USE OF LITERATURE FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE BASIS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ÖZET

Eğitim herkesin sosyal ve bireysel olarak kimliğini öğrendiği ve seçtiği bir süreçtir. Ancak geleneksel davranışçı teori, bu süreçte öğrencilerin gelişimsel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak konusunda yetersiz kalmaktadır. Öte yandan yapıcı (constructivist) eğitim felsefesi öğrenci merkezlidir ve demokratik yapısıyla öğrencilere gelişimsel ihtiyaçlarını karşılama olanağı sağlar. Dil kavramı yapıcı felsefede çok önemli bir yere sahip olduğu halde, dil eğitiminde de bilişsel ve yapıcı bir altyapı eksikliğinden söz etmek mümkündür. Bu çalışmada öncelikle mevcut eğitim sisteminde yapıcı felsefeye yönelik bir değişim önerilmektedir ve bu değişimin dil eğitimine etkisi "bütüncü dil" (whole language) yaklaşımıyla incelenmektedir. Bu çerçevede edebiyat metinlerinin öğrenciler ve öğretilen materyal arasında etkileşim oluşmasını sağlayan anlamlı bir öğrenim ortamı oluşturması açısından önemine dikkat çekilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eğitim, dil, dil eğitimi, eğitim sistemi

ABSTRACT

Education is an important process that we learn and choose whom to be both socially and individually. However, the traditional behaviouristic theory falls short of meeting developmental needs of learners. On the other hand, constructivism lays emphasis on the learner as the focus of education and its democratic structure offers opportunity for learners to meet their developmental needs. Although the concept of language lies at the very heart of constructivist paradigm, there is a lack of concern for a cognitive constructivist basis in language teaching as well. This study first suggests a shift should take place in the current educational paradigm towards constructivism and offers "whole language" approach to meet the implications of such a shift in language teaching. In this context it emphasizes the significance of literary texts in providing a meaningful learning medium in which the learners can respond to what is being taught.

Key words: Education, language, concept of language, educational paradigm

INTRODUCTION

Education has a pivotal role and holds a unique power in forming people. It is through education that a person learns and chooses whom to be both as a social being and as an individual. In this respect education can be seen as a process that gives individuals

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opportunities to find out what they are really meant to be and how they could be useful for both the society and themselves.

However the traditional way of education that most of the educational institutions follow currently, in many respects, falls short of providing a certain ground for learners to meet their developmental needs. Traditional way of teaching hardly comes up to the expectations with a teacher lecturing class model and a testing looking for the *correct* answers for what is transmitted from teacher to learner.

On the other hand, constructivism as a philosophy of learning, lays emphasis on the learner rather than the teacher as the focus of the learning experience and with its democratic structure it offers the opportunity to provide the learners with an alternative to equip themselves with the developmental needs that would be necessary in the future course. While doing this it opens a certain ground for the learner to improve power of imagination, have critical awareness and develop a certain background to make choices for a better future survival.

The lack of an immediate concern for a cognitive constructivist basis for teaching patterns of the present day is highly apparent in the methods used to teach language arts as well. Yet, the concept of language lies at the very heart of constructivist paradigm. Beyond the educational implications, constructivist and cognitive psychology has given primary concern to the relationship between language and thought.

In general this study suggests a shift in the current educational paradigm towards constructivism, extending itself into an approach in which certain humanist and holistic elements hold a key role. In particular, this essay offers "whole language" approach as an answer to meet the implications of such a shift in the methodology of language teaching. In addition it emphasizes the significance of literary texts in providing a meaningful learning medium in which the learners can respond to what is being taught.

Yet, the argument has no intention to disregard the place of behaviouristic theory of learning, since otherwise it would not be possible to explain that we learn our first lessons from our parents through imitation as Aristotle suggested in his "Poetics". However, in the later years behaviouristic pattern does not explain the whole, individuals seek for unique ways of behaving and existing. Thus an individual's learning move from an *imitative* pattern towards an *imaginative* one, so should education.

