



THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHING ENGLISH  
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
IN INDONESIA

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# The <sup>nd</sup> 62 TEFLIN

International  
Conference  
2015

Denpasar, 14th - 16th September 2015

**PROCEEDINGS**

*Teaching and Assessing L2 Learners  
in the 21st Century*



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND CULTURE  
IN COLLABORATION WITH  
POST GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAM UDAYANA UNIVERSITY

**BOOK 2**



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# EXPANDING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND PRESERVING LOCAL WISDOM THROUGH FOLKTALES

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## Abstract

In many countries around the world, literature is highly valued. Based on this reason, students of English education department may experience a real sense of achievement at tracking literary materials in the classroom. Asking students to retell short stories from their own culture before getting them to read an authentic story in English on a similar theme could be highly motivating. A good novel or short story, a play and a poem are good materials for teaching English. If the materials are carefully chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives. Literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying. Literary texts in English reflect the rich and fascinating diversities of our world. The purpose of this paper is to show that literature in language teaching is very crucial in the global era for expanding students' language awareness and preserving local wisdom through folktales to create interesting and amazing atmosphere.

*Key words: language awareness, local wisdom, folktales*

## 1. Background

Using literature in teaching English as a teaching material is very difficult to apply because it is considered not an interesting one, especially in speaking class. While Lazar stated that "Literature means to meet a lot of people, to know other different points of view, ideas, thoughts, and minds to know ourselves better" (1993:1). This paper talks about using literature in teaching English for expanding students' language awareness and preserving local wisdom through folktales in speaking class. We quoted Lazar's statement because it consists of the criteria that the students need in speaking ability.

We use literature in English language teaching because the study of literature can develop the students' literacy competence at university level. It makes literature itself the content or subject of a language course, while the use of literature as a resource, draw on literature as one source among many different kinds of texts for promoting interesting language activities inside or outside the class. Clearly, if it is the study of literature which has the aim in developing the literary competence of the students is crucial in language teaching.

The use of literature in English language teaching is important because it is very motivating to be learnt. The material is authentic and has general educational value. Moreover, it can help students to study another culture. Consequently, it can help them to develop interpretive and understanding abilities. Furthermore, it expands students' language awareness, encourage them to talk about their opinions and willingness which is highly valued and has a high status. The use of literature in English language teaching is as stimulus of language acquisition. This will give impact to the students to have a joyful and fun atmosphere.

Folktales are parts of folklore which represent the values of culture that they come from. It can open the students' mind of how to deal with kindness, steadfastness, bravery and honesty. Honesty in this case is self-evident which is possessed by human being that invokes trust and similar honesty on the part of others. Steadfastness was often represented by the hero who is always tough in facing his life. Bravery takes from risking danger or some other test usually for the benefit of someone else. Kindness refers to someone's wisdom reflection.

Based on the preceding statements, it can be concluded that folktales can be used in English language teaching for preserving local wisdom through moral values.

Finally, the use of literature in English language teaching will help the students to stimulate their imagination, develop their critical abilities and increase their emotional awareness which will empower their abilities to grapple the text and its language that relates to the values and traditions of their own society.

## **2. Discussion**

### **2.1. Language Awareness**

Literature is a useful tool for encouraging students to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings and opinions. It helps students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English, and as the aids of language acquisition. It can be used as an excellent stimulus for group work.

Some people view of adult education is one of andragogy. This science and art of teaching adults is based on two concepts: the adult learner is self-directed and autonomous; the lecturer is a facilitator rather than presenter of content. There is an assumption that the learner arrives in the classroom with a skill set and knowledge base that will be enhanced by the new learning experience. Developmental learning theory derives from cognitive psychology and believes that adult students have already developed their own cognitive maps and strategies to guide their interpretation of the world. They learn by doing and learning new knowledge and skills which they then associate with previous learning and experience. Prior learning is acknowledged as well as assumed.

Material is chosen on the basis of whether it is appropriate to students' interest and will stimulate a high level of personal involvement. Material is often organized thematically, and may be placed alongside non-literary materials which deal with a similar theme.

A language-based approach is quite a broad approach which covers a range of different goals and procedures. Generally speaking, proponents believe in a closer integration of language and literature in the classroom, since this will help the students in achieving their main aim – which is to improve their knowledge of literature and proficiency in English.

