LITERATURE AFFILIATION IN A FUTO EXPERIMENT CLASSROOM BASED ON LANGUAGE TASKS

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Article history:		Abstract:
		This research paper analyzed the use of literary texts in the task-based constructive method of language instruction. In contrast to traditional methods of education, which prioritize the teacher's control of the classroom and the promotion of memorization, the theory of constructivist language learning emphasizes the importance of placing the learner at the center of the learning process through the use of meaningful tasks. With the help of the teacher-facilitator, the student in a constructivist learning environment makes their discoveries about the target language as they carry out specific tasks. This paper aimed to investigate the Federal University of Technology, Owerri's (FUTO) adoption of literary texts rather than singularly constructed sentences for language tasks in the course Use of English. The paper focused on two aspects of language: descriptive writing and textual coherence. Literature texts were found to be more engaging and challenging for students because they were more similar to accurate data than de-contextualized constructed sentences. The paper advocates for the increased use of literature and other texts based on actual or nearly real-life situations in task-based learning.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have been interested in second language acquisition (SLA) for quite some time. There have been two main topics of debate in this field. There are two main goals in second language acquisition and instruction research: the first is to find the most effective way to teach a second language, and the second is to discover how students learn a new language. Different strategies for teaching a second language and theories on how students learn a new language have been proposed. The literature is replete with examples of various pedagogical approaches [for example, see Galloway (1993); Rodgers (2001); Ubahakwe (1979); Bell (1981); and Wikipedia]. There are many different approaches to teaching a new language. However, some of the most prominent are the classical approach, the audio-lingual approach (ALM), the notional functional/situational approach (NFS), the communicative approach (CLT), and constructivism.

The traditional approach, often known as the grammar and translation method, was the standard up until the year 1950 or so. One of its defining characteristics is the view that linguistic competence may be taught in a vacuum. Additionally, acquiring a large vocabulary of individual words and phrases was emphasized. The conventional approach also centered on a literal translation.

The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) has its roots in the Behaviorist philosophy of learning through repetition and habit building. With the audio-lingual approach, practice and routine became the primary means of instruction. Grammar was also presented via dialogues enacting native speakers. The students listened to recorded conversations and tried replicating the speakers' accents and grammatical choices.

The hypothetical functional/situational approach developed in opposition to the audio-lingual approach. In this method of instruction, lessons are structured around the idea of the various settings and purposes (functions) in which language might be employed. If we take the example of a market, a speaker can set prices for items. Students are guided through applying their newly acquired linguistic skills in authentic settings.

The 1970s saw a rise in the use of the communicative language teaching (CLT) methodology. Students learn to converse with one another through this approach to instruction. The lessons are based on real-deal literature. Authentic texts are those that come from genuine experiences. Classroom activities are designed to mirror students' experiences in the real world.

The Constructivist Method is a relatively new theory for teaching foreign languages. It is the "current catchword in educational circles," as Hein (1991, p.1) puts it. Moreover, "a theory based on observation and scientific investigation concerning how people learn... People construct their understanding and knowledge of the world via experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences" is another way that constructivism is understood (Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2004, n.p.). The performance of numerous tasks under the teacher facilitators' moderation is one way to learn in a constructivist classroom. Students in a constructivist classroom have much autonomy in their learning and are encouraged to construct their knowledge through investigation, introspection, and collaboration during collaborative group projects. Rather than being a passive receiver, the student develops into a proactive leader. The educator's function shifts to that of moderator and facilitator. The learning activities represent problems that learners will encounter in their everyday lives and cultures.

It is a Problem: Literature has long been integral to the second language classroom. Willmott (1979, p. 57) argues that teaching literature is worthwhile because it forces students to grapple with language and the necessity to explain its meaning, regardless of whether or not the text in question teaches or entertains them. Literature written for a broad audience requires the reader to apply their linguistic knowledge to comprehend and appreciate the piece thoroughly.

We can see how closely literature and language are linked, thanks to Willmott's claim. Learning one helps better understand the other. Given the close connection between language and literature, it is essential to consider how literature might be used in a constructivist task-based classroom. This work aims to solve that issue. Rather than using made-up phrases to demonstrate a point about language, literary texts can be used as data for language acquisition. Constructions like these, say Leech and Svartvik (2002, p. 4), make students feel "stilted or 'wooden,'" which puts them at a remove from real-world grammar. A literary work might be taken at face value despite its fictional setting. When presenting the Speech-act theorists' perspective, Abram (1981, p. 62) says that a fiction writer "'pretends' to make assertions, or "imitates" the making of assertions, and thus suspends the "normal illocutionary commitment" of the speaker or writer of such utterances to the claim that what he asserts is true. Even if illocutions in fiction can be argued to have a questionable truth value, this does not negate the fact that they have textual and cultural roots. Hence they are data collected from actual events.

The goals of this paper are twofold: to show how a literary text, as contextualized language output, can provide the accurate data required in a task-based constructivist classroom; and (ii) to assess the usefulness of literary texts in the instruction of linguistic concepts like coherence and descriptive writing in a constructivist English language classroom.

This work used a qualitative methodological approach for its research. No methodical process was followed in choosing the literary work that was analyzed. It was taken from a book intended to instruct first-year students at the Federal University of Technology in Owerri on using the English language. The work is a piece of imaginative literature. This was not an experimental setting but one of the researcher's regular GST 102: Use of English II classes. No, it was not one where constructivism as a method of instruction was used exclusively. The instructor experimented with the strategy in the classroom by covering both subjects.