A DEFINITION FOR EDUCATION

Before an attempt to suggest a paradigm shift in education, it would be more appropriate to picture out what we understand from the word *education*. Lay public views "educated person" as the one who has accumulated a large body of information. The business world, on the other hand, would say an educated person is the one who has skills required to succeed in the job. (Shopov & Pencheva, 2001: 51)

On the other hand, John Dewey (1933) says it is a primary responsibility for educators not only to be aware of the general principles of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions but also to recognise in the concrete what surroundings are conductive to having experiences that lead to growth. Moreover educators should know how to utilise the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile. (Dewey cited in Shopov & Pencheva, 2001: 51)

However, it is hard to claim the general view of education complies with this end. The popular explanation for learning is increasingly becoming a matter of accumulating a large repertoire of facts and routines. Perkins (1992) referred to this phenomenon as the "trivial pursuit model". He explained that this model is extremely damaging to students and suggested that in these classrooms:

> "...students acquire fragile knowledge, often inert (not remembered in open-ended situations that invite its use), naive (reflecting stubborn misconceptions and stereotypes), or ritualised (reflecting classroom routines but no real understanding)." (Perkins, 1992: 185)

In many schools today around the world, classrooms are still entrenched in traditional teaching methodologies. Even at the universities students still sit in rows, are taught factual material to be learned for later testing and have minimal input into their own learning. The focus of this learning is the development of mathematical and linguistic abilities, and information is transmitted in a context detached from emotional engagement.

The traditional teaching paradigm places responsibility for student learning upon the teacher's shoulders. That is to say, the instructor represents the same information, lectures to and tests all students regardless of individual differences among them. Little or no concern is given to the psychological needs of the individual. (Shopov & Pencheva, 2001: 53)

However, students are social individuals each with different needs, learning styles, goals and abilities. The focus must be on the individual needs of the students, if we want our students to learn how to think critically, to work constructively with members of their community, to enjoy scholarly activities and how to embellish their learning experiences when they leave school.

Educators emphasise that one of the most important things students should learn is how to think for themselves. Students must learn how to choose consciously what direction their lives would take professionally as well as personally. They need to be able to solve problems in a rational manner, to experience compassion toward others and to be willing and able to acknowledge conflict and contradiction and resolve differences satisfactorily. (Shopov & Pencheva, 2001: 52)

Within a positivistic tradition, so to speak, under which come the theories of behaviourism, contiguity theory, and many others, the learner was, and still is, seen as relatively passive, "simply absorbing" information transmitted by a "didactic teacher". In the universe created by these paradigms, the powerless learner is "worlds apart" from the omniscient and powerful teacher, whose main concern is to "deliver a standard curriculum and to evaluate stable underlying differences between children" (Long, 1986).

Against this background, the cognitive paradigm of constructivism has been instrumental in shifting the locus of responsibility for learning from the teacher to the learner, who is no longer seen as passive or powerless. The constructivist learning has a democratic nature in which the student is viewed as an individual who is active in constructing new knowledge and understanding, while the teacher is seen as a facilitator rather than a "dictator" of learning.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism, as a philosophy of learning, can be traced back to the eighteenth century and the work of the philosopher Giambattista Vico. Vico maintained that humans can understand only what they have themselves constructed. A great many philosophers and educationalists have worked with these ideas, but the first major contemporaries to develop a clear idea of what constructivism consists in were Jean Piaget (1973) and John Dewey (1933) to name but a few. Constructivism takes an interdisciplinary perspective, as it draws upon a diversity of psychological, sociological, philosophical, and critical educational theories.

Constructivists adopt the notion of Wittgenstein that context is an integral part of meaning. They assume that learning is an active process in which meaning is developed on the basis of experience. Not unlike some cognitive psychologists, they argue that all human beings construct their own version of reality, and therefore multiple contrasting ways of knowing and describing are equally legitimate. This perspective might be described as:

> "An emphasis on active processes of construction [of meaning], attention to texts as a means of gaining insights into those processes, and an interest in the nature of knowledge and its variations, including the nature of knowledge associated with membership in a particular group." (Spivey, 1997)

Within the constructivist paradigm, it is the learner who interacts with his or her environment and thus gains an understanding of its features and characteristics. The learner constructs his/her own conceptualisations and finds his/her own solutions to problems, mastering autonomy and independence. According to constructivism, learning is the result of individual mental construction, whereby the learner learns by matching new against given information and establishing meaningful connections, rather than by internalising mere factoids to be recalled later on. In constructivist thinking, learning is inescapably affected by the context and the beliefs and attitudes of the learner. Here, learners are given more responsible position in becoming effective problem solvers, identifying and evaluating problems, as well as discovering ways in which to transfer their learning to these problems.