A language-based approach to using literature includes techniques and procedures which are concerned more directly with the study of the literary text itself. The aim here is to provide the students with the tools they need to interpret a text and to make competent critical judgements of it. Here the method of stylistics or stylistic analysis is frequently adopted. Stylistics involves the close study of the linguistics features of a text in order to arrive at an understanding of how the meanings of the text are transmitted.

The advantages of using literary texts for language activities are that they offer a wide range of styles and registers; they are open to multiple interpretations and hence provide excellent opportunities for

classroom discussion; and they focus on genuinely interesting and motivating topics to explore in the classroom (Duff and Maley, 1990, p.6 in Lazar).

Ellis defines language awareness as “explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use, Association for Language Awareness (ALA, 2012, p:2 in Ellis). Hawkins in Ellis (1999, p:4). Language learning contributes to language awareness in providing positive feedback on the mother tongue and culture stereotypes.

Language awareness blends a) content about language, b) language skill, c) attitudinal education and d) metacognitive opportunities, which allow the students to reflect on the process of language acquisition, learning and language use. All four of these aspects of language awareness need to be integrated into the existing subject areas. A focus on language awareness is a key aspect of creating student-centered classrooms, and assists the teacher to present material accordingly to student readiness (Bilash and Tulasiewicz, 1995, p.49 in Bilash, 2011).

Language awareness has an “affective element-it engages and helps to evolve attitudes and values”. It encourages teachers to become “autonomous and robust explores of language (Wright and Bolitho, 1993, p: 299).

Literature on language teacher’s cognition, which is the study of language teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and assumes about language, language learning and language teaching. Emerge from the interest in teachers’ cognition in general education in the 1980s (e.g., Shavelson and Stern, 1981 in Ellis p:9).

It can be concluded that language awareness is how to encourage the language learner to the reflection of the process on language learning as well as establishing desired knowledge, skills and disposition.

Building language awareness also involves helping students gain a positive attitude toward the target language by developing the confidence to make an attempt or take a risk. By becoming conscious of strategies that can be used to learn the second language, students may become more active in and more responsible for their own learning. Learning more about language in general may help the student develop an appreciation for the target language (Bilash, 2011).

The implementation of language awareness in our speaking class also needs literary competence based on the students’ experiences which concentrates on genre, plot, appropriate diction and folktales choice. The genre that we use in speaking class is folktales which belong to traditional prose. Plot is used to explain the chronological events of the folktales. Appropriate dictions will represent the stylistics use. Translation is also needed in the implementation of language awareness which aims to get the right translation of the chosen folktales in order to obtain the proper syntax.

## **2.2. Local Wisdom**

Under the influence of globalization communities from Western countries that place importance on economic development and consumerism. Consequently, people in the country have become dominated mentally, intellectually and culturally by forces which are foreign to the traditional atmosphere. Many parents think that their children deserve to get good education with good facilities. The young generation emphasizes relative relationships, respect for seniors, and helpfulness even among strangers. Loss of these values causes problems, namely, moral, ethical, health and environment.

The study of literature provides students with an occasion for focused moral reflection and dialogue, an occasion to examine what informs the moral compass guiding fictional lives. Adolescents

need a constructive context within which to talk about the lives of others, how they sorted out conflicting desires and learned (or failed to learn) to make their actions consistent with their ideals. Characters in stories are distant enough not to pose a threat to adolescents' ambitions or self-image. Literature gives students privileged insight into the moral journey of a life to discover an authentic individuality, conceiving great ideals, agonizing over relationships to others, burdened by a sense of fate beyond their control, wondering whether the life choices they make will be the right ones (Appleyard in Bohlin 2005:27). Fictional characters' struggles are of interest to students as they set a course for their own life journey, make their own choices, and in doing so, give consideration to the kind of person they would like to become. Characters in literature often reveal their struggle with conflicting desires (Bohlin, 2005:28). Characters in literature provide us with examples of the various ways human beings deal with fun, happiness, sadness and anger.

Local wisdom is basic knowledge gained from living in balance with nature. It is related to culture in the community which is accumulated and passed on. This wisdom can be both abstract and concrete, but the important characteristics are that it comes from experiences or truth gained from life. The wisdom from real experiences integrates the body, the spirit and the environment. It emphasizes respect for elders and their life experiences. Moreover, it values morals more than material things (Nakorntap et. al., 1996 in Miss Roikhwaphut Mungmachon, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 2 No. 13; July 2012)

Local wisdom is dynamic and flexible to the global situation. It is simple but elaborative and comprehensive. It is usually oral in nature. It is adapted to local, cultural, and environmental conditions. It is dynamic and flexible. It corresponds with quality and quantity of available resources. It copes well with changes (Padmanugraha, 2010).

