

# Hamlet to Twilight

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**Hamlet to Twilight:**

**Analysis and Suggestions for Using Literature in EFL Teaching**

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## Summary

“Is literature language? *or* Is language literature?” questions the title of C. J. Brumfit and S. J. Burke’s article, one of the first to discuss the language-based approach to literature in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Although largely rejected as a valid language teaching resource in years preceding 1980s, the number of scholarly discussions on various methods and techniques of implementing literature in EFL teaching syllabi has over the last three decades increased significantly. The late eighties, and especially early nineties, brought about numerous publications by linguists and teachers alike, which began to appreciate literary output as a valuable language resource, emphasizing different approaches to reinstate literature in formal EFL teaching. Consequently, poems, novels and plays went from being disregarded as too complex and impractical, to being suggested as enriching and fulfilling, even necessary elements of English language acquisition.

However, the matter of teaching something that unique, enriching, and enjoyable, yet unpredictable, unchanged and complex, naturally demands a detailed study of the elemental teaching aspects: pedagogical, cultural, methodological and, most importantly, linguistic. To present literature in the English classroom, both theoretical approaches and equally important first-hand, teachers’ experiences have to be considered. Continuing, or rather, expanding the analysis of literature in language teaching, this work aims to further examine significant developments and approaches to introducing literature in EFL teaching, over the period of recent history, by focusing on its practical viewpoint – EFL classroom teaching practice. With the invaluable feedback from teachers of English, this work brings the discussion on the specific level of Croatian education, with the idea that the insights of the context could possibly be applicable in similar world-wide EFL situations. Exploring theoretical approaches, and their practical applications, the work furthermore intends to offer, in its contemporary perspective, a study of both the role and place of literature in EFL teaching today, as well as its benefits on EFL acquisition.

Key words: English as a foreign language (EFL), teaching literature, suggestions and approaches, school

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## 1. Using Literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)<sup>1</sup> Teaching

“So you may ask what is the use of studying the world of imagination where anything is possible and anything can be assumed, where there are no rights or wrongs and all arguments are equally good”.

-- Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination*

“Literature went out of favour in the 80s because it wasn’t perceived as practical, useful or communicative – but this is more of a reflection of the narrow-mindedness of the commentators rather than the usefulness, pleasure, enriching benefits of the glories of a country’s literary output”.

-- Liz and Joan Soars, Personal Interview<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1. Literature in EFL classroom – Historical Development and Reception

One of the first editions of ELT documents<sup>3</sup> entitled “Teaching Literature Overseas: Language-Based Approaches”, aimed to reinstate until then largely neglected literature-based approaches in EFL teaching in the early 1980s. The editor Neil Gilroy Scott explains that “since 1945 language teaching theory has drawn attention to the inadequacies of literature-based methods in promoting the acquisition of language skills” (as cited in Brumfit 1983: 1). Especially in the early stages of language acquisition for foreign learners, “the trend has been to reduce... the literature component at early and intermediate levels and to concentrate on reading, written and spoken skills”. In the preface to the collected papers Scott rejects those arguments, arguing that especially in the overseas institutions (EFL) there had been an increase in the need of guidance for learners, since existing methods of ELT had left them in need of the authentic, communicative, that is “necessary study skills” (as cited in Brumfit 1983: 2).

The collection of language-based approaches in teaching literature<sup>4</sup> was only the first in the line of series of debates in the late 1980s, which aimed at re-approaching literature as a necessary and even essential part of a foreign language and culture methodology – a trend that has been on the rise for the last two decades of the twentieth century up to today. However, reinventing the role