If a student is able to perform in a problem-solving situation, a meaningful learning should then occur because he has constructed an interpretation of how things work using pre-existing structures. By creating a personal interpretation of external ideas and experiences, constructivism allows students the ability to understand how ideas can relate to each other and pre-existing knowledge.

Piaget's (1973) constructivism is premised on his view of the psychological development of children. Within his theory, the basis of learning is discovery:

> "To understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition" (Piaget, 1973).

According to Bruner (1973), on the other hand, learning is a social process, whereby students construct new concepts based on current knowledge. The student selects

information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions, with the aim of integrating new experiences into his/her existing mental constructs. It is cognitive structures that provide meaning and organization to experiences and allow learners to transcend the boundaries of the information given. For him, learner independence, fostered through encouraging students to discover new principles of their own accord, lies at the heart of effective education.

For Dewey, knowledge emerges only from situations in which learners have to draw them out of meaningful experiences (Democracy and Education, 1966). Further, these situations have to be embedded in a social context, such as a classroom, where students can take part in manipulating materials and, thus, forming a community of learners who construct their knowledge together. Students cannot learn by means of rote memorisation; they can only learn by "directed living," whereby concrete activities are combined with theory. The obvious implication of Dewey's theory is that students must be engaged in meaningful activities that induce them to apply the concepts they are trying to learn.

It could be argued that constructivism emphasises the importance of the world knowledge, beliefs, and skills an individual brings to bear on learning. Viewing the construction of new knowledge as a combination of prior learning matched against new information, and readiness to learn, this theory opens up new perspectives, leading individuals to informed choices about what to accept and how to fit it into their existing schemata, as well as what to reject.

Most importantly within constructivist theory, context is given significance, as it renders situations and events meaningful and relevant, and provides learners with the opportunity to construct new knowledge from authentic experience. After all, learning is contextual: individuals do not learn isolated facts and theories in abstract state of the mind separate from life: individuals learn in relationship to what else they know, what they believe, their prejudices and their fears.

To sum up, constructivism emphasises learning and not teaching, encourages learner autonomy and personal involvement in learning, looks to learners as agents exercising will and purpose, fosters learners' natural curiosity, and also takes account of learners' affect, in terms of their beliefs, attitudes, and motivation. By providing opportunities for independent thinking, constructivism allows students to take responsibility for their own learning, by framing questions and then analysing them. Reaching beyond simple factual information, learners are induced to establish connections between ideas and thus to predict, justify, and defend their ideas.

CONSTRUCTIVISM IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Constructivism naturally has certain implications in every field of education. However, considering the relation between language and cognition, for language learning constructivism has a deeper significance. The behaviouristic view that cognition is too mentalistic to be studied by the scientific method is diametrically opposed to such positions as that of Piaget (1973), who claimed that cognitive development is at the very centre of the human organism and that language is dependent upon and springs from cognitive development. Thought and language were seen as two distinct cognitive operations that grow together. As the well-known Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity suggests, constructivists held that each language imposes on its speaker a particular "world view".

The issue at stake in language acquisition is to determine how thought affects language, how language affects thought, and how linguists can best describe and account for the interaction of the two. Although there are not complete answers, it is a fact that cognitive and linguistic developments are inextricably intertwined with dependencies in both directions. Language is a way of life, is at the foundation of existence, and interacts simultaneously with thoughts and feelings.

This is why one would expect that the implications of the constructivist paradigm would play a central role in language learning. In other words, language and thought are two concepts, which are totally dependent on one another. Enlarging the capacity in language means enlarging the capacity of thought. Thus it is important to see that the responsibility of language teaching is not only to teach the language but also to provide the students a certain ground for enlarging the conceit.

However, today, in all grades, the methodology of language teaching has contributed in a major way to negative attitudes among students. Educators have equated effective learning with quiet classrooms and attentive children who sit still in their seats. The focus of language education has been on teaching what is thought should be the content, tied to the textbooks and missing the opportunities inherent in working with real literature.

For years, language education has been too concerned with mechanics and not concerned enough with creative content. It has focused on parts rather than wholes, expecting students to learn punctuation from a unit in a textbook, rather than through actual reading and writing experiences. This contributes nothing to one of the main principles of education as

meeting the real-world needs of the learners and using teaching methodologies to answer their developmental needs.

Myers and Hilliard (1997) argue that the task of the English language teacher is to promote the conditions and circumstances that will enable students to learn the English language. In other words, the main objective of language classes is to teach English to foreign students and this priority must never be underestimated. Nevertheless, in light of the discussion that a general constructivist approach is a necessity for an improvement in the current educational system, language teachers are also expected to contribute to the holistic education of their students. Along with parents, teachers play a crucial role in building up the values and the personality of a teenager as well as his/her concept of citizenship.