## **2.2. Knowledge and Local Wisdom**

Community knowledge is transmitted through tradition (Settaboonsang, 2006). Community knowledge is obtained from both within and outside the community. It is used in ways that benefit the community and in ways which it can be passed on. The Thailand Research Fund categorizes community knowledge into three classes. (1) Knowledge to maintain the community is its history, important stories, main values, culture, traditions, regulations, and the important teachings of the community. This knowledge is an indicator of the community's strength in the face of the flow of changing values. (2) Knowledge for a living is the knowledge of occupations, religion, and training for development of the potential quality and health of the members. (3) Knowledge of establishing harmony is the knowledge which comes from people's enjoyment of life or the general knowledge found in coffee shops, retail shops, or meeting places such as temple halls and school sport fields. This knowledge includes storytelling, lullabies, harvest songs, everyday stories and general news. It establishes harmony through close relationships, enjoyment and strength among the members. They value elders who have knowledge that comes from life experiences (Thailand Research Fund, 2009, February 15 in Miss Roikhwaphut Mungmachon, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 2 No. 13; July 2012).

## **2.3. Folktales**

Spaulding (2011: 36) defines folktales as those stories that have been told through many generations for so long that no one knows who originally thought them up, who change them, or how.

### **a. Motivating, Authentic and has a General Value.**

Literature exposes students to complex themes and fresh, unexpected uses of language. If the students are familiar with literature in their own language, then studying some literature in English can provide an interesting and thought-provoking point of comparison. A legend may elicit a powerful emotional response from students. If the materials are carefully chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives.

Asking students to retell short stories from their own culture before getting them to read an authentic story in English on a similar theme could be highly motivating. Literary texts in English reflect the rich and fascinating diversities of our world. Literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying. They are written by authors living in many different countries and widely divergent cultures which have general value.

### **b. Help Students to Study and Understand Another Culture**

Literature in English language teaching does encourage students to become broadly aware of the social, practical and historical events which form the background to a particular legend. At the same time, literature does seem to provide a way of contextualizing how a member of a particular society might behave or react in a specific situation. In other words, using literature with our students may enable them to gain useful and often surprising perceptions about how the members of a society might describe or evaluate their experiences. But as this description is very likely to be only a partial one, we should encourage students to treat it critically. In fact, our response to the cultural aspect of literature should always be a critical one, so that the underlying cultural and ideological assumptions in the texts are not merely accepted and reinforced, but are questioned, evaluated and, if necessary, subverted (Lazar, 1993:17).

### **c. Develop Interpretive Abilities**

Any learning of a new language would seem to involve the learner in the forming of hypotheses and the drawing of inferences, whether these relate to when a particular idiom is used appropriately, how far a grammatical rule can be generalized or what is implied behind the literal meaning of what someone says in a conversation. It has been argued that literature is a particularly good source for developing students' abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretations (Rossner's interview with Widdowson in *ELT Journal* 37/1). Thus, by encouraging our students to grapple with the multiple ambiguities of the literary text, we are helping to develop their overall capacity to infer meaning. This very useful skill can then be transferred to other situations where students need to make an interpretation based on implicit or unstated evidence. This skill will be better if it is supported by a reader response theory. Reader response defined as a theory that has many different manifestations, but essentially, the text is seen to interact with the reader who brings all his/her experiences (cultural, social, cognitive, emotional, literary, linguistic) to bear in the engagement with a text (Sotter, 1999:8).

To develop interpretive abilities in speaking class, we use *Ande Ande Lumut* story. We can find many symbols in this story. Symbol is defined as something that means more than what it is (Perrine, 1963:69). The symbols that we discuss in *Ande Ande Lumut* story are kiss, *temuruno* (please get down), the shit of cows and a piece of palm leaf rib which is called *sodho lanang* in Javanese, and water. The kiss symbolizes women's virginity, while *temuruno* (please get down) symbolizes the holy place for Javanese whose religion are Hindhu. The shit of cows and *sodho lanang* symbolize self-protection. Water



