The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching

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From the editor

Friends and Collegues,

Welcome to the second issue of The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching, and to our first issue of 2013. This journal is a peer reviewed publication put out by the JALT Special Interest Group (SIG) Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT).

Since our first issue we have been growing quickly, co-sponsoring and arranging lectures and events, and working on this journal. As always, we very much welcome member contributions. If you have some ideas you would like to share, please do get in touch.

In getting this second issue ready, we would like to extend our thanks to the contributors and to those who have taken the time out of their busy schedules to help in editing and proofreading. Thank you!

Gavin Brooks & Simon Bibby

Editors

In This Issue

Feature Articles

As with the first journal this issue provides us with a varied selection of articles that deal with using literature in the language classroom. In the first article, Atsushi Iida provides an insightful overview of the current state of the research being done on using literature in the language classroom. This article examines both the theoretical underpinnings of what makes literature such a valuable tool when teaching a second language and also looks at some of the current empirical studies being done on the use of literature in both writing and reading classes. In the second piece, Cameron Smith discusses how writing, and creative writing, can be used to improve our students second language acquisition. He examines the topic using examples from his own personal experiences in the classroom along with a selection of examples and ideas taken from the research that others are doing on the benefits of using creative writing in English as a second language classes. In the next article, entitled Post-Colonial criticism in ELT reading, Neil Addison examines why teachers should try to use a wide range of global literature in ELT reading classes to present students with a more diverse and varied view of English speaking cultures. In the final article in this section, Tara McIlroy introduces us to her research on teachers' beliefs and their approaches to using literary texts in the language classroom in Japan. This article presents the results of a small-scale study that looks at how teachers at a private university in Japan use poetry with learners of English, and their views on the process.

Literature in Practice

This section of the journal is devoted to articles that discuss the experiences of individual teachers in the classroom. It is hoped that this section will provide both a theoretical overview of how and why second language teachers are making use of literature in their classroom as well as practical examples and advice that will help our readers to start to use literature in their own classes. In the first article of this section, Patrick

Judge provides us with a follow-up to his previous article that examined the idea that contemporary television drama series can serve as fine examples for students of contemporary literature. In this article he looks at how teachers can use television dramas like *Battlestar Galactica* in the classroom by drawing on his own experiences using this drama to teach students at a private university in Japan. In the second article of the inaugural edition of this section Gregg McNabb looks at how we can use authentic literature in combination with new online technologies to help teach our students to become better readers. He looks at some of the technology that exists today, such as Spreeder, Moodle, and shows how these technologies can be used by teachers to help students improve their reading ability and promote autonomous learning.

Conference

This edition's conference section focuses the 4th annual Liberlit conference, which was held at Meiji Gakuen University January 15th. In this article Frances Shiobara gives us an insightful summary of the plenary speech given by Professor Yoshifumi Saitothat. This presentation looked at how movies and literature can be used together to show students the changing attitudes to a piece of literature. Which, in turn, can make these texts more understandable and interesting for the students. She also notes that the conference has grown in size in recent years and encourages those interested in using literature in language teaching to check out Liberlit's new website and go to next years conference to experience, first hand, the quality presentations that are given at this conference on a number of literature related topics ranging from science fiction to World Englishes.

Critical review of literary reading and writing in a second language

Atsushi Iida

Assistant Professor, University Education Center
Gunma University

Many language teachers understand that the use of literature helps students' literacy practice in their first language (L1), but we know little about the effect of reading and writing literature on literacy development in second language (L2) education, especially within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. To gain a better understanding of this issue, it is crucial to clarify what has been done and what needs to be done in the study of literature in L2 education.

The aim of this article is to discuss the value of reading and writing literature in an L2. The article provides a critical review of the literature on literary reading and writing in ESL/EFL contexts, and identifies, using empirical evidence from previous studies, the potential of using literature as a way for developing L2 literacy.

Introduction: The Nature of Literary Learning in Second Language Contexts

The application of literary study in second language (L2) contexts is not as popular as it is in first language (L1) contexts (Iida, 2011). There are a number of possible reasons for this. To start with that vocabulary, grammatical structures, and syntax in literary texts make it difficult for L2 students to understand the content of literary texts (Chen, 2006; Lazar, 1994). Also, the focus of L2 learning is more on producing the target language accurately than on using it fluently so teachers tend to use drills rather than literature in the classroom (Zyngier, 1994). Furthermore, L2 students are expected to learn to write academically rather than creatively (Paran, 2006). Finally, reading literature is a time-consuming activity and is not seen as valuable by many teachers because they see no connection between literary learning and the development of L2 proficiency and may feel that the difficulty of the task would demotivate their students.

On the other hand, the study of literary education in L2 contexts is beginning to be developed and the research focus has shifted from a theoretical discussion to a more practical one that involves the use of empirical research on the effect of literature on L2 learning (Iida, 2012). Applied linguists have started to use this new empirical evidence to discuss the potential uses of literature in L2 learning. One of the possible uses of literature in L2 learning is the use of literature as a way to introduce the students to the social practices and norms of the L2 culture (Allington & Swann, 2009; Hall, 2005; Kim 2004). However, in both ESL and EFL contexts, the ultimate goal of language teaching is to develop both the oral and written communication skills of L2 students. Therefore, we still need to examine how teaching literature can contribute to the development of L2 communicative competence.

A number of previous studies have looked at the value of teaching literature in L2 contexts, the benefits of using literature in the L2 classroom include: developing L2 cultural awareness (Hanauer, 2001b; Wang, 2009; Zapata, 2005); enhancing L2 linguistic knowledge (Hanauer, 2001a; Iida, 2012; Paesani, 2005) promoting L2 communicative competence (Kim, 2004); gaining awareness of critical thinking (Lasker, 2007; Vandrick, 2003; Wang, 2009); and

helping self-discovery or personal growth (Hanauer, 2010).

Carter and Long (1991) propose three possible models of literature use in L2 classrooms: culture, language and personal growth. The cultural model regards literature as a way of presenting the sociocultural features and aspirations of the society from where the literature originates. The role of literature in this model is to transmit some important perspectives of the language community that the students are studying about. The language model views the use of literature as a way of reinforcing vocabulary, grammar or language manipulation with a special emphasis on providing students with authentic language texts. It enables L2 learners to study the target language as it functions in the real world, outside of the classroom. The personal growth model connects the experience of reading literature with each learner's development as a language learner. It views the interaction between the literary text and the reader as a way of encouraging learners to generate their own ideas and feelings. Zyngier (1994) argues that these three models help to expand the possibilities of teaching literature in L2 contexts. She also notes that teaching literature in the language classroom would allow students to become aware of the ideologies which underpin both the (L2) culture which produced the texts and the reader's own (L1) forms of social interaction.

Hanauer (2001b) presents us with a theoretical framework for teaching literary reading that focuses on the aspects of motivation, psycholinguistics and culture. The first part of this equation is the relationship between literature and motivation. Reading literature helps L2 learners to develop motivation for reading with enjoyment and personal involvement. The second aspect, the psycholinguistic aspect, is connected to the process of L2 learning: "the linguistic and textual properties of literary texts and the cognitive characteristics of literary reading interact with the second language learning process" (Hanauer, 2001b, p. 390). Reading poems, for instance, directs L2 learners to focus on linguistic forms as they engage in the process of negotiating meaning from the literary texts. The third aspect is that of cultural awareness. Literary reading provides L2 learners with opportunities to develop a cultural knowledge of the target community.

Paran (2008) highlights the importance of teaching not only language but literature itself in using literature in L2 education. Doing so enables L2 learners to develop both literary and textual knowledge, including knowledge of both lexical and grammatical items. Paesani (2005) also supports this position and argues for the use of literary texts "as comprehensive input for the acquisition of grammatical forms and as the basis for meaning, form-focused communicative language use" (p. 22). This argument, the use of literature as a means, not as an end, is crucial because L2 learning is "not about simply learning new linguistic forms, but it is about learning how to construct, exchange, and interpret signs that have been created by someone else" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 22). All of these frameworks agree that the use of literature can help to facilitate L2 learning and that the literature itself has the potential to motivate L2 learners to read (Kim, 2004; Paran, 2008; Vandrick, 2003; Wang, 2009).

Literature, as an example of authentic language, also "potentially play[s] a role in facilitating the learner's access to this English-using culture" (Hall, 2005, p. 55). Because language and culture are inseparable the use of literature is important because it can lead to better cultural understanding of the target community, which is necessary for learning the target language (Kramsch, 1993). The use of literature in the language classroom can calso help with the development of L2 learners' awareness of intercultural understanding. Hanauer (2003) illustrates the relationship between the nature of literature and culture taking poetry as an example: "poetry offers the opportunity of the entry of cross-cultural personal understanding as well as the site of explicit negotiation of linguistic structures" (p. 85). In other words, literature in L2 education can allow students to become more sensitive to the target culture through the reflection and comparison of their own culture with the culture that produced the texts that they are reading. In this sense, the use of literature is "a powerful way of knowing about oneself and the

world" (Chen, 2006, p. 211). Iida (2008, 2010) also addresses this issue by carefully looking at the nature of *haiku* as a literary genre: *haiku* is used as a way for the authors to express their identifiable voices and to reflect on the natural world. From this perspective, the role of literature in language education is to make connections between internal and external worlds of the individual (Hanauer, 2004).

This convergence of literature, language and culture represents a theoretical framework that supports the use of teaching literature in the L2 classroom. As we have seen, there is an argument to be made for using literature in L2 learning, but the effects of literature on L2 literacy development still needs to be examined empirically. Specifically, we need to examine in what ways the use of literature in the classroom helps students with their L2 learning. The remaining sections of this article address this issue by focusing on a number of empirical studies that have been done on the effects of reading and writing literature in the L2 classroom on students' L2 learning.

Literary Reading in a Second Language

While there are an increasing number of studies being done on the use of literature in the language classroom, this field is still in its infancy. Paran (2008) conducted a survey on the current state of research articles on literature use in L2 education and he notes the lack of empirical studies. His survey also showed that almost all the studies focus on the effects of reading literature on L2 learning (e.g., Chen 2006; Hanauer, 2001a; Kim, 2004; Wang, 2009).

Hanauer (2001a), for example, discusses the use of poetry reading in the L2 classroom. He investigated the process by which pairs of advanced Hebrew speakers of English in a teacher's training college in Israel ought to understand an English poem. His study showed that L2 learners were able to construct meaning from these texts by using their existing linguistic knowledge and then applying that knowledge in a creative way to construct meaning. In addition, this task allowed the learners to 'focus on form' as they were able to use the poems to "extend their understanding of the potential range of uses and meanings of existing linguistic structure" (Hanauer 2001a, p. 319). This study provides some empirical evidence that poetry reading can be an effective task for advanced learners and may be effective in helping them to develop L2 linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Kim (2004) also addresses the significance of using literature in L2 education. Kim explored the effect of literature discussions on classroom interactions among nine adult ESL students in an advanced class at an American university. The aim of this study was to examine the features of student interactions with literary texts (e.g., a short story and a novel) and with their peers, and look at the relationship between these interactions and the learners' language development. The qualitative analysis of classroom discourse showed that literature discussions had the potential to engage students in enjoyable reading, enabled them to practice the target language through active social interactions, and gave them the opportunity to express themselves meaningfully in English. These findings seem to indicate that literature can provide students with a chance to develop their ability to comprehend texts, to reflect on their personal values and experiences, to respond to cross-cultural topics, and to interpret a text and critically evaluate it. This study also showed that literature circles which allow students to interact with literary texts (focus on form) and to respond and interact with other students (extended discussion), promoted their L2 communicative competence.

Another empirical study of literary reading was conducted by Wang (2009). This study evaluated the value of using novels in advanced-level first year classes at a university in Taiwan. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of 162 college freshmen toward the use of literature in the classroom, the effects of watching the film adaptation of a novel on DVD before reading the book, and the effect of the literature instruction on their L2 reading and listening skills. In this study, literature instruction was shown to promote students' reading, translation, vocabulary, problem-analysis, grammar, rhetoric, listening, speaking and writing abilities. In addition, watching the novel on DVD helped students in their comprehension of the story. As a result, students were

able to achieve outstanding scores in both reading and listening tests. This study illustrates a model of using literature for the development of both students' overall English skills and their L2 cultural knowledge in advanced-level English courses.