This means that, apart from helping students to develop their language skills in English, namely reading, listening, speaking and writing, language teachers should take advantage of the contact with different societies and cultures. In case of English, the concept 'culture', not only implies the British and the North American civilisations, but also the Irish, the Australian and other African, Asian and American cultures that find expression in the English language. When the translations of the world-known classics are added to the list, language learning becomes a golden opportunity for the teacher to allow students to explore and reflect on different aspects and problems of the world in general and their day-to-day lives and naturally to make them think critically about these facts and issues.

School has been regarded as a place where young people acquire different skills and a wide range of information on different matters and fields of knowledge. In other words, it has been seen as an institution that teaches adolescents what they need in order to find a suitable profession or trade when the time comes. However, more and more, parents, teachers, pedagogues and even politicians realise that the education of young citizens of a creative, responsible, constructive, open-minded nature, is, at least, as important as teaching them facts and abilities. It is undeniable that contribution to the development of the student as an individual is an essential objective as teaching English in a language teaching classroom.

Adapting from the introductory text to the Portuguese syllabus of English as Foreign Language, Myers and Hilliard (1997) define an English language learning class, which goes beyond learning the English language and is related to the personal development of the student, to be a place where students are able to discover and explore aspects of their own character as well as of the world around them. They quote as translated from "Programas de Inglês" (1997):

> "A language is a potential space of expression of the Self, a space that facilitates the relationship between people and the establishment of social interaction. As a determining factor of socialization and of personal self-esteem, a language gives one the means to develop the consciousness of oneself and of the others, to translate attitudes and values and to have access to knowledge and to demonstrate his skills and abilities." (Programas de Inglês, 1997: 5)

According to the same text the main pedagogical aim of the language teacher is stated as to combine the language competence with the student's personal and social development. In order to achieve this objective the teacher should take a multidisciplinary approach. Respect and understanding for the socially and culturally different people is also a priority, in terms of individual's development. Teacher would succeed in promoting such a respect and understanding if he/she is able to emphasise the social and cultural dimension of language. So besides mastering the four language skills and understanding how language works the students find opportunity to learn values such as tolerance, justice, solidarity and respect towards the other. Students would also develop critical awareness concerning issues of the contemporary world, such as, racism, social injustice, the parent-child relationship and so on.

Language class should also improve the students' creativity and imagination. To promote the students' interest for art in its different forms of expression: literature, painting, sculpture, photography, music would be a useful way to help students develop aesthetic sensitivity.

This means that the main aims and the priorities defined by this approach are directly orientated to contribute to the students' holistic education in order to make them citizens who play a constructive role in society - respecting other individuals and other cultures, promoting social justice - and who are able to think critically about the problems of that community.

THE WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH

Whole language is perhaps the most widely discussed trend in public education, starting with the elementary level. The theory argues that schools are first and foremost developmentally responsive institutions. That is, they focus on the real-world needs of young adolescents and use teaching approaches that best meet developmental needs. It involves practices such as cooperative learning, literature-based reading and holistic literacy.

Describing the whole language approach Manning and Manning (1995) trace back to Vygotsky and other adherents of constructivist practices, like Goodman (1992), Sikula, Buttery and Guyton (1996), Myers (1993), and Ruddell (1992). Whole language has been defined both as a theory and as a practice. Most seem to view it as a theory, a way of looking at language. They say that the original philosophy of whole language, even before it acquired the label, had nothing to do with methods, materials, or techniques. They describe whole language as a holistic perspective on how language operates.

Pace (1991) as quoted in Manning and Manning (1995), suggests that whole language constitutes more than using real literature complete texts, and integrating reading, writing, speaking and listening. Pace reminds that language is always meaning-driven, and that students construct their own meaning as they read, write, speak and listen. The success of such activities depends on the degree to which the activity is authentic and relevant to their real-world needs.

According to the theory of whole language the first principle is that in the real world, as well as in the effective classroom, language use is holistic. Teachers should depart from the separatist mentality and recognize the links among the language arts processes. Most teachers recognise that good readers are also good writers; fewer note that this is true, in part, because those students are also effective speakers and listeners. It is not enough to exercise one or two language faculties; we need to provide ample opportunities for enhancing all facets of language. Using cooperative learning activities is one of the best ways to accomplish this. Teachers also should encourage open interaction among students, as well as between student and teacher. A learning environment that encourages the interaction of ideas will help the students feel secure.