symbolizes purifying. The fifth symbols are very interesting issues to be discussed but the students only interested in the kiss as an essential one to be explored. The highlighted issue to be discussed in the folktale is the Yuyu Kangkang's (The Crab Monster) kiss toward the three Kletings (Kleting Abang (Red Kleting)), Kleting Biru (Blue Kleting), and Kleting Ijo (Green Kleting)). Being kissed by Yuyu Kangkang, they lost their virginity. In Javanese culture, it is very important to keep women's virginity before their marriage based on the story discussed. Yuyu Kangkang's kiss is symbolizing the kiss of death. It is not physically death but psychologically because it is about virginity. Demirjian (2006: xiv) stated that she remembered believing that only married people could kiss on the lips. Demirjian had sensed there was an intimacy to this sacred act that warranted an official union. Since kissing is considered sacred, it is not allowed to do kissing without any commitment, such as marriage. According to one of her correspondences who expressed his/her feeling that a kiss is an intimate coming together of lips between two people who want to get closer (2006:20). A kiss is something important for those who build their long-lasting relationship in marriage. But the kisses done by Yuyu Kangkang and the three Kletings are not sacred because they are done for satisfying his desire. Furthermore, Gourmont in Demirjian (2006:29) that women still remember their first kiss long after men has forgotten their last. The kissing will stay in their mind forever which will haunt the three Kletings' mind that make them always think about Yuyu Kangkang's unforgettable kiss. The unforgettable kiss is considered that the three Kletings had lost their virginity psychologically, which means loyalty, even though they are still physically virgin. When the three Kletings' lost their virginity psychologically, they had lost their loyalty as well. Loyalty is very important in developing future commitment, such as marriage. Consequently, Ande Ande Lumut rejects the three Kletings' loves. The moral value in the story tells us that we have to keep our virginity both psychologically and physically as well as we can, in other words, the prestigious Javanese women are valued by their loyalty for their future commitment in marriage.

#### **2.4. Expand Students' Language Awareness**

In folktales students learn to interpret the themes more easily. By focusing on the deviant use of the verb, we are helping students not only aware to become aware of specific stylistic effects in literary work, but also to consider how this effect is achieved by departing from a norm. For the language learner, stylistics has the advantage of illustrating how particular linguistic forms function to convey specific messages. It uses terminology and a set of procedures reasonably familiar to students (those of grammatical description) to reach and justify literary intuitions. In the same time, we are involving them in process of discovering more generalisable features of language like usual rules of syntax and cohesion in plot. For example, in expanding students' language awareness and preserving local wisdom through folktales in speaking class, we use Ande Ande Lumut story. We can find many symbols in this story for the implementation of stylistic. The symbols that we discuss in Ande Ande Lumut story are kiss, *temuruno* (please get down), the shit of cows and a piece of palm leaf rib which is called *sodho lanang* in Javanese, and water. The students can imply the syntax by changing past tense into present tense in retelling the story which applies the chronological plot to reach their cohesion understanding of the plot. Furthermore, they are able to describe that the moral value which reflecting the local wisdom where the story comes from, will be applied forever no matter in the global era, like this moment which a lot of moral decadences occurred.

## **2.5. Encourage Students to Talk**

Focusing on a task which demands that students express their personal responses to these multiple levels of meaning can only serve to accelerate the students' acquisition of language. Acquisition may also be accelerated because the overall context for processing the new language is so striking. This language will enhance the students' abilities to explore their understanding on a specific folktale, such as *Ande Ande Lumut*, as it is stated in the previous subheading. The students encourage in giving opinion based on their personal responses to the story by transferring the language that is Indonesian to English using contextual translation which aims to accelerate their foreign language acquisition and speaking ability.

## **3. Conclusion**

Using literature in English language teaching can guide students towards a more sensitive understanding and appreciation of the literary competence and develop interpretive abilities at university level.

Stylistic, which involves the enclosed study of literature, has two main objects: firstly, to enable students to make meaningful interpretations of the folktales; secondly, to expand students' knowledge and awareness of the language in general.

For the language learner, stylistics has the advantage of illustrating how particular linguistic forms function to convey specific messages. It uses terminology and a set of procedures reasonably familiar to students (those of grammatical description) to reach and justify literary intuitions. In this way it not only helps students to use their existing knowledge of the language to understand and appreciate folktales but also deepens their knowledge of the language itself. Stylistic analysis can also provide a way of comparing different types of folklore (whether folktales or fairy tales) in order to ascertain how they fulfill different social functions.

Thus, integrated literary competence, good translation, proper syntax and stylistic will expand students' language awareness and preserve local wisdom through folktales in speaking class.

In conclusion, we can use literature in English language teaching to expand students' language awareness and preserve local wisdom by designing an integrated syllabus which is suitable with the students' level of education.

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