Thus, we can see that empirical studies of the use of literature in the language classroom provide support to the theoretical rationale of using literature in L2 education. Despite the difference in genres, practical approaches, and contexts, the use of literature has been shown to have a positive impacts on L2 learning. These empirical studies provide us with support to the idea that literature can be used to enhance linguistic and cultural knowledge of the target community as well as to develop the students' L2 communicative competence. This supports Carter and Long's (1991) thesis that the integration of language and literature works on different levels and can be used to achieve a diverse number of goals.

Literary Writing in a Second Language

To date very few empirical studies have been done on the use of writing literature in the L2 classroom (Hanauer, 2010; Iida, 2012). This may be due to the fact that most university writing classes tend to teach academic writing and students are expected to write with the grammatical 'accuracy' rather than creatively. As a result, most studies of L2 literary writing that focus on writing literature do so as part of an integrated approach whereby students are asked to both read and write literature in the classrooms.

Hirvela (2005), for instance, addresses the use of literature in ESL composition courses. He investigated 195 ESL students' attitudes toward reading literature, and literature-based writing in composition courses. His study involved dividing ESL college freshmen into two groups: the first group was assigned to read a short novel and write a formal academic essay in response: the second group was assigned to read the same novel as the first group and write their response paper in a more informal manner, through journal entries. An attitude questionnaire indicated that approximately 60 % of students in both groups had a positive attitude toward reading literature in English, and that approximately 67% of students regarded literature-based writing (e.g., formal response essay, literary journal) as a useful academic writing experience; in other words, many ESL students viewed the inclusion of literature in the classroom as helpful in the improvement of their academic writing abilities. A significant finding was that "ESL students will support, albeit moderately, writing *about* literature directed toward academic literacy ends; what they will oppose is writing *for* literature" (Hirvela, 2005, p. 76).

Chen (2006) examined the effects of both reading and writing literature on students enrolled in a college composition course at a university in Taiwan. Chen looked at the effect of reading children's literature on the development of the writing abilities and narrative thinking of 43 college freshmen. Their reflective comments and responses in an interview about the literature-based tasks indicated that the features of children's literature (e.g., the simplicity of language style, a variety of cultural information, and comfortable length of stories) were perceived to facilitate the student's reading comprehension and that this genre knowledge, obtained through reading stories, could be applied to the student's own writing practice. The research showed that the students' chosen texts provided good writing samples for their own stories and enhanced their sense of authorship. This study provides empirical support for the theory that the reading and writing of literature should be taught together (Grabe, 2003; Hirvela, 2004; Vandrick, 2003).

While Hirvela (2005) and Chen (2006) investigated students' perceptions of literature on their own language learning, Hanauer (2010) conducted research on the relationship between writing poetry and second language learning. They looked at 844 poems written by 81 advanced ESL learners at an American university. These poems were analyzed for their textual and literary characteristics which involved: text size analysis, linguistic category analysis, lexical frequency profile, poetic features, thematic organization, lexical content analysis, and expressed emotion analysis. This analysis showed that L2 poetry was short, personal, descriptive and direct. In addition, it revealed that the poetry involved the

"individual perspective on particular events and experiences" and "the emotional states of the writer", and "a process of self-reflection" (Hanauer, 2010, p. 53).

Hanauer (2010) also conducted a case study of poetic identity by analysing a book of poetry created by a female ESL student in Japan. The book entitled 'Family' consisted of ten poems, the theme of each poem was connected to her parents' divorce, an event that occurred when she was a high school student. By analysing each of the poems in the book Hanauer was able to construct a picture of the writer's history of change, during the time-period in which she moved from the feelings of shock and confusion over her parents' divorce to a position of accepting it. This picture includes the maturation of her understanding of gender roles, and the development of her ability to live alone. This case study shows the potential of poetry writing as a window into a greater understanding of the writer's identity- "the history of developing subject positions designed to explore, understand and negotiate different ways of being in the world" (Hanauer, 2010, p. 73) – as well as their progress as a second language learner.

Most recently, Iida (2012) has reported on the value of *haiku* writing in a second language in a Japanese college context. This study investigated how a six-week *haiku* writing exercise affected the students ability to write prose. The results of this study indicate that haiku writing had a positive effect on the students' prose writing development. The effects of writing haiku on prose writing were that: the total words used in texts increased in the post-*haiku* essay; students used impersonal pronouns more in the post-essay than in the pre-essay; and students demonstrated a greater ability to write their ideas in a direct and succinct way in the post-essay. This study supports Hanauer's (2011) theoretical assumption that learning one genre will have an influence on students' abilities to function in another genre. This , in turn supports the use of literature in L2 writing classes, even if the final goal of the class is the production of an academic essay.

Despite a limited number of empirical studies, research on writing literature has (re)constructed theories of the place of literature in the L2 writing classroom. Recent studies (e.g., Hanauer, 2010: Iida 2012) have provided empirical evidence that L2 learners have the ability to produce literary texts; and this opens a new possibility for using literature as a method for students to gain more experience writing in the target language. While it is still early, literature seems to have a place in the future of L2 education, even in the academic writing classroom (Hirvela, 2005; Iida, 2012).

Conclusions

This article has explored the use of literature in L2 contexts from both a theoretical and an empirical viewpoint. Previous studies of L2 literary learning present us with a picture of how literature can be used in language learning (and teaching). They show us that literature can be employed by the teacher to work at a number of different levels, for different goals, and in different contexts. The use of literature enables students to develop L2 linguistic knowledge and language awareness, communicative competence, cultural knowledge of the target language, critical thinking skills, helps their level motivation, and provides them with emotional engagement. In particular, L2 literary writing provides students with opportunities to express their own thoughts about different subjects and the world, and to negotiate and construct meaning by placing their own perspectives or emotional states at the centre in their writing processes.

The theoretical framework of teaching literature emphasizes the use of literature as a way for students to gain experience with actually using the target language as well as developing their linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical knowledge. In this sense, it is important for each instructor to consider *how* to use literature, rather than *whether* they should use it in the L2 classroom; in other words, the use of literature should be a *means*, not an *end* in L2 education. It may be challenging for L2 learners to read and write literature in the target language, but L2 literature has the potential to improve their overall English skills. Further research and further discussion on the effects of L2 literature and language learning is

clearly required, but the initial empirical evidence suggests that using L2 literature in the language classroom can help students to acquire linguistic and cultural knowledge in the target language, to gain genre-specific knowledge, and to develop (academic) literacy skills.

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Creative writing as an important tool in second language acquisition and practice

Cameron Smith
Chubu University

Creative Writing is rarely included in the curricula of English language learners in Japanese higher and further education. However, students' creative use of language, in particular in literary writing, may serve as an aid to certain aspects of language acquisition (particularly grammar and certain kinds of vocabulary), as well as address issues of communicative competence as English L2 learners move beyond the beginner stage of acquisition. Such tasks also appear to be motivating. This paper uses examples from texts and classroom activities to show how asking second language students to attempt poetry and fiction can contribute to central parts of their learning.

Introduction

In the 1887 Unua Libro ("First Book"), L.L. Zamenhof offered as examples of texts in his new language of Esperanto (in addition to some biblical translations and a letter) three poems, two of which were original. In developing the language, he had translated works of literature (poetry and prose) to ascertain the completeness of his new creation, and in later life he devoted much time to translating other works of literature. The first book in Esperanto by an author other than Zamenhof was a poetry anthology; within just over 20 years of Zamenhof introducing his creation, people had published original novels, songs and plays in this new language. Output, whether original or in translation, was largely literary.

This case is interesting because the producers of these works were quite clearly intrinsically motivated language learners. The noted Esperantist Donald Harlow (1995) asked "Why do Esperantists dedicate so much time, money and effort to such an essentially non-productive pastime as literature when they could be more effectively devoting it to the promulgation of Esperanto?" His answer was that "It is the nature of languages to produce literatures".

There is, in foreign language education, a paradox when it comes to texts. Among the most valued texts in any language are creative works. Mass consumption of "texts" is dominated by them: films, books (including manga), and songs. When we give students extensive reading, we recommend graded readers that are overwhelmingly fiction. Yet when EFL teachers ask students to produce written work, they usually ask for well-organised facts and explicit opinions: descriptions, essays, reports. They very rarely ask for expressive or creative output, if ever. There are vanishingly few textbooks available for teaching or encouraging foreign language students to write stories, songs and poems in their target language.

The usual defence of this situation is instrumental: students don't need to know how to write songs, poems or stories. On the other hand, the ability to express and support one's ideas in a well-organised and comprehensible manner is an important professional and academic skill. The clear implication is that (compulsory) curriculum time should be devoted to activities directly relevant to archetypal "real-world" work- or study-related usage.

However, does this position accurately reflect the potential usefulness of creative writing for a language

learner, or indeed the actual needs of students? Using examples from creative writing courses, this paper challenges the presumption that creative writing lacks relevance in a serious EFL curriculum. In particular, it argues that the study and practice of creative forms (learning the "craft") is particularly beneficial, and that the human tendency to produce literature – even in a foreign language – should be acknowledged and harnessed in foreign language education.

The Contribution of Creative Writing to Language Acquisition
Making Focus on Form and Rhythm a Meaningful Task

One of the challenges in using communicative and task-based methods in the classroom is how to manage focus on form, often contrasted with a focus on meaning (e.g. Littlewood, 2004). The study of grammar is problematic: it can be inauthentic, controlling and non-communicative, and for some writers, the prescription of specific forms as part of a lesson or curriculum plan, rather than as a reactive, mid-task activity, is frowned upon (e.g. Long, 2000).

However, creative writing, in particular poetry, provides a means of combining meaning-focused and form-focused tasks. With the exception of freeform verse, poetry involves paying attention to meter, form, repetition and shape. Holmes and Moulton (2001) have shown how the use of pattern poetry allows students to perform tasks that, by having a prescribed format, allow for meaningful, authentic use of teacher-specified forms. The students are given a stable vehicle through which they can express themselves. The response from students can be impressive:

"With the very first poems our students wrote, we knew we were onto something special. Not only were our students practicing the structures we wanted them to, but they were also engaged and enthusiastic about the process. And the poems they wrote were little jewels!" (2001:1)

Here is one example of a task they give to students that focuses on relative clauses using who and adjectives. Note that like most tasks presented here, it can be attempted by low level students.

Line 1: First name
Line 2: Four traits that describe the character
Line 3: Relative of _____(brother, sister, daughter etc.)
Line 4: Lover of _____ (list three people, things or ideas)
Line 5: Who feels (three emotions)
Line 6: Who needs (three items)
Line 7: Who fears (three items)
Line 8: Who gives (three items)
Line 9: Who would like to see _____ (three items)
Line 10: Resident of _____
Line 11: Last name

And here is one of the results, by three children (Karla, Moses and Joel) aged 15-16

Rose
Colorful, aromatic, pretty
Sister to gardenias, sunflowers, and daisies
Lover of parties, weddings and dates
Who feels warm in the sun, hurt when cut, and satisfied when it rains
Who needs water, sun, and dirt
Who fears drought, chemicals and scissors
Who gives love, happiness, and peace
Who would like to see all people happy
Resident of beautiful gardens
Linda

(Holmes and Moulton, 2001, p. 52)

Notice that the students do not feel limited to giving regulation answers, and that they are still engaged in using other language for the task – such as connecting clauses with "when". Holmes and Moulton's book is full of similar student-written examples.

Through poetry, creative writing can also help with pronunciation. In the Japanese context, students are sometimes asked to write haiku in English to

focus on what counts as a "syllable". Many Japanese speakers can struggle at first to distinguish between the Japanese moraic rendering of English words in katakana from their syllable-based pronunciation in English, where consonants can run together and syllables can end in consonants (Wells, 2000). For example, the one syllable word "stress" is rendered as four morae: su-to-re-su. This may be a particular problem with English loan words in Japanese where students may defer to L1 pronunciation. Writing haiku encourages students' awareness of the syllabic character of English pronunciation. Here are two examples from low-intermediate students at a Japanese university from a creative writing course run by the author. Again, notice the humour as the students respond to the task.

> *I'll show you my poem.*
> *You might be disappointed*
> *'Coz I can't write well.*
> Fumina Nakashima

> *I love many sports*
> *I don't do any sports now*
> *Oh! I will be fat.*
> Ayaka Iwamura

In the creative writing course referred to above, writing Haiku was the first stage in raising awareness of word stress and stress-timing in English. The next stage was writing in a regular meter – in this particular case, in iambic pentameter. In doing such exercises, students need to bring attention to the stress patterns in words (including secondary stresses), and are made aware of the general significance of stress-based rhythm in English. The advantage of approaching these exercises as attempts to write poetry is that the students seem ready to combine a focus on form (in this case stress patterns) with attempts to create meaning and communicate ideas. In his guide to poetry-writing, Fry (2006) suggests that simply following a certain meter (in the example below, iambic pentameter) can result in aesthetically pleasing work simply after a few sentences of trying. This seems to be true for L2 learners too. The following example, while with errors and not perfectly matching the meter, is from the same creative writing course:

> *When I was very little in the past,*
> *I believed that there was Santa in the sky*
> *I was excited on the Christmas day,*
> *because he comes and gives me what I want.*
> *In morning I get up and find a gift.*
> *Then I had very wonderful feelings.*
> *When I have darling children at someday*
> *I want to be a Santa Claus for them*
> Hitomi Kitamura

It is notable how many students try to be interesting, thought-provoking, moving or funny. The anecdotal evidence from writers such as Holmes and Moulton, Al-Jarf (2007), and my own classes is that students do make an attempt to communicate through these exercises.

Non-Core and Emotional Vocabulary: Acquisition and Practice

Carter (1998) distinguishes between core and non-core vocabulary items. The former are words which are neutral, or "unmarked" – *eat, big, door* etc., and which act as universal substitutes for their non-core synonyms. The latter carry nuances, extra meanings – *guzzle, ginormous, portal*. Because non-core vocabulary often have cultural connotations that may be lost in word-for-word translations, they present a problem for low to intermediate students seeking to improve their active vocabulary. Why would a student use the word "furious" when the simple circumlocution "very angry" is available?

Attempting fiction, where the aesthetic quality of the writing is a central component, provides an excellent setting for non-core vocabulary study. It encourages both raising cognitive awareness of non-core vocabulary, and provides reasons for using it. Where the emotional impact (rather than simple semantic message) becomes important, so does the nuance in word choice. Figure 1 presents an example of an exercise taken from a course in story-writing taught by the author. It is designed to raise awareness of non-core words synonymous with "look".

1. John stared at Peter. Why?
<u>Peter had walked into the room
wearing a gorilla costume.</u>

2. Peter gazed at Catherine. Why?
_____
_____

3. Catherine glared at Sophie. Why?
_____
_____

4. Stephen glanced at Helen. Why?
_____
_____

5. Helen frowned at Susan. Why?
_____
_____

6. Susan smiled at John. Why?
_____
_____

Figure 1. Example of a worksheet used to raise student awareness of non-core words (Smith, 2012, p. 39)

The results can be impressive, as students' sensitivity to reaching for the "right" word seems to increase, leading them to investigate synonyms and improve their dictionary use. I have found that the vocabulary use in fiction writing appears to be more varied and of higher quality than academic writing produced by the same students. Good collocations appear unbidden: for example, one student begins to write how people are *occupied* by thoughts, while another has an animal's tail *wagging*. Some reach deep into the dictionary: A student writes how his main character "*awoke to* a *silky, orotund* voice".

It is not simply non-core vocabulary in general that needs attention. Dewaele and Pavlenko (2002) show how the conceptual maps implied by emotional and expressive vocabulary are different across different languages. The interrelationship between language

and emotions can even be witnessed in psychological tests: in Veltkamp, Recio, Jacobs and Conrad (2012), two groups of Spanish L1/German L2 and German L1/Spanish L2 speakers on a personality assessment scored higher for "agreeability" when they took the test in German and higher for "extraversion" and "neuroticism" when the test was in Spanish. There is also evidence that emotional vocabulary is processed differently to concrete and abstract vocabulary, and they present a particular challenge to L2 learners (Altarriba and Basnight-Brown, 2011). One aspect of this challenge is the psychological "depth" of encoding of emotional concepts in the first language, found even in bilinguals whose "second" language was learned after the age of eight.

The active exploration of emotions in L2 is well-suited to fiction and poetry writing. These are safer media both for the student and the teacher. For example, expressing feelings of rejection or loss may be traumatic; students can be empowered by language if instead they are allowed to write a fictionalized story – the one that they want to tell. (In one of my first story-writing courses a student confessed that the high-school love triangle story she had written was based on her own life, except that "only this time I won!") Finding an emotional voice in the second language appears to be part of mastering that language.

The Relevance of "Literary" Language in Real-World Language Use
Language Play and Relationship Building

As several authors have noted, "language play" is an integral part of language use, especially in relationship building, both in L1 adults (Carter 2004) and L2 learners (Belz and Reinhart, 2004). Carter's corpus research shows how the use of rhymes, repeated patterns, puns, morphological inventiveness ("undancerly", "finelyish"), jokey deconstruction of idioms etc. serve as a common means of building intimacy and trust. That is, everyday speech is "pervasively artful", with language play serving to "bring people together and membershipping them inclusively" (Carter, 2004:108). According to Cook, language play constitutes "a large proportion

of personally and socially significant language use" (2000: 204)

Many of these techniques do not come naturally to Japanese learners of English. As a case in point, rhyme is a particular challenge. Japanese songs, with the exception of rap music, typically do not employ rhyme. In my own classes, students struggle to focus on the sound rather than orthography. In awareness-raising exercises such as finding rhyming pairs, many choose similar spellings (*stone – gone*) or beginnings (*strike – stroll*) , while struggling when words of different syllable counts still rhyme (*court – report*). It is notable that in the recent NHK Educational show *Angela Aki no English Song Book*, in which the singer explains to a Japanese audience the meaning of English lyrics, she typically does not mention the rhyme or meter pattern. This is even where an unusual word choice or sentence structure has clearly been dictated by the demands of rhyme and scansion, and even though rhyme and rhythm are central aesthetic characteristics of English. Such things have been excluded from the English curriculum in Japan.

I was sleepy so I went to bed.
Then I slipped
And I hit my head.
Ayaka Yamamoto

If language play is part of social interaction, is it right that we have able students graduating as English majors who don't understand (let alone know) how to rhyme or scan? Who don't even appreciate that punning and alliteration are common currencies of social interaction?

Change the statements into ones that show someone's feelings rather than tell the reader directly.

Telling	*Showing*
Lucy's mother was very angry with her.	*Lucy's mother stared at her with cold eyes.*
Terence hated John, because he was also in love with Lucy.	*Terence's fists tightened as he saw Lucy, Lucy, Lucy, holding hands with that fat idiot, John.*
Lucy missed her father a lot.	*Lucy still kept her father's old walking stick in the umbrella stand by the door.*
Lucy was very scared of big dogs .	
Lucy didn't like Anna.	
Lucy's favourite food was ice cream.	
Lucy's French lessons were always boring.	
Lucy got very upset when she was told that her pet hamster had died.	

Figure 2. Example of a worksheet where students need to transform literal descriptions into actions (Smith, 2012, p. 24)

Sociocultural Competence and Linguistic Proficiency

Dewaele and Pavlenko (2002) state that a commonly reported difficulty for intermediate level students is the inability "to express their communicative intentions accurately", and that "this inability is mostly due to problems at the level of associative aspect of lexical competence, i.e., to a limited ability to perceive and use subtle stylistic nuances"(2002: 270). For example, intermediate speakers usually employ direct descriptions of emotions, while figurative speech indicates higher language competence. That is, for students hoping to spend time abroad, a focus on techniques in expressive language will help them to thrive in their second language environment. Littlemore and Low also highlight in particular how metaphoric competence contributes, amongst other language learning goals, to "sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. (2006: 268)

Associative and figurative language, with the ability to express nuance, are central to creative, particularly literary writing. Both the form (e.g. similes with *like*, *as* etc.) and the purpose (the impact of showing/comparing rather than literally re-telling) of such techniques can be taught and practiced through encouraging students to write literary-style pieces. Figure 2 shows a simple exercise from my story writing class where students need to transform literal descriptions into actions. Students are guided to "show" the emotions of actors to achieve a greater emotional impact.

Such tasks empower students to employ examples for emotional effect in their stories. In a recent class, a high-beginner student describes a bullied character: "Textbooks written with the name Fumiya were thrown into a garbage can and his shoes were hidden every day". Another student sums up a 7-year-old child missing his father: "Veg sometimes draws his father's imaginary face". These examples provides a richer, more nuanced means of expression than the direct expression of an emotion.

Conclusion: Creative Writing as a Suitable Classroom Task

I referred at the start to the "instrumental defence" for the exclusion of creative writing from core curricula – that creative writing serves no practical use for students. This defence produces a corollary paradox to the paradox of literary texts in EFL: the problems of extrinsic motivation in language study are well-known, yet extrinsic rewards are cited not only quite reasonably as a justification for focusing on certain activities, but also implicitly as a necessary characteristic of worthwhile language tasks.

I hope to have shown that both the belief that creative writing cannot serve practical language learning purposes, and the implicit belief that creative and expressive use of language is of little importance to language learners, are invalid. By providing opportunities to focus on form in a meaningful manner, and opportunities to investigate and use more difficult vocabulary and more impactful forms of expression, creative writing tasks can contribute to central challenges in language learning.

I also hope also to have indicated the advantage of creative writing in terms of motivation. Students respond positively to creative writing tasks. While poems, stories and songs may begin as externally motivated tasks set by the teacher, it is my experience that the innate human drive to expression and playfulness in language, that is, to literary expression, frequently takes over. Students write with more care, dedication and – in my experience with stories – often far greater output. I believe we should embrace this aspect of human nature. Instead of excessive and unwarranted concern about its usefulness, we should include more creative writing in our curricula.

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Post-Colonial criticism in ELT reading:
Encouraging a critical response towards literature

Neil Addison

Many English literary texts employed in ELT reading classrooms are saturated with Western cultural values, which, if not explicated properly, can confuse students who may come from very different cultural backgrounds (Widdowson, 1990). Moreover, English literature often produces a specific and stereotypical way of thinking about and perceiving non-Western cultures (Pennycook 1998; Phillipson, 1992), and some concern is held by ELT teachers on the possible effects these texts may have upon students of English as a foreign language (Sell, 2005; Torikai, 2011). In light of such concerns, this paper advocates using a wide range of global literature in ELT reading classes, while interpolating a mediated Post-Colonial and Reader Response approach. The paper further outlines educational methodology that might encourage Japanese university students to apply Post-Colonial and Reader Response criticism to both authentic texts and graded readers.

English Literature in the ELT Classroom.

Introducing authentic works of English literature into an ELT reading classroom can be beneficial for a wide variety of reasons. Such materials can afford English language students the chance to understand other cultures at a deeper, more satisfyingly complex level because literature itself tends to possess subtlety, richness and uniqueness (Brumfit, 2001) that might not be found in English language textbooks. Due to the profound and serious range of ideas found in classic literature in particular, authentic texts dating from centuries past can often connect old themes with new, and broaden and deepen our students' understanding both of previous ages and of subjects related to the present time. For example, using selections of Wordsworth's nature poetry, which criticize the growing industrial materialism of early 19th century Britain, can add a deeper historical and critical perspective to ELT discussion classes which centre on modern phenomena such as globalization. Reading authentic English literature also presents students with the opportunity to understand how the English language is used in a variety of specific contexts and can convey genuine, authentic cultural

enrichment whilst training the mind and sensibility (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000).

Despite the many positive skills and insights students can gain from reading literature, many English reading students face difficulties in moving from basic decoding of texts towards fluency. These obstacles may include a lack of textual and cultural background knowledge, which is often regrettably glossed over in the classroom in favor of teaching information retrieval skills that "exclude the cultural values and identities, or expressive and aesthetic characteristics. . . . quite simply because these are now seen as surplus to practical requirement" (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004, p. 357). This runs the risk that many reading students will be alienated or confused by the cultural content in authentic literature due to it not matching their own social and cultural schematic knowledge (Widdowson, 1990). If learners cannot understand or process authentic texts then, as Waring observes, "the text is noise and frustrational…and not instructional but interfering with instruction" (Waring, 2006, p. 1). A more serious growing concern amongst teachers and scholars is that, due to many English literary texts being saturated in

Western values, reading students may potentially be encouraged to "analyse and evaluate the world as made and seen by Europeans" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 241). Western literary cultural values emanate in part from the establishment of the literary canon, but also from the specific historical and geopolitical processes which underpin its formation, such as colonialism (Pennycook, 1998). This article will first discuss these two important factors during the following two chapters, before proceeding to address the more practical ways in which a critical approach towards such literature can be encouraged in ELT reading classrooms.

The Western Literary Canon and ELT Texts

The type of literature introduced and taught to students in ELT reading classes often conforms to a Western centered, elitist and canonized standard, exemplified by F.R Leavis's The Great Tradition (Leavis, 1950) in which he identified Anglo-American writers such as Eliot, Austen, and Henry James as the bearers of great and immutable values. The literary canon has since begun to suffer attacks on its credibility due to accusations of perceived elitism and dogmatism (Brumfit, 2001), but despite this growing criticism the images of various literary figures from the Western canon, such as Dickens, Austen and Shakespeare, still pervade the content of ELT communication textbooks such as Headway (Soars & Soars, 2005). At a tertiary level in Japan many reading textbooks focus chiefly on Western literary texts to the exclusion of global literature selections. Of particular note is the reading textbook series Discovering Fiction, which affords space for a large selection of American writers, such as Hemingway, Langston Hughes, Ray Bradbury, and Shirley Jackson (Kay & Gelshenen, 2001) yet there is no place for international writers such as Marquez, Mahfouz, or Lao She. While it should be conceded that the textbook Literary Odysseys (Ziemer, 2000) has previously attempted to include multicultural selections of literature, this volume failed to be embraced or used widely by teaching institutions, and has now regrettably fallen out of print. English may enjoy the status of a widely used global language, but the previous textbook examples are perhaps symptomatic of the general lack of focus on global English literature in many reading programs.

'Self' and 'Other' in Western Literature

A dearth of global literature in many reading textbooks may be partly attributed to the argument that the ELT industry is subtly shaped by the ideology of colonialism (Phillipson, 1992). This discourse, which was influenced by the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment, served to enforce an ontological division between 'self' and 'other'; Enlightenment culture represented Western progress positively whilst conferring an inferior status on the rest of the world (Pennycook, 1998). Cultural demarcation between 'civilized self' and 'savage other' meant that other parts of the world were judged by Europeans to be in need of the West's guidance, and early British poetic explorers such as Sir Walter Raleigh (Hill, 1965/1972) used these beliefs to justify the need for colonial expansion whilst later British explorers such as Stanley championed Western colonial 'civilization' as a force for good (Sherry, 1971). Colonialist discourses can be further discovered in the literature of prominent Western writers who are often read by students in English reading classes; literary depictions of civilised Western 'self' and savage 'other' can be found in works by Defoe, Melville, Conrad and London. More specifically to Asia, stereotypical depictions of the Orient in Western literature as exotic and mysterious (which attained a vogue of considerable intensity during the 19th century), can be located in publications as varied as Wordsworth's The Prelude (1850/1996), Coleridge's Kubla Khan (1816/1996), Orwell's depiction of Myanmar in Burmese Days, (1934/1967), and Gide (1902/1960) and Kerouac's (1965/1995) accounts of North Africa. These kinds of representations still pervade popular contemporary literature, such as Alex Garland's The Beach (1996/1997), where the East is depicted as an exotic playground which conveys the promise of adventure. This genre tradition of writing has in turn influenced Western cinematic depictions of different parts of the world, further establishing rigid lines between 'us' and 'them' (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003).

A Western-centric representation of the East can even be located in ELT textbooks, such as *Headway*, which includes a reading feature on the explorer Marco Polo's 'discovery' of China, and then juxtaposes this with another reading exercise featuring a Western backpacker exploring the Far East (Soars & Soars, 2005). In this sense, ELT can be argued to project values historically connected with imperialism, as the commercial exploitation of the English language has a long and honourable history (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004), exemplified by the British Council's 1983 admission of "exploiting English" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 144). Because of this history, some ELT teachers feel concern that, by introducing Shakespeare, Dickens or Hughes into an ELT reading class, they are in some manner contributing to linguistic and cultural imperialism (Sell, 2005), whilst some maintain that all authentic culture should be kept out of the ELT classroom, (Torikai, 2011) due to its perceived hegemonic properties. Yet keeping students away from authentic Western culture appears impossible in an age when students often choose to gain on-line and TV access to this culture during their leisure hours. Perhaps, in the long run, teaching culture at a deeper, more critical level may instead be more profitable because students require a great deal of cultural education in English classes to achieve a deeper level of communicative competence and fluency (Kramsch, 1993). This necessitates engaging with foreign cultures and literary texts more rigorously and critically.

Teaching Global Literature

In seeking to promote a more critical student response to authentic texts, the central problem for ELT reading teachers is in assessing what the intended culture of a text should be, and how they should attempt to teach it. With economic power looking to slowly switch from West to East, the culture students are encouraged to learn will not perhaps be of much use in the immanent future, and it may be more productive to introduce learners to other cultures through English. This will entail teaching literature from many diverse parts of the globe, such as Asia, the Middle East and Africa, whilst there is

also no reason why Japanese students should not read selections of their own literature in English classes, and compare these texts critically with British, American or global texts. Yet faced with a restricted, culture-specific choice of textbooks and materials (Flavell, 1994), teachers may need to accept more personal responsibility in terms of leading students to diverse literature, and this will in turn necessitate instructors possessing both a zest for reading and a critical expertise of multicultural literary texts. A multicultural approach to teaching literature in ELT should ideally avoid cultural bias and instead expand to represent many varied parts of the globe, affording students the chance to enjoy a broader, deeper, more profound vision of the world.

A Reader Response and Post Colonial Critical Approach

An English reading program that provides a multicultural selection of authentic literature will also require the development of student literary critical competence. The major obstacle to this approach is that literature is still chiefly employed in some Asian countries such as Japan in a top down, efferent approach (Rosenblatt, 1938) to develop intensive reading skills, improving reading speeds, and for grammar translation purposes. To avoid being confused or locked out of the text, students need to be encouraged to critically engage with literature by critical comparison with their own culture and individual identities. Encouraging students to develop a personal reader response towards authentic texts is advocated by a number of scholars (Rosenblatt, 1938; Scholes, 1985,) who note that the reader's interpretative process is central to the creation of meaning, but, in addition to teaching such reader response, teachers should also seek to equip students with a deeper knowledge of the ideological values of the text itself, and the cultures it both embodies and represents. Teaching a post-colonial approach to reading can help shed light on various cultural discourses that underpin literature, such as representations of identity, self and other. Using reader response and post-colonial critical readings might potentially enable reading students

unacquainted with foreign cultures to more smoothly process culture-specific schematic knowledge encountered in such texts and yet also compare and contrast it with their own.

Using Mediated Classroom Materials

With these critical reading aims in mind I decided to teach reader response and post-colonial reading approaches to my Japanese university literature students during the 2012 autumn semester, and I chose specific vocabulary to both explicate this difficult content and to also hopefully encourage a critical response. An academic word list was not consulted in selecting vocabulary, as it was felt that this would be too general for the purposes of scaffolding critical theory and instead specific terms were chosen which related to reader response, such as 'vizualise', 'picture', 'imagine', 'relate', and 'infer'. Vocabulary which related to post-colonialism included terms such as 'stereotype', 'representation', 'self', 'other', and 'reinforce' and 'subvert' 'colonialist ideology.' These terms were introduced to the students through the distribution of vocabulary reading sheets, and also, to maximise student opportunities for memorisation, recycled in subsequent classes (Nation, 2001; Waring, 2006) in the form of reading and writing activities. Audio-visual media such as short examples of movies were used in conjunction with the vocabulary reading sheets to aid student familiarisation of textual content (Lonergan, 1984), whilst images such as optical illusions, works of art and cartoon *manga* were further used to explicate meaning.

Two Classroom Examples of Teaching Critical Readings

The first task at hand was to encourage a student reader response to literature, and I decided to approach this through showing the class works of art. I used paintings with androgynous figures such as Carravagio's *Supper at Emmaus* (1601), or ambiguous meanings such as Dali's *The Persistence of Memory* (1931), and the anonymous optical illusion *Young Girl and Old Woman* (1888) and these images were specifically selected to illustrate the idea that everything one sees can be interpreted in more than

just one way, and that perception therefore depends on one's personal response. Students were encouraged to use the reader response related vocabulary they had been taught to interpret and describe the pictures in terms such as how it influenced their opinions and feelings, what the picture made them visualize, whether they could relate the image to their life, a movie, or a book, and what they inferred the meaning and message of the image to be. This vocabulary was then used twice more: First when the students viewed and wrote their impressions of a series of recent movie trailers, and secondly when reading and reviewing the short story *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820) by Washington Irving. It was however stressed to the students that whilst they were being encouraged to give their personal response to literature they should base their responses upon evidence derived from the text, such as specific words, descriptions, events or conversations. At the climax of the *Sleepy Hollow* class, group discussions regarding the text took place, and students exchanged the ideas which they had generated through their reader response writings, moving from thinking to writing to discussion.

Having scaffolded a reader response approach to reading, the next stage was to introduce a more critical approach towards literature, so that students could combine their own personal impressions with a deeper cultural knowledge of texts. Post-colonial criticism was introduced by distributing simplified reading handouts containing some of the basic ideas and figures from colonial and post colonial criticism, such as Mohandas Gandhi, Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, and vocabulary which outlined post colonial critical theory was also included on the handouts. The notion of 'self' and 'other' as a set of created cultural dispositions in Western culture was explicated through using visual media. The students were shown the *Mosaic of the Battle of Issus* (100 B.C.), which depicts Alexander of Macedonia's battle with Darius the Persian King, and were supplied with some historical reading information related to the mosaic. Whilst introducing my class to the vocabulary 'self', 'other' and 'representation' the important point was made to the students that in this famous Western created mosaic Alexander

is represented as heroic, whilst the non-Western Darius is represented pejoratively as cowardly. These scaffolded vocabulary based ideas were then subsequently connected to much later historically pejorative examples of represented 'others.' I used paintings such as Delacroix's *Massacre at Chios* (1824), and example video clips from the short documentary movie *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (ChallengingMedia, 2007) to illustrate how Western culture has negatively represented the Middle East over a long historical period up to the present. My students were then introduced to a further selection of pictures and movie clips, and were encouraged to use post-colonial related vocabulary to write about and discuss whether they contained cultural differences or stereotypes, representations of self and contrasting depictions of other, and whether the works reinforced or subverted colonialist ideology. Having become familiarized with these post-colonial critical ideas the students were then required to read over subsequent classes two different literary texts, one British and one Nigerian. Students first read and discussed the short story *Sredni Vashtar* by Saki, (Munro, 1911) which was scaffolded by distributing printouts of an online graphic novel of the text (Lauraneato, 2007) to smooth and simplify student comprehension, and in the following class read and reviewed *Dead Men's Path* by Chinua Achebe (Achebe, 1953/1973). These two texts were specifically chosen to be compared and contrasted for culturally thematic reasons; in the former text the ferret character Sredni Vashtar appears to personify an imagined Eastern religion as represented from a British perspective, whereas in the latter text British Christian missionary rule in Nigeria is represented from a Nigerian perspective. Having used reader response and post-colonial critical ideas to read and write about both texts, my students then participated in a longer critical discussion in which ideas generated by their writings were exchanged, and I encouraged their conversation to center specifically on how the two texts represented Western and foreign cultures, and whether the two texts potentially reinforced or subverted colonialist ideology.

Conclusion: Assessing a Critical Approach

I wished to test my students' ability to apply reader response and post-colonial criticism to literature, and in the final class examination they were required to use the terms they had learnt whilst performing a reader response and post-colonial critique of the latter two texts. However, as studies illustrate the importance of graded readers for both autonomous learning (Waring, 2006) and for creative enjoyment (Prowse, n.d.), my students were also given an extensive reading essay assignment in which they were required to write similar critical assessments of a graded reader of their choice. Corpora of student written responses to authentic texts and graded readers are currently under construction at the time of writing, and will be subjected to examination by the text handling package Wordsmith Tools 6.0. Whilst it is too early to draw any comparative conclusions regarding student responses to such texts, it is hoped that this collected data can be employed in the future as part of a longitudinal collection of student writings. This data can then be compared with examples of learner corpora from other institutions to better inform a future research article advocating a critical post-colonial approach to teaching literature. Yet it is argued that while literature is culturally charged, and contains differing and often stereotypical representations of other cultures, these factors shouldn't prevent teachers from introducing such authentic texts into the ELT classroom, and needn't obstruct students from engaging with them critically and creatively. Encouraging students to critically assess and compare wide selections of global literature within a reading syllabus is potentially beneficial in aiding students' broader comprehension of literature and culture.

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What teachers talk about when they talk about poetry: Discussing literary texts in the university EFL context

Tara McIlroy

Teachers of English Foreign Language (EFL) in Japan are from diverse educational backgrounds but many are not teaching literature. Little research has been conducted on teachers' beliefs and their approaches to literary texts in the language classroom in Japan. This paper introduces a small-scale study looking at literature teaching in the university context, using interview data gathered as part of a university project. Six teachers at the same private university in Japan completed a questionnaire and a short interview discussing their use of poetry with learners of English. Comments from the interview data are categorized into three codes related to teachers' reasons for using poetry in class, i.e., 1) cultural development, 2) language development and 3) personal development. The author concludes by raising questions for teachers in the LiLT SIG and suggests areas for further research.

日本のEFLの教師たちは、広範囲にわたる学問を背景にしており、英文学を教育する分野を専門にするものは、少ない。学問的な調査というものは、教師のその専門的な学問への信条から行われるため、日本の言語学習の分野において、教師の文学教育に対する調査についてはほとんど行われていない。　この調査は、大学のプロジェクトの一環として行われたインタビューによるデータをもとに大学においての文学教育について紹介するものである。　6人の同じ日本の私立大学の教師が、アンケートと短いインタビューを用い、英語を学習する学生と詩について話し合いを行った。　このデータは、クラスでの詩の学習に教師たちが使いやすいように三つに分けられる。それは、①文化的な成熟、②言語的な成熟、そして③個人的な成熟である。著者はLiLTとSIGの教師たちに疑問を投げかけるとともに、この文学教育についての更なる調査についての提案を持って締めくくる。

Introduction

In ELT in general and in the English Foreign Language (EFL) context in Japan in particular, literary texts are often absent from curricula at various levels (see Bibby, 2012 and Tatsuki, 2012). The influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and conversational English as well as teaching to tests such as TOEIC are often cited as reasons. Teachers do not always have the freedom to choose their classroom texts, for example. Reluctance to deviate from textbook material, or lack of interest in literature amongst teachers themselves are also reasons for avoidance of literature. Teachers can also be limited by other factors such as student proficiency level, course goals, or management policy. Nevertheless, some teachers in EFL contexts in Japan are interested in literature and actively seek to introduce literary texts when they are given the opportunity to do so.

In the past, Literature meant the literary canon, bringing with it exclusivity and a general belief that to teach literature and to learn it was difficult (perspectives on this are seen in Brumfit & Carter, 1986, Carter & Long, 1991, Showalter, 2003). In

this paper, the notion of literature with a small "l", (McRae, 1991) is used. This means any imaginative text, including a simple nursery rhyme, children's literature, or poem can be considered literature. As such, when teachers are talking about literary texts this definition is broad, and is inclusive rather than being exclusive. By conceptualizing literature as being any creative text, teachers see opportunities for teaching and learning using texts in a range of contexts. This short paper introduces some of the ways in which teachers justify their choices.

When choosing to use literary texts in the language classroom, there can be different reasons for doing so. Literature for cultural development, language development or personal development (Carter & Long, 1991) is referred to in this paper as the culture, language & personal development framework (CLPD) and is used as a beginning framework for discussion of how literary texts can be useful to learners of English. In this short paper a selection of comments from interview data will be discussed within the CLPD framework.

To better understand language teaching and the Japanese context more research is required which looks at literary texts in the EFL classroom. The question that this paper aims to address is this: what types of texts do teachers choose for language classes and why? The project described below is part of a larger university project looking at the role of literary and creative texts in the English curriculum.

The Participants, Data Collection and Data Analysis

The research was conducted at a private university in Chiba, Japan. Students complete a four year degree program in one of the following three departments: English, International Communication, or International Languages and Culture. Some students are studying another foreign language as well as English.

Since the research was exploratory in nature, a non-probability, purposive sampling selection method was used (Dornyei, 2003). The researcher identified participants through an email call to faculty and staff requesting volunteers briefly outlining the research to which six teachers responded. All of those who answered the questionnaire also agreed to the questionnaire and follow-up interview.

The teachers all have MA degrees in Applied Linguistics or a closely related field. A SurveyMonkey on-line questionnaire and follow-up open-ended interview were used for data collection (Appendix A). In this paper, themes from the interview data will be introduced and discussed. The interviews were then transcribed by the researcher, and were limited to 10 minutes each. Details about the six participants are included in Appendix B. Two of the respondents discussed previous teaching experience, and one described her teacher-training experience. All participants had chosen to use poetry in their classes through personal interest in poetry. Questions in the interview varied between participants as indicated by the survey responses and the topics. As such the sample is not representative of the general population of language teachers. Given this limitation, the positive learning experiences that the teachers recalled in their own personal learning histories are important because they have resulted in the creation of poetry-inspired lessons and activities in their own teaching in Japan.

Table 1:

Selected results from the teacher survey

Types of classroom task discussed in detail	Examples of texts used by teachers
warm-up	Shel Silverstein
free-writes	Spike Milligan
individual and group readings	William Carlos Williams
class discussions	E.E. Cummings
gap-fill	Langston Hughes
pronunciation task	Dr Suess
workshop group activity	Alicia Keys

The interview data were transcribed and then uploaded into a qualitative data analysis software package (HyperResearch) which allows for coding of statements in the data following qualitative research principles (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The coding of

the data was done using the three open codes of 1) cultural development 2) language development and 3) personal development. Within this additional themes emerging from the data were coded also but due to space limitations these are not discussed in the current paper and only a selection of comments from the three larger codes are introduced.

Poetry for Cultural Development

The most frequently discussed topic is the use of poetry for cultural understanding of a topic. Learning about culture and developing skills in this area means learning to understand differences between cultures, attitudes and values. In a content-based class this also might mean using a theme for discussion, as it would in a general reading or writing class. Poetry tends to be used by teachers to create discussion or to assist deeper cognitive processing of information.

Poetry and cultural development in content-based classes was discussed by several teachers. David has tried both longer texts and poems in the same course with the same learning objectives, and has decided that the poems are more suitable and get better results.

> For me, poetry is not an explicit thing in my classroom it's more of a tool that I use for teaching concepts that are difficult to conceptualize in other ways. In my class, I'm teaching about New Zealand, and especially when we do things about Maori connections to land and spirituality it's really, really hard. I introduced a few poems... and it seemed to help students get a deeper understanding of the concept. I don't know if it was that they enjoyed the poems more, or that the meaning gave them more of an understanding of the ideas or that it helped them to get the material more closely that way. Certainly . . . they seemed to click on after using poems and discussing things in small groups.

In this case the teacher has the impression that different students gain different levels of understanding about a topic from poetry. The idea that greater enjoyment works for some students while others thrive on the complexity of the message

appears to suit the content-based class described. In the above example it is also significant that this teacher is not presenting poetry as the end in itself and instead it is used as a tool for learning.

Often the teacher has made a decision to use poems for the purpose of introducing complex ideas and concepts. Several teachers make reference to the results of using poems in class. For example, in a writing class, Ben comments:

> I've had good feedback from lessons on poetry. I've had students come up to me after class, after struggling with poems and had them saying to me I didn't understand it, but now I get it and it is so cool. There's that "Aha!" moment, this reveal that goes into it that makes the work somewhat satisfying like a crossword puzzle.

Overall, teachers using poems for content-based discussions tend to describe the lessons positively. A theme of these comments is that poems enhance understanding and encourage satisfying results through the use of poems.

Poetry for Language Development

> Poetry is useful because it is very expressive. In a sense, Western people use poetry in the same way that Japanese people use karaoke. That is we really show emotion... (Emily)

In the interviews language development was mentioned in several different circumstances. Language learning goals such as pronunciation, speech rhythm, and fluency were discussed by participants. Fluency was discussed as a learning goal and a number of classroom activities discussed were designed to develop fluency in English. Claire used a fluency task as a warm-up activity with Japanese teachers in a teacher-training context. Andrew talked about fluency in a reading class from listening to poems read aloud.

Some teachers work with language goals very closely, building activities around these specifically. One example from Frances is the use of poems in a beginner's ESL class in a previous teaching context in the US. The idea of using poems read aloud comes

from the teacher's own background of reading for enjoyment and reciting poetry for competitions. In the task she describes, learners transcribe their own readings at home and partners comment on their progress and their developments in fluency and pronunciation using a written feedback sheet in class. Through using simple poems such as Shel Silverstein's children`s poems, learning goals such as fluency development can be promoted positively. Frances talks about language goals and their relation to the overall aims of the course:

> We tend to focus on language goals since that is what the course required and we focused on pronunciation, fluency and so on. It was amazing to see how poetry was such a short way to achieve those learning goals in a fun way.

In the university setting, Emily has used poetry for language learning goals in a Freshman class. Spike Milligan's poetry was used for its fluid rhythm and other language features which encouraged playful group readings and practice through re-reading in a warm-up activity. Pronunciation strategies and learning about improving pronunciation are the overall goals of the unit of study as Emily describes here:

> Different types of pronunciation area were already being used in class for language learning goals. Rhythm, linking and other ways of looking at pronunciation. In the Spike Milligan poem each line needs to have a rhythm, and we made a reading activity where they had to clap along as they read the poem in time. They were laughing, they were taking turns, they were getting better, and encouraging each other. In that sense the activity worked really well for the goals of the class.

In these language activities teachers express satisfaction at the balance between learning goals and enjoyment through using poetry in language learning activities while also noticing positive student reactions.

Poetry for Personal Development

In the CLPD framework, personal development can be conceptualized in a variety of ways. For example, personal development can be seen as individual progression towards learning goals through use of skills in the target language. It also means the willingness of learners to engage with lessons, texts and each other. As well as this, personal development can additionally mean learner development outside the classroom. Essentially, if the learner leaves the lesson feeling more confident, satisfied and encouraged by the lesson, then personal development has been encouraged in that lesson. Frances comments:

> Often-times we [the teachers] give people the impression that you are not a reader unless you read novels, or read the newspaper. Poetry means also to see that this poet has created this one moment, and that it is so open to interpretation.

Teachers describe their use of poetry to encourage student engagement and learner development within this code of personal development. Particularly at the start of a lesson the use of a poem to build classroom atmosphere and create discussion was commented on. Warm-up activities seen as important at the university level, since students do not always know their classmates at the beginning of the course of study. Warm-up activities had the additional feature of provoking reaction and allowing for multiple perspectives.

Ben commented that by allowing multiple interpretations of a text that other skills are developed also:

> I have used group work and that raises the expectations of the individual. I have also been surprised by students as well, since they help me learn new things about the texts also. It's not like I come into the classroom with all the answers and explanations. Students often-times see things in a different way and those are great moments in the class.

The aim of using a poem to gather interest does not mean that all students are expected to like a poem. Andrew suggests that other responses are

equally important:

> Even if they don't enjoy it I think that's a valuable reaction. What I would be displeased with is no reaction. What is also as valid is I hate that poem. I'm more worried if they say I don't care .

Overall the idea of student response to a text is seen as important. Selection of classroom material is closely linked to the goal of personal development, as Ben suggests:

> Thinking of subject matter that 30 students would agree on is not easy to do, and so poetry allows for the multiple understandings that a text like this allows. Not everyone is going to care. I don't feel that I should need to fight with the students to get them to access the material. I think it speaks larger to any content-based curriculum and that one of the selling points of any subject-based curriculum is that students want to learn the subject matter and they want to use the language they are learning to access it.

Some teachers feel strongly that what they are doing with literature and poetry is important to students in helping them respond to difficult concepts. This response, again from Ben, looks to goals beyond the text, and the classroom:

> I genuinely believe that the best elements of literature are the themes that transcend time and place and that the themes in good literature are about a shared human experience. We can read a poem about life from North America, or China, from 1600 or from 2011 and there is something that we have done or something that we are doing that connects us. It may be able to touch us or affect us or we may be able to see something in ourselves, and a thing that is difficult to put into words may become less difficult to articulate.

Although teachers are talking about the everyday occurrence of teaching general reading and writing classes there is a sense that poetry is adding something additional to the overall experience of learning. In expressing their views in this way, teaching and experiencing language learning takes on a more substantial role.

Conclusions and Future Directions

This study attempted to tackle the question 'What types of texts do teachers choose for language classes and why?' and used the CLPD framework to categorize interview responses. As a framework for analyzing the data, the CLPD model begins to highlight the different ways in which teachers view poetry in the language classroom. However, additional sub-categories or new descriptors are required for more detailed analysis. Further research is still required to find out how and in what ways literature is being used in the language classroom at different levels and in different contexts.

Not all teachers in all settings want to take on what poetry teachers enjoy teaching. Teachers in this study repeatedly express the view that poetry should be chosen very carefully and there is a time and place for poetry in language classes. In general, teachers interviewed here would not recommend literature in every EFL class. However, they tended to agree that poetry and creative texts had such potential for language teaching and learning that they should not be absent from language curricula. More research is required to explore the potential for literature (with a small 'l') in different teaching contexts which further the learning goals of Japanese learners of English.

Finally, teachers choosing to use poetry articulate strong beliefs about using literary, creative ambiguous texts with learners. Ben was particularly interested in the value of literature for not only the development of language skills but also for the cultural and personal development of the learner. The use of literature is not simply for the purpose of meeting one aspect of the CLPD framework, but instead is for all areas simultaneously.

> It's not about translating, it's about interpreting. That skill is about using language. It's not about being in a conversation with a foreigner and being able to simply translate what they are saying, but it is about being able to understand and have a sense of what they mean.

These comments suggest real and tangible benefits for teachers and learners when poetry is brought into the language classroom, and, essentially, what

happens outside the classroom too. Just how these fit together should be explored by additional research in this field for the benefit of students and teachers alike.

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Appendix A: SurveyMonkey questionnaire

1. What department are you teaching in?
   English
   International Communication
   International Languages and Culture

2. Are you teaching a content-based class using poetry?
   yes
   no

3. What types of classes have you used poetry with?
   reading
   writing
   speaking & listening
   other (please give details)

4. Which of the following activities have you tried in class using poetry? (check all that apply)
   Warm ups
   Listening activities
   Projects
   Gap Fill
   Split story
   Reading activities
   Pronunciation practice
   Creative writing
   Personal/exploratory writing
   Other (please comment)

5. In what way(s) have you used poetry in class? Please describe this briefly.

6. Which poet(s) have you used?

7. Describe a lesson activity that you have used. What was successful about the lesson or activity?

8. What was unsuccessful about the lesson (if anything)?

Would you be prepared to talk further about your uses of poetry in a short interview?

Appendix B: details about participants

Teacher	Poetry classes and topics covered in interview
Andrew	Has used poetry in university level reading classes. Successfully used poetry and songs for warm-up activities in the university setting.
Ben	Has taught academic writing classes. Uses poetry for free-writing activities, along with art work. Talked about poetry as a tool for teaching a variety of skills.
Claire	Has used poetry in teacher-training workshops. Talked about using nursery rhymes in workshops to highlight rhythm and pronunciation patterns in English.
David	Has taught a content-based class on New Zealand in university in Japan. Talked about cultural content and poetry in EFL classes.
Emily	Has taught poetry in a variety of settings. Talked about being interested in poetry and motivation and poetry for language learning.
Frances	Has taught poetry to beginning level classes in the US. Talked about personal experiences of poetry in high school and poetry activities for pronunciation in English.

Practicing EAP skills through television drama:
Using *Battlestar Galactica* for an academic discussion course

Patrick Judge
Kwansei Gakuin University

Much of the time that a high school or university teacher shows a television episode in a class, it's done as either a reward or as a break – usually a one-off activity. I've done it and I am sure I am not alone. Television drama is rarely used as in integral part of the university English as Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum. Television series, be they serial or procedural dramas[1], are particularly challenging to integrate into a curriculum conscientiously. It is hard to prevent the course from devolving into a 'TV watching' class. Yet, if used in a conscientious manner as part of a disciplined approach, television drama can add much to the EFL classroom.

I wrote an article in the previous issue of this journal arguing for the inclusion and examination of 'literary' television drama (Judge, 2012). At the end of that article, I indicated that I would detail in a future volume how I have used one such television drama, *Battlestar Galactica* (2003-2009), in an elective discussion class. I hope this will encourage others using film and television in their courses to further contribute to this journal by writing up how they do it. After all, I believe that most of the members of this JALT special interest group understand the power of a good story to help our students learn not only the content of a particular course, but to become more motivated and invested in the process of communicating with each other.

I teach in a policy studies department at a private university in the Kansai region of Japan. The university is highly regarded and tends to attract good

students. In particular, the department is known for its rigorous and demanding curriculum. In the first two years of the program, students participate in an intensive English program where they take 12+ hours of English each week, focusing on English for Academic Purposes (EAP). In their remaining years, students can take English-language content-based *zemi* (seminars) and various English-language electives. The goal of the program is to get students to both academic and communicative levels of fluency that would allow them to participate in graduate programs abroad or to work for various national/international agencies and NGOs.

Battlestar Galactica (2003-2009) is used in two elective courses. These classes focus on academic exploration of current issues. Before being eligible to take these classes, students have already taken three to four semesters of courses teaching explicit academic discussion strategies, giving students plenty of opportunities to practice what they have learned. The purpose of these courses is to put them into situations where they are using implicitly, what they have explicitly learned in earlier classes, to discuss social policy issues in a vigorous yet academic manner. Students make verbal arguments, taking a point of view and explaining their reasoning in a rhetorically appropriate manner. There are also periodic vocabulary quizzes and discussion preparation prints that help them prepare for discussions.

The first course, using the 1st season of the drama, looks at issues of policy and philosophy through the perspective of the individual. We explore such topics as artificial intelligence, racism, limits of human suffering, and the strengths/weaknesses of democracy. The course tries to balance persuasive writing and academic discussion in a way that is

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1. 'Serials' are drama relying on sequentially developed, episode-by-episode, continuing plots. Serials follow story arcs spanning entire seasons/series. Serials can be contrasted with 'procedural', or episodic, drama which utilize more stand-alone stories, relying on the setting and characters to provide a sense of continuity.

mutually supportive. The second course uses the 2nd season to look at issues from a sociological perspective, examining social institutions such as the military, religion, government, the media and criminal organizations; the course also focuses on gender roles, institutional loyalty and politics. This course more heavily focuses on academic debate and discussion, however there is a considerable amount of reading. Both classes have three main goals: enhancing academic discussion skills; improving university-level English reading and listening; and the acquisition of academic level vocabulary in context.

What is *"Galactica"*?

Battlestar Galactica is the fictional story about humans living on the other side of the galaxy, fighting for survival against a race of robots called Cylons. Prior to the start of the story, humans had created the Cylons, developing advanced robots with artificially intelligence (AI), to do the unpleasant, difficult and dangerous work of society. Because the robots were sentient, they realized they were being treated as slaves and revolted against their human masters. When the TV series begins, the Cylons destroy some 50 billion people on the human home worlds, leaving only 50,000 human survivors. A small fleet of civilian ships, under protection of the last military warship, the old and recently decommissioned *Galactica*, escape in search of a new home. The Cylons pursue them across the galaxy, in an attempt to destroy humanity once and for all. The show explores the survivors attempt to re-establish human society as they seek to escape destruction at the hands of their own creation.

Why am I using a TV drama in a class for the department of Policy studies? Good fiction allows us to explore political, social and cultural issues in a way that is approachable and engaging. Science fiction, allows writers to use fiction to examine contemporary social, moral and ethical issues in allegory. Issues are often easier to see and debate when they come from fiction. The TV drama functions as a "playground" for students to consider policy issues from a new point of view. *Battlestar Galactica* is well suited for this kind of activity. The show's primary show-

runner2, Ronald Moore, created the show with realism in mind, portraying the show's heroes as being part of a 'flawed' humanity; the show draws inspiration from the tragic events of 9/11 and after (Poniewozik, 2007). Moore wanted the show to address questions like, "What does it mean to be free in a society under attack? What are the limits of that freedom? Who's right? Who's wrong? Are you rooting for the wrong side?" (Hodgman, 2005). *Galactica* is a four season story, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Though I am only able to use the first two seasons in the courses, the story arcs for each season are sufficiently complete that they provide a compelling story, motivating students to work hard during the semester.

Class Activities:

A typical class starts with watching a 40-45 minute episode. At the beginning of the course, we use Japanese subtitles. Depending on the average level of the students, we sometimes switch to using English subtitles half-way through the course – though for some semesters, we have continued using Japanese subtitles all they way through; both versions are made available to students for home viewing when it is a part of their homework. Though some may understandably question using so much Japanese language support, I view this as providing content to the students in the most efficient manner possible; they do more than enough speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English to make up for it. When I first began this course, I was hesitant about dedicating almost half of a 90-minute class period to passive viewing, especially when using Japanese subtitles. Yet, I found that in the immediacy of having viewed an episode in class led to far more passionate discussions and debates in the second half of class. Most of the time, it is worth the 40 minutes to watch an episode together.

The second half of the class is normally filled with one of three types of activities. The first and primary

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2 . 'Show runner' is an industry term for the chief creative director/ producer of any serial or episodic drama on television. For *Galactica*, Ronald Moore and David Eick are the show-runners.

activity is an academic discussion. Sometimes we have a class discussion about issues brought up in that day's episode. Other times, we have a formal graded discussion. Students are broken up into groups of 3-4 students and are tasked with answering a series of questions derived from the last few episodes. Students are allowed to use discussion preparation notes, previously done as homework – which greatly facilitates more in-depth discussions and a higher level of syntax and lexicon. Students are assessed on their ability to use a variety of EAP rhetorical strategies explicitly taught in earlier courses: agreeing/disagreeing, citing from sources, summarizing others' positions, interrupting, helping weaker members in the group, giving strong support for one's argument, and connecting show issues with real-world examples.

Another activity that sometimes fills the second half of the class period is vocabulary. With each episode, students are given a modified script as a PDF file and a list of words that I have chosen for students to study. Words were initially chosen after using Tom Cobb's Complete Lexical Tutor website (http://www.lextutor.ca). Some of the words selected for the episode vocabulary lists come from Coxhead's Academic Word List (1998); some are included because they are often seen in articles in news and policy issue publications such as *Time Magazine* or the *Economist*. Many are words from West's General Service List (1953) but have different usages that normally found – example: 'hit', meaning kill. Students are asked to use the PDF to look up the word and try to guess the meaning from context, using electronic dictionaries afterwards to verify meanings. Four times throughout the semester, they have quizzes testing, primarily, receptive understanding of these vocabulary.

The last common activity for the second half of the class comes from articles published in newspapers and magazines on contemporary issues that tie into themes discussed during the course. Sometimes the articles are used as published, but often-times they are somewhat adapted, either shortened or simplified, for usage in an EFL setting. This helps students tie themes raised within the drama to topics students of policy issues need to be aware of. On several occasions, instructors of other courses within the department have reported to me that students have mentioned the drama when talking about various topics in their classes.

As an example, this last semester students read either, "*Rape is shredding Syria's social fabric*" (Wolfe, 2012), or "*How did rape become a weapon of war?*" (Smith-Spark, 2004). They answered a series of questions about the article they read, then came together with a student who had read the other article. Each student would summarize their article and lead a brief discussion with their partner; then they came together in groups of four to talk about how rape was used as a method of torture and humiliation in the *Galactica* episode, *Pegasus* (Saunders & Rymer, 2005). In the most recent semester, students focused on two main themes during their group sharing. The question of whether or not an artificially intelligent robot can be 'raped' is ultimately a question on the limits of what we call 'human rights' and involves the very definition of sentience. The second theme centered on the question of what it means for the audience when the humans are the ones committing war crimes and the Cylons, the AI robots bent on destroying humanity, are the victims.

One of the strong points of *Galactica* is that the show depicts actions contextually, in morally gray tones – it is up to the viewers to decide the rightness or wrongness of an action. It has been fascinating for me to watch student-initiated explorations of the problematization of notions of 'good guys' and 'bad guys'. Some students have even been able to make comparisons between characters' struggles to redefine what it means to be human on the show and the history of racialist limiting assumptions for definitions of civilization and humanity in the real-world.

Why *Galactica* Works:

I have been using seasons of *Galactica* in the classrooms of high schools and universities in Japan for over eight years. Over those years, I have seen a consistent level of motivation and effort by L2 learners in the courses unmatched in most comparable courses taught using more traditional approaches. I asked a student once why she seemed more enthusiastic

debating issues in the *Galactica* class than I had seen her talking about similar issues in other classes. She replied, "*To talk about politics and stuff is not so fun. We don't have opinion when they make rules or such policies. But Galactica is not real. It is story. [We have as much say as anyone does about it.] Also, talking about the real world topics like racism and war crime and so on, is nervous. It is uncomfortable. But Galactica is not real. We don't need to worry about other's feelings. [No one gets troubled if we insult Cylons].*"[3]

At the university where I am currently teaching *Galactica*-courses, students fill out anonymous evaluations at the end of each semester. The evaluations shows that most students are generally quite enthusiastic about the drama and the discussions that derive from it. Though it is science fiction, *Galactica* has obvious relevance to students today. These are a few examples of their comments:

"I could think, 'What is human?' … it was very useful for me."

"Watching it was very fun and interesting. Discussing about those stories was not easy for me, but I also think I gained knowledge and improved my English skills."

"[What I like most about the class was] exchanging ideas about topics which students do not normally have the opportunities to discuss."

"I could find a new view of thinking through this story."

It may sound ironic, but stories about the end of the world are most effective when they instil feelings of hope in the audience. *Galactica* works because it speaks to the fears and concerns of post 9/11 viewers while instilling hope that students want and need. *Galactica,* "…shifts from the topical to the timeless, raising questions about the nature of humanity as the protagonists are forced to redefine their purpose. Can humankind save itself, not by finishing some quest but by understanding the threats of its own creation? As this brilliant space saga comes to an end, humans are forced to recognize that the big solution is not out in the stars. But it might be in themselves" (Poniewozik, 2009).

Storytelling is a part of our makeup as human beings. Fisher's Narrative Paradigm (1987) argues that people are, in essence, storytellers who formulate a world view made up of a set of stories chosen to create, and recreate, both our individual identities and our shared cultures. Any work of good storytelling can have positive effects on students, allowing them the opportunity come together as a class and explore real-world ideas in the playground that is literary fiction.

I hope that other members of the Literature in Language Teaching special interest group will share their own experiences using high quality film and television drama in classrooms. Great stories, whether part of the traditional Western literary cannon or not, are powerful pedagogical tools. "Stories motivate people towards becoming greater than they are. Stories are how human beings have related to each other, passed down knowledge, skills, and experience" (Bellefeuille, 2013). What other stories are EFL teachers in Japan using? Tell the readers of this journal *your* story.

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3. This conversation was recalled from memory and only written down much later. It may not be an exact quote. Portions in brackets [ ] were spoken in Japanese.

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Some benefits of choosing authentic literature and using online technologies to improve reading ability in EFL learners

Gregg McNabb

Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology

This paper is divided into two sections. The first deals with why we may want to use authentic literature, in particular short stories, in EFL language classes. The second explains how we can take advantage of promising new online technologies such as Spreeder, Moodle and desktop capture software like QuickTime to help students improve their reading ability and promote autonomous learning.

Introduction

Except for the very few among us who are fortunate enough to teach gifted students in the very best universities, our students tend to be those who have had very little exposure to any foreign language literature. Moreover, most of them are very weak readers. Indeed, a perennial problem in many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms is that due to this weakness, it limits what we can offer them. This is not due to a glaring lack of learning ability, but more often than not, simply the case of EFL students never having had enough or proper instruction about how to read efficiently and not having been given the means to practice regularly. As a result, we have to teach such students from scratch. While onerous, in fact this actually represents a tremendous opportunity for us to slowly introduce them to captivating literature and get them hooked on reading. At the same time, now that we are able to integrate new technologies specific to reading, it will help them learn how to read effectively. That is, faster and with improved understanding. With effort and planning we can try to initiate, innovate and enrich students' reading experience by creating a new, blended reading teaching paradigm that incorporates the judicious use of technologies.

The Case for Using Short Stories

No matter whether it is called a *conte*, *cuento*, *kurzgeschichte* or *duanpianxiaoshuo* (短篇小), short stories are universally appreciated. Of course the main appeal of short stories to students is that they are short. Students will likely not be afraid to try to read when they can actually see the entire story on one or two pages. Like a police procedural TV program, for example, they know what to expect: there is a beginning, middle and an end. In most cases, and definitely insofar as the classics are concerned, the authors have paid close attention to every word, so language tends to be precise, and have tried to make their stories entertaining in a variety of ways. There is a lot of semantic and grammatical quality packed into a small space. Because short stories are usually very well crafted, students tend to be motivated to continue reading them to the end in order to find out what happens. For example, in Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," many readers find the precise description of the killer's mounting guilt to be addictive. And in just two pages, in "The Filipino and the Drunkard," Saroyan creates a morality play.

As short stories are read to be enjoyed, especially when self-selected, most students will not merely go through the motions of reading (see Lao & Krashen below), whereas with many textbook passages, they already know that, in spite of sometimes interesting and well-conceived content, the real reasons for reading are vocabulary study, comprehension, grammar analysis, and eventual testing. In other words, they know that reading a short story or other (authentic) material is for pleasure, so they

feel free to engage with the content naturally, safe in the knowledge that not a single short story will be followed up with vocabulary, comprehension or grammar exercises for testing purposes.

Support for the preceding is detailed in Lao and Krashen (2000) where they examined the impact of popular literature study on literacy development in EFL. They reviewed a variety of studies where students were given opportunities to read freely, not only using the instructors' materials. In *all* cases, using literature, especially popular literature, resulted in reading gains and positive self-assessments, especially for students who read self-selected readings along with well-assigned readings that were selected to appeal to students' interests and reading ability, rather than a "one size fits all" textbook. In their study the experimental group that was able to self-select and read freely scored substantially higher than the comparison group that was "enrolled in a typical academic skills development course" (p. 264). In addition, the experimental group showed substantial improvement in reading speed, whereas the comparison group did not. Although this was not a longitudinal study that tracked multiple cohorts, the authors still asserted that "the differences in gains between the two groups is evident . . ." (p. 267). In spite of some unbalance between the two groups, they seemed confident that their results were fair and accurate. Similar to other studies, the students examined by Lao and Krashen reported they had very strong beliefs that reading for pleasure was valuable. Specifically, 87 students in their experimental group replied "Yes" to the question "Are you more interested in pleasure reading after taking this course?" Only four said "No." By contrast, none of the 39 students in the comparison group that were in a traditional academic skills development course using traditional materials believed that reading for pleasure had much value. Thirty-two said "No" and seven replied, "I don't know" (p. 267). Answering the question "Is pleasure reading a better approach to acquiring English than formal instruction?", 85 out of 91 students in the experimental group answered "Yes". Six responded in the negative and only one person didn't know. In the comparison group, the results were reversed: four said "Yes," eight said "No" and 27 replied that they didn't know. In a metaanalyis on the effects of reading for pleasure on language learning Lindsay (2010) found that the conclusions reached by Lao and Krashen in their study are supported by the results of other studies that have been done in this field.

Moving away from empirical research, educators such as Krashen (2000), Erkaya (2005) and Hwang (2005) have anecdotally delineated the value of authentic literature and short stories.

- Authentic literature is valuable for getting a genuine sense of language and culture.
- As per Bloom's taxonomy, the subject matter can foster higher-order critical thinking.
- In the case of classics, students may already have some background knowledge of the story, making reading in English less daunting for them. Some will have read Poe, Maupassant, O'Henry, Hemingway, or Mansfield in Japanese. Myths, fables, fairy tales and detective stories will also be familiar in content and form.
- Short stories are manageable in length and promote a *holistic* view of language. Students are reading the story to find out what happens, whereas when reading a typical textbook passage, a narrow view is the norm because they are dissecting meaning, and quite likely have been explicitly told to do so.
- Literature is seen to have more value, to be more prestigious than reading textbooks, which tend to be artificial, often using caretaker English.
- Short stories are neither examples of extensive reading, nor are they, strictly speaking, intensive reading. Because they have elements of both, they are ideal for vocabulary study and grammar focus, yet are also efficient as catalysts for further reading or perhaps as bridges to extensive reading.
- Short stories can motivate students to discuss and write. For example, I have had regular, long-term success with "The Filipino and the Drunkard" by William Saroyan and "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson. In the case of advanced learners, year after year, they cannot wait to convincingly present their arguments and debate with those who have differing opinions, including me. After

they have done some detailed, sentence-level analysis, some of my students become fascinated with not only the story, but also the impact of subtle (to them) grammar on meaning. In this sense, these stories are successful in stimulating critical thinking about behaviour and grammar. These stories also arouse interest and bring about considerable positive effort among low-intermediate learners who struggle to negotiate meaning because they strongly want to offer an opinion. "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Pit and the Pendulum" and the "Murders in the Rue Morgue" by Poe have all led to discussion, short essays, the exploration of descriptive language and even drama.

The Advantages of Using Technologies to Improve Reading Ability and Accessibility

Having established the validity of using level-appropriate short stories and authentic literature, I will show how available technologies are a boon to instructors who want to take students to the stage where they can independently interact with actual literature. One obstacle, however, is that some educators frequently bristle when the topic of using technology is brought up. It can be a polarizing topic where "claims showing exaggerated 'awe' at a new technology's potential, are frequently matched by exaggerated 'fear'" (Bax, 2011). At my own university, we have a state of the art, custom-designed Moodle system with full training and support available to all instructors. Moodle is a powerful online Learning Management System (LMS) that can be used to complement regular classroom practices. In addition to enabling instructors to create and upload a plethora of different materials and courses individually and together, it lets them organise, observe and measure students' online course performance. Our system is fully compatible with smartphone users. In spite of providing comprehensive training sessions and demonstrating the ways it can complement the traditional "chalk and talk" approach, after 2.5 years, it is only being used by ten professors, six of whom are in the English department. Yet our students are 21st century digital natives (Bibby, 2011; Prensky, 2005),

many of whom expect and appreciate an online or computer-based component in their courses, so it behooves us to embrace technology. Embracing technology may have even more significance in Japan where many institutions need to capitalize on every opportunity to differentiate themselves from their competitors in order to remain viable.

New smartphones and tablets are very smart indeed, as will become clear in the section dealing with setting up speed reading online. In an "Introduction: technology in teaching literature and culture: some reflections," Porter (1999) states that "Technology can give students a greater degree of control over the delivery of their learning: by using technology, students can access information, learning spaces, and other resources at times which suit their lifestyle and their other commitments." She adds that "Technology-based resources can be integrated into a course of study and used to complement classroom contact." Bibby (2011) also explains that students prefer to use their cell phones for online activities.

It is very easy to find many suitable, well-known stories online such as at searchlit.org and www. short-stories.co.uk. Thus, in addition to paper (still preferred by many), making a story accessible by putting it online has never been easier. These days most people have a phone, an iPad or a computer with them most of the time. This is especially true in the case of young people (Bibby, 2011). Therefore it is easy *and likely* that instructors will increase a student's contact time with the L2 by making materials available online, particularly if the materials can be viewed on a smartphone. For sceptics, ample statistics below from weak learners fully substantiate these assertions. Even the very weakest students at my institution regularly access our Moodle site. It should be noted that according to the Japanese education ranking hierarchy, all students at this university are classified as weak. Therefore, even weak, mostly unmotivated students will use online materials.

According to the data from our Moodle server, in January 2012 there were 30,287 hits by 927 students. By January 2013, there were 112,129 hits by almost the same number of students. Students even continued to access the Moodle site in February,

after the semester had finished. In February 2012 there were 3492 hits and in February 2013 there were 5209 hits. Finally, well after the end of semester, by the end of March 2012 there were 169 hits, all of which were in my short story section. As of this writing, on March 3, 2013, the same section has already received 104 hits. Indeed, we have found that after each semester approximately 60 students regularly access and reaccess materials during the semester breaks. As students have become familiar with the site and as our content has expanded and improved, usage has increased. On average, when classes are in session, our site gets approximately 60,000 to 65,000 hits per month, most of which are related to English courses. This seems to suggest that even weak students do not mind using online technology. Our students do not mind reading short stories online. This bodes very well for using certain technologies to improve students' reading ability. In addition, by using a Moodle website for reading short stories, instructors can better understand their students' habits because, when files are uploaded to a Moodle website, extensive data mining is possible.

I have suggested above that some instructors are reluctant to adopt new technologies. This reluctance is usually out of fear that learning new procedures will be too complex or that preparing materials online will be too time consuming. In fact, the technology used to improve students' reading ability is easy to use except for the actual, original set up of a Moodle server, which does require specialist knowledge. While it is advantageous to use Moodle, it is by no means mandatory. In the next section I will explain how to set up an online speed reading system, but the objective does not necessarily have to be speed reading. Using the system to improve reading fluency could be an equally valid purpose.

Setting Up Speed Reading Online

First of all, instructors need to find a suitably interesting, level-appropriate story, such as from *Fifteen Little Stories For English Language Learners* by Gregg McNabb, a collection of low-intermediate, mostly light-hearted stories ranging from about 800 to 1800 words, that focuses on vocabulary

development without letting too many new words obstruct the goal of reading for pleasure. Then they can save the story in Word or another common format for future use. At this point, the instructors can upload it to their website as a stand alone file that students can access any time. Many are already doing this. For instructors who do not have a website, it is extremely easy, free and even enjoyable to create one at Weebly.com. It is totally compatible with smartphones. There is also Weebly for Education, which is also free. In addition, by paying a nominal annual amount, Weebly.com provides features that permit data mining. Even without any website at all, instructors with a Gmail account can upload files to Google docs, which is easy to access.

The next step is to practice speed reading the selected story or reading it for fluency. Spreeder is free online speed reading software. It is extremely easy to use. My students were using it within five minutes. Before introducing students to Spreeder so that they can improve their reading speed, first, instructors need to practice with it. At www.spreeder.com, paste the previously saved story into the window. After "spreed!" has been clicked, the story will appear according to the default reading speed (the default setting is 300 words per minute (wpm)). Spreeder parameters may need to be adjusted based on the complexity and flow of the story. Chunk size can be changed according to students' levels. For example, five-word chunks will be appropriate for one story, but six-word chunks may suit another. 135 wpm might be suitable for Hemingway's "Old Man at the Bridge," but perhaps only 100 wpm would be optimal for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. It is possible to set font size, colour, background, alignment, and window dimensions. There are even several, simple "advanced" settings, such as adding a slight pause at the end of sentences and paragraphs.

Once instructors have learned how to use Spreeder, they will show students what to do. After students have been instructed how to use Spreeder, they should be encouraged to read the story again and again until reading becomes automatic at a particular rate. I have found that reading and rereading individual paragraphs, as opposed to reading the full

story, is preferred by weak readers. Setting targets of reading X times per week at X wpm will put some positive stress on students to strive to attain a goal, but this should be balanced by free reading opportunities ,so that reading does not become reduced to a set of tasks assigned by the instructor. Depending on the students, an element of competition could be introduced by rewarding those who improve their reading speed the most by setting a challenging wpm target. The main objective, however, should first be to improve automaticity in reading.

By using a computer in class, the instructor can follow up on students' progress by having them read in class from a large screen or from monitors. This is good pedagogy in that *the instructor* can set the pace. Reluctant readers will be forced to read in chunks for 2-3 minutes, instead of word by word for 20 minutes. Actually, it is a very positive thing to demonstrate to reluctant readers that they are reading multiple times faster than they do normally and that they are mostly "getting" what the chunks and the story mean. Krashen's testing in Lao and Krashen above and my own experiences in the classroom bear this out.

Since I put all of my comprehension questions on our Moodle site, I can determine how well they have understood a story by looking at the overall Practice Quiz results and can even perform item analysis of individual questions. Because they are Practice Quizzes that can be attempted endlessly for a small percentage of their total grade, students tend to do them without extensive preparation. As a result, their first few attempts tend to reflect their actual understanding of the story. Sometimes these data give me insights into what parts or aspects of a story are problematic and therefore need to be addressed in class.

To this point I have explained how to conduct silent reading and control the pace or let students read on their own using technologies, but where there is mild pressure to read faster.

The last stage is to introduce an oral component. The story file should be printed out in a font size that is easy to read. Next, at Spreeder the story needs to be pasted into the window with the desired settings and then read aloud several times. There

will be hesitations and difficulties, so being able to refer to the printed copy helps to produce a more polished reading. Once the story can be performed smoothly, a desktop capture application needs to be opened to make a YouTube style video of the reading while using Spreeder. Most newer computers have this capability. If not, it is easy to download an application. Procedures will vary slightly according to the operating system on the computer, but with a MacBook Pro with QuickTime 10.0, QuickTime 10.0 must be opened. Then after selecting New Screen Recording from the drop-down File menu, the reading should be practiced several times for 20 to 30 seconds. Next, the file(s) should be played back, evaluated and redone if necessary. Next, the entire story can be read or as much as is appropriate for the students. As described in the preceding section, this file (usually in mp4 format) can be uploaded to a website or to Google docs. Students will be able to read and listen to the story at the wpm rate set by the instructor. Of course they can read it silently, too, by turning down the volume. It is possible and preferable to upload several files with different wpm rates so that students can challenge themselves. If the files are uploaded to a Moodle site, when and how many times each student used each file can be checked. If instructors can succeed in getting students to use Spreeder often, the same as with other forms of speed reading programs, there will be improvement. It is also possible to have students record their own reading and submit it as e-homework.

By making story files available online and introducing Spreeder, at the very minimum it will be easier for students to use their smartphone or computer to read whenever and wherever they want. Most likely, however, a whole new dimension to teaching reading will be added because traditional classroom practices will be reinforced when students are able to read and listen to authentic materials numerous times. When various types of comprehension questions are put online that can be accessed at any time, students will be able to check their understanding. Instead of spending just 90 minutes in a week in classroom reading and study, as has been shown above, students will likely engage

with the materials more often.

Conclusion

There is no need for instructors to eschew online technologies due to their perceived lack of confidence. It has been demonstrated that it is neither difficult nor time consuming to adopt powerful new technologies that enhance students' reading opportunities. Blended learning, that is combining traditional classroom practices with new e-learning technologies, has never been easier. By offering students enjoyable, manageable short stories to read and simultaneously hear via new technologies that they can control according to their own schedules, we are moving forward to create a new paradigm for teaching reading, one that will, hopefully, increase students' interest in reading literature.

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Liberlit 2013
Conference Report

Frances Shiobara

Kwansei Gakuin University, School of Policy Studies

The 4th Liberlit conference was held at Meiji Gakuen University January 15th.

The Liberlit conference has expanded massively in size in 2013, from ten presentations last year to twenty-four this year. This year's theme was 'Only Connect: Teacher, Student, Text.' The aim of this theme was to bring literature back into the classroom in such a way that students could share the teacher's passion for literature. Many of the presentations at this conference were wonderful in the way that they brought literature to students in inventive and original ways. Despite the relatively small size of the conference the quality of the presentations was very high, ranging from science fiction to World Englishes.

The plenary was from Professor Yoshifumi Saito, Graduate School of Education, The University of Tokyo (with one of the most fabulous English accents that I have ever heard!) Professor Saito's presentation was as entertaining as it was informative. He pointed out that the onset of Communicative Language Teaching in the 1970s had encouraged teachers to emphasize oral language over written language, with literature particularly suffering. Saito showed that the language from a textbook can be just as unnatural as any classical literature. His example, taken from a high school textbook, focused on a stilted, highly unnatural conversation between a foreigner and a high school student asking how to get somewhere by train. Saito then went on to show, by use of Jane Eyre (1847), how movies and literature can be used to show students the changing attitudes to a piece of literature. Saito focused on just one short scene when Mr. Rochester's wife is shown to Jane Eyre. In the original novel Mr. Rochester's wife was described as "That purple face, those bloated features." in the movies she gradually looks more and more beautiful. It was fascinating to see this demonstrated through the use of six movies ranging from 1944 to 2011, in the last of which Mr. Rochester's wife looks positively exotic and sexy. This was a clear demonstration of how studying classical literature alongside movies can make texts understandable and interesting for students.

One of the most original and interesting presentations I saw was by Iain Lambert from Kyorin University. In this presentation Lambert showed students short extracts from various literary texts from around the world. These included Shakespeare, Caribbean English, Nigerian English and Glaswegian dialect. The students were asked to guess the chronological order of the texts and where the texts came from. This use of literature encouraged students to guess unknown words from context, as the texts contained many non standard English words, rather than immediately resorting to their dictionaries.

One of my favourite ideas to bring literature alive in the classroom was presented by Simon Bibby from Kwansei Gakuin University. He provided students with assorted texts from differing genres: novels, short stories, philosophical allegories, cinema for his 'Studies of society: dystopian cinema and literature' course. The interesting aspect of his classroom was that it is very student-centred. He explained the 'backward design' of the course: firstly deciding upon course Aims, planning how to Assess, then the final stage of putting Activities in place to enable students to attain the understanding level required to be assessed: an 'AAA' mnemonic. He starts the course by asking students a variety of questions to find out how students feel about modern society. Whilst the questions are fairly simple for students to understand, they may be challenging to answer. He then leads students into a discussion of texts ranging from Plato's 'The Cave' to Terminator. Through this literature he leads students into discussing dystopian societies and the future of current societies. This is

similar to many mainstream textbooks introducing global issues and policy studies.

A recurring question in presentations was, "What is literature?". This conference seemed to show that teachers were flexible in their characterization of literature, that we do not need to stick to a view of literature as being only canonical texts. Literature could be modern, written in non-standard English or written for cinema rather than books. The important thing, which was emphasized by co-host Michael Pronko in his closing remarks, was that we should not put literature on a pedestal. The reason that the works of Charles Dickens have survived is precisely because they are great stories; Shakespeare is in turn tragic and comical, but always entertains his audience. It is this that makes us love literature and why our students would also benefit from being introduced to it.

All in all, the organizers Michael Pronko and Paul Hullah, both of Meiji Gakuin University, should be highly praised. Despite modestly claiming that organization was not their strong point, the conference ran very smoothly. It was a pleasure to be surrounded by other literature lovers. The classrooms were well equipped, it was easy to move from room to room between presentations, and free refreshments were provided. The only complaint I heard from participants was that time limitations necessitated holding four presentations in parallel on the single day, so that a number of appealing presentations were missed.

I would encourage everyone who is teaching literature or interested in teaching literature to visit the new Liberlit website http//www.liberlit.com for details on the presentations, and for information regarding next year's conference.

Journal of Literature in Language Teaching Information

Literature in Language Teaching Journal, the refereed research journal of the Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT) JALT Special Interest Group, invites research articles and research reports on using literature in language classrooms in Japanese and Asian contexts. Submissions from international contexts are accepted if applicable to language teaching in Japan.

Information for Contributors

*All submissions need to conform to *LiLT Journal* Editorial Policy and Guidelines.*

Editorial Policy

The editors encourage submissions in six categories:

1. Full-length articles, detailing research or discussing theoretical issues. Between 2500-3500 words.
2. Interviews with SIG members: about themselves, their ideas and their teaching experiences using literature. Length: flexible, consult with editor.
3. Lesson plans, lesson ideas (similar to JALT The Language Teacher's My Share section). Maximum 800 words.
4. Write-ups by presenters themselves of recent presentations (format somewhat akin to proceedings) and presentation and/or conference reports by attendees at literature-themed events. Length: flexible, consult with editor.
5. Comments on previously published *LiLT Journal* articles (*Talk back).*
6. Book and media reviews (*Reviews*).

Articles should be written for a general audience of language educators; therefore, statistical techniques and specialized terms should be clearly explained.

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of references and reference citations.

Style

The *LiLT Journal* follows the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition. Consult recent copies of JALT Journal or TESOL Quarterly for examples of documentation and references.

Submission procedure

Submit:

1. Contact information on a separate sheet including: (1) full name (2) affiliation and (3) email address.
2. Abstract (no more than 150 words).
3. Author biography (no more than 100 words).

All manuscripts are first reviewed by an editor to ensure they comply with *LiLT Journal* Guidelines. Those considered for publication are subject to blind review by at least two readers, with special attention given to:

1. Relevance for the SIG: submissions should relate to the use of literature in language teaching.
2. Compliance with *LiLT Journal* Editorial Policy.
3. The significance and originality of the submission.

Restrictions

Papers submitted to *LiLT Journal* must not have been previously published, nor should they be under consideration for publication elsewhere. *LiLT Journal* has First World Publication Rights, as defined by International Copyright Conventions, for all manuscripts published. If accepted, the editors reserve the right to edit all copy for length, style, and clarity without prior notification to authors.

Sending in submissions

Please send submissions in these six categories, using APA style for references, or general inquiries to: *<lilt-sig@gmail.com>* with *Journal Submission* in the subject line.

About the Literature in Language Teaching Special Interest Group

Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT) is a Special Interest Group (SIG) within the NPO JALT. We established this group in 2011 to encourage and promote the use of literature within language classes. The group coordinates with other groups to hold events, publishes an annual peer-reviewed Journal and publishes two newsletters per year. Join us!

LiLT SIG Organisational Team

Journal Editorial Board