In the whole language theory the focus is on meaning. The inherent purpose in all language activity is the clear communication of ideas. Both written and oral composition should emphasise clarity. This often means remedying mechanical language deficiencies. This method only deals with language in its parts, not in its whole. The meaning is not discovered in the parts, however, but by perceiving the whole language.

In light of the arguments both in part of the constructivist paradigm and the whole language theory, it seems undeniable that literature should have an essential place in language teaching both as an exercise for language skills and a source to develop learners' creative and critical abilities. Constructivist learning suggests contextual pattern as the most effective means of learning and only through experience a real learning can take place. In this respect

studying literary texts in the language classroom brings the opportunity to have an authentic context for language learner and provides a means for experiencing the language in a creative and productive way.

Understanding literature is a natural examination of language. The student is forced to search the text both forwards and backwards in order to find the clues that would help to grasp a meaning. Such training in deciphering the communication, as Carter and Brumfit (1986) stress, "is a crucial factor in the development of language learning abilities, in working out its status as a communication" (Brumfit &Carter, 1986: 16).

The figurative language of literature or the linguistic distortions are central to the style and effect upon which literature depends for its meaning. This clearly has some important implications for the use of poetry in the language classroom. Regarding the language teacher, it poses two questions. Firstly, in order to make sense of what is new, original use of language the students need some familiarity with the norms or rules from which this use deviates. Lazar (1993) points out some teachers may feel that the knowledge of the norms or 'correct' language is not yet sufficiently well established by students for them to appreciate when the norms are being stretched. Secondly, teachers might worry that exposing students to more creative uses of language could, in fact, legitimise the use of deviant or 'incorrect' language in the classroom.

However, an important point to bear in mind is that in fact, language is not so rigidly governed by rules as one might think. A closer look at some native speakers' informal conversation could reveal many 'incorrect' uses of English syntactically and grammatically; yet, communication among the speakers remains unimpeded. Therefore, when poetry is introduced in the classroom, it could serve a basis for expanding the students' language awareness and interpretative abilities; a rather useful tool than an inhibition for the language teacher. (Lazar,1993:99-100)

Furthermore, studying literature gives the opportunity to create personal interpretation of ideas and experiences. This, in compliance with the philosophy of constructivism, allows students the ability to understand how ideas can relate to each other and already existing knowledge. Reading a literary text involves some sort of engagement by the reader beyond simply being able to understand the meanings of utterances in the text (Brumfit & Carter, 1986). Interpretation of the literary texts encourages students to figure out connections among the signs to allow them construct a meaning through the whole. This may well be considered a cognitive exercise, in which the individual tries to create relations between different

constructs and interpret in a unique way. Thus a literature class may well be a medium for exercising creative power, and naturally develop an aesthetic sense towards both the language in question and life in general.

A literary text is an authentic text, which directly demands a response, thus demanding the interaction of the reader. The use of literary works under a certain methodological framework of study reinforces motivation in the classroom environment and thus makes the learning more effective. Motivation is one of the key factors that determine the rate and success of second language attainment. It provides the main stimulant to initiate learning a foreign language and later the determination to sustain the long and often difficult learning process. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the best of abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals. Teachers are first and foremost supposed to teach the curriculum, but one cannot ignore the fact that this cannot happen without motivating the learners. However, literary texts are interesting to learn. It is not possible to take any short cuts or anticipate a literary text as one can do with informational passages. Literary passages evoke feelings and a strong imagery; they offer a rich and varied repertoire of themes in short pieces of writing and can be a real source of pleasure for teacher and students.

Long (1986), on the other, hand states that seeing literature along a continuum of discourse styles can help students to develop sensitivity to all language use as well as foster acquisition of those kinds of sense-making procedures. He suggests literature teaching, both in native and non-native environment urges the learners to develop a feeling of 'response' to the text being read. He points out the concept of response should not be confused with criticism particularly for non-native speakers. For him, "any reaction on the part of the learner, whether spoken or written, would be 'response' rather than criticism." (Long, 1986: 45)

According to Long (1986), after establishing certain conditions such as background which is essential for the understanding of the text, or linguistic investigation, which leads the learner to a better understanding of how message is conveyed in literature, the teacher gets a three dimensional response from the learners. The first two is verbal and activity response. Of these the former channel requires the learners to understand the text as a verbal message and give answers to text-related questions addressed by the teacher. On the other hand in the activity response channel the answers shall not depend on the text; it is "the students involvement in the task." It might be a creative process that the students make predictions about what follows in the text, which for example would lead to a creative writing activity.

The third channel is quite different from the first two; it is the individual response to the text "as a result of the stimuli they have received." This is where the students are allowed to make their own value judgements about the text, whether they liked it or disliked it. Long believes this may not even reach the teacher, or if so, only indirectly, however he is confirmed that some of these channels will certainly reach the teacher and would open up further channels which he marked as 'monitoring/redirecting'.

Carter and Long (1991) distinguish three models for teaching of literature in language classroom. Each of these approaches includes certain objectives that can be achieved through a number of pedagogic practices. While the emphasis in the *language model* is given to the detailed analysis of text to guide students towards meaningful, and personal interpretation, the *cultural model* considers the social, historical and political background to text and material is selected for the way in which it exemplifies certain movements or traditions.

The *personal growth model,* on the other hand, is a learner-centred model which involves process-based activities aiming to motivate learners to study literature as they make the text their own by relating it to their own experience and knowledge of the world. This approach highlights the need of the students' personal engagement with the reading of literary texts. It also underlines, the necessity and the pedagogical value of developing the students' critical awareness so that they become critical readers of literary texts and not passive accumulators of whatever is being taught to them. In this perspective, the personal growth model to the teaching of literature appears compatible with the notion that education could and should aim to be a means of empowerment and the current trends on language teaching such as humanistic teaching and learner-centeredness.

READER RESPONSE THEORY

In recent years, the reader response approach has been actively promoted as the most appropriate method for the teaching of literature. The studies of Louise Rosenblatt (1938, 1985, 1990), and her book, "Literature as Exploration" (1938), have provided guidance to teachers for this approach. The popularity of the reader response approach can be seen in the number of publications, which use this term. The ERIC lists 1776 articles on this topic from 1980 to now, compared to 64 articles with this term for 1966 to 1979.

The reader response emphasises the transaction of reader and text to show that both are dependent on each other for meaning and that there can be more than one meaning or

interpretation. The meaning of a literary text was seen as a construction through an interactive process between the text and reader's mind, thus the reading experience was seen as a constructive process, where the reader inevitably brings the work his/her whole social contexts of discourse, tacit assumptions of sense-making which the text may challenge.

The process of reading is always a dynamic one, a complex movement and unfolding through time. Quoting from Ingarden (1973), Eagleton (1996) says that for the reception theory, the literary work itself exists merely as a set of "schemata" or general directions, which the reader must actualise. To do this, the reader will bring to the work certain "pre-understandings", a context of beliefs and expectations within which he/she evaluates the various features of the work. As the reading process proceeds, however these expectations will themselves be modified by what is learned, and the hermeneutical circle – moving from part to whole and back to part – will begin to revolve. Striving to construct a coherent sense from the text, the reader will select and organise its elements into consistent wholes, excluding some and foregrounding others, "concretising" certain items in certain ways: he/she will try to hold different perspectives within the work together, or shift from perspective to perspective in order to build up an integrated "illusion."

Thus, the reading experience is constructive in its essence and a literary text as a whole is considered to be successful as long as it is able to question, alter and transform understanding. This itself is a cognitive and constructive exercise and inevitably there would be a transfer of this practiced skill to other circumstances in life, since both reading a literary text and reading life infers construction of meaning and the mind employs similar cognitive strategies in both cases.

Reader response sees the reading of any work of literature is, "of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence involving the mind and emotions of some particular reader and a particular text at a particular time under particular circumstances". (Rosenblatt, 1990: 40) The transaction with the literary text is an aesthetic reading and in such reading, the reader engages with ideas in the text and draws from her own prior experiences. This aesthetic reading with the text is a process in which the reader selects ideas and synthesizes them into a new experience, which is created by the reader and the play, story, novel or poem.

Here the teacher is seen as a facilitator in order to clarify the students' response to the text and guard against total relativism or subjectivity. Moreover, the teacher has to balance the technical analysis of poetry by also bringing out and relating the aesthetic and emotive aspects of the work of literature to the students. Literature has aesthetic and social elements,

substance and form. Teachers should encourage their students to reach into their own experiences for understanding, and help them to appreciate the literary text they are reading. They should aim to foster inquiry and an attitude of tentativeness and exploration.

Yet, what this approach tries to develop is not a naive, but a knowledgeable and articulate reader who has learnt the cultural and intellectual ideas and habits of a certain community. Instead of being an original reader with unique responses, the student can be seen as one who has learned the ways of knowing the subject domain. One of these ways is through individual responses, but these responses have to be guided and constrained by the codes and conventions of the subject, which the teacher and students have to make use of.

Literature as has been discussed by various literary critics through out the history, is the best means to develop a critical consciousness in individuals towards the issues of the actual life, providing an insight to be able to live with truth as it is. Starting with Aristotle, many critics in the history of literary criticism such as Horace, Sir Philip Sidney or Matthew Arnold (1963), defined the function of literature as bringing a certain aesthetic taste and at the same time teaching individuals with the wide scope of experience it can exploit. Thus literature in general was seen as a field of study which helps people to integrate certain skills for existing as a thinking, creating and evaluating member of the society. Most of the critics assumed literature to be unique, when compared to other sciences, in its capacity to bring a broader perspective to an individual's life, with its final end to cultivate the "total man".

This concept of "total man" or as one may wish to call "whole person", is underlined as a fundamental aspect in the philosophy of constructivist education as well. The main premise of the constructivist and humanist approach to education, as has been discussed previously, suggests that learning should not take place on mechanistic grounds only, it is actually a process which should also take into consideration the individual development of the learner and see the learner as a human being with a potential to improve his/her abilities to think critically which would hopefully help them to become responsible and beneficial members of a society.

According to the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud, the key to health is self-knowledge and a willingness to confront the inevitable pains and paradoxes of human existence. Language of literature uses words in a way to reveal human conditions and tell people things that they didn't know or hadn't themselves put into words before, as Wordsworth puts it in his Preface to Lyrical Ballads "whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect." (Wordsworth, Norton Anthology, 1993:145)

Poetry is written to know; to know one's feelings, to understand oneself. The capacity of living, working, loving with others, and sharing a common culture is a person's sophisticated ability to make distinctions among other individuals, to be able to understand their actions, to enter into their lives, to make a start to understand how they view reality. Poetry would then help to learn how to live, work, and love with others; to listen to others; to give audience to the thoughts, feelings, and desires of others.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to underline that the teaching of literature is a complementary and an essential element for language teaching to comply with the requirements of a constructivist and holistic basis in education.

First, it has offered a shift in the current traditional paradigm in the teaching methodologies. This shift is principally marked by constructivist and humanistic philosophies and has certain implications and responsibilities on both the teachers' and learners' part. Then, what this would mean for second language instruction has been analysed.

One of the conclusions that one can draw from the arguments presented so far is that literature-based instruction gets learners deep into the best of language and has them actively involved in the learning process. Literature speaks directly to the emotional development of learners, as well as to their interests, needs, and concerns. It is easier to motivate the learners when the material is significant to them, the plots engrossing, the characters "real" and the language full and challenging instead of controlled, stilted, and designed primarily for the development and practice of skills.

Next, through literature, learners have the opportunity to develop insights and understandings of the cultures and people of the world; to develop their imagery and visualisation abilities; and to gain new perspectives by testing their ideas with those found in books. For example, through an examination of the plot and character issues in literature, it is likely that learners can discover that they are not alone in dealing with their own real-life situations.

Furthermore, through interacting with good literature learners develop their ability to use higher-order thinking skills, to problem solve, and to arrive at generalisations to support or reject their hypotheses. Cognitive psychologists have seen these intellectual activities as one hallmark of the best results of literature-based instruction.

To sum up, using literature with a methodology as the medium of learning can provide a rich emotional learning context in which students have the opportunity to become personally engaged in their work through exploration, active involvement and engagement of their particular abilities. Using literature as a catalyst for imaginative and engaged learning would help support a truly nurturing environment and give students the opportunity to engage individually and expressively in the work and allows for personal exploration and meaningful interaction with concepts and ideas.

Literature helps learners think like scientists. Like scientists the readers of literature observe with a clear eye, record their observations in precise, descriptive language, and craft their expressions. This deeper layer of thought that poetry can create through aesthetic response turns even the driest body of knowledge into a rich and personal encounter, because literature is a useful tool for encouraging students to draw on their personal experiences, feelings and opinions. It helps students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English, and hence aids acquisition.

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