DISPLAY, ANALYSIS, and TALK ABOUT

This study used the following literary text to illustrate the incorporation of literary texts into the instruction of coherence and descriptive writing within a task-based constructivist framework. The crazed Ukala is just as much an icon in Obia as the enormous tree in the town plaza. Legend has it that a jealous business partner drove him wild long ago somewhere in Ibibio territory. Ukala is dark-complexioned and of medium height. His wrists are extraordinarily long, and his bow leg is highly noticeable. It is hard not to compare his gait with that of a chimpanzee. His extraordinary eyesight is undeniable. They are far apart, deep in color, and piercing. There is not so much a hint of grey in his dark hair, yet he is in his 70s and has had a rough go of it. However, his full mustache has snuff marks all over it.

A. Cohesion Education with Classroom Tasks

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 532), cohesiveness entails the following:

One can draw on a collection of lexicogrammatical systems that have developed over time as a tool for overcoming the limitations of the clause, the highest-level grammatical unit. The term "system of cohesion" describes the group of lexicogrammatical systems rooted in the "meta-function" of texts.

English cohesiveness can be achieved "through I conjunction, (ii) reference, (iii) ellipsis, and (iv) lexical arrangement," as the source puts it (533). Cohesion binds us to a text and distinguishes it as prose since it is the linking of one sentence to the next inside a paragraph that creates this sense of unity.

What, therefore, is the significance of cohesiveness in text-making in a constructivist classroom, and how can a tertiary-level English instructor use literary texts as a resource to help students learn about it? This study employed the following method to have students figure out what "cohesion" in the literary text studied meant.

You will be responsible for text scrambling and rearrangement as a first assignment. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) argue that cohesiveness extends beyond the limits of the clause. This holds across the text and helps to bind the sentences together, as the implication suggests. Nonetheless, coherence is not a property of any string of words. When the students rewrote the passage above with the sentences switched around, they found out the truth:

It is reported that he was made mad by a jealous business partner someplace in the Ibibio area many years ago. However, he has snuff stains on his full mustache. Ukala has a dark complexion and is of average height. They

are far apart, very dark, and very sharp. He has a very noticeable bow leg, and his hands are excessively long. His eyes are pretty stunning, indeed. His gait is reminiscent of a chimpanzee's. In Obia, the madman Ukala is as much of a landmark as the enormous tree in the town square. He is in his eighties and has been through a lot, yet his dark hair has not turned gray yet.

The instructor helped the class realize that the jumbled text lacked bonding (cohesion) by asking probing questions and encouraging students to share their thoughts. The following are examples of such inquiries:

The instructor asks, Based on your reading of the jumbled words, what do you notice?"

(ii) What do you think is responsible for the loss of meaning?

What does this tell about how authors arrange sentences in their works?

Students were allowed to voice their opinions on these issues, and they determined that a lack of group cohesiveness was to blame for the deterioration of meaning.

Task-based Instruction for Descriptive Writing

This researcher used a task-based, interactive approach to teaching descriptive writing to his GST 102 students, in line with the principle of constructivism. The instructor led the students through an activity in which they came to their understanding of descriptive writing. Passage A was also used as an example. Following are the actions taken, with each action matching a specific job.

Step one is to figure out what the writer wants to say. A leading question posed by the instructor let the class zero in on the author's intent.

Teacher: Every piece of writing is created with a specific goal. His goal could be to clarify something, set something in order, tell a story, make a case, describe something, convey an emotion, etc. To what end do you think this author is writing?

The class was given some time to figure it out on their own. There was free conversation as they debated what they felt this author's goal might be. Their solution was obvious:

The author is attempting a character study. Hence the answer is yes. Because of this response, we now have to do the following.

(a) Determine the Author's Language Resources for Achieving His Goals Once the writer's intent had been established, it was time to dig into the language tools the author deployed to convey his or her message.

Instructor: Yes, we agree that the author is attempting to characterize someone. What linguistic clues do we have that his goal is to describe?

Students skim the text looking for linguistic clues that reveal the author's descriptive aim. They were permitted, as per usual, to operate in loosely defined groupings. The class size and seating layout made it impossible to establish distinct boundaries. The subsequent responses were generated:

1. The narrative centers on a specific character, in this case, Ukala, the crazed leader of the tribe. Repetition and emphasis help to draw attention where they should be.

2. descriptive words and phrases predominate. To name a few examples:
   A. just as noticeable as the massive tree in the middle of the town square
   B. enraged, a long time ago in Ibibio land, by an envious business partner
   C. enraged, a long time ago in Ibibio land, by an envious business partner
   D. average in stature
   E. as in "bow-leg,"
   F. very lengthy b. abnormally short (of hands)
   G. The likeness between G. and a chimpanzee is uncanny (when he walks)
   H. remarkable (of his eyes)
   I. Separated I. from Others (of his eyes)
   J. dark (of his eyes)
   K. Penetration (of his eyes)
   L. not a single gray hair on his head or dark hair

CONCLUSION

It has been determined that literary texts can be used successfully in a constructivist classroom focusing on task performance. This incorporates authentic reading materials into the classroom setting. Literature texts are not the only ones that can be utilized as data to educate in a task-based classroom. Texts from the sciences, commerce and other disciplines can also be employed. Through this, they will be better prepared for the workplace and able to apply what they learn in class. Therefore, this researcher suggests using actual texts, such as literary literature, rather than manufactured isolated sentences while teaching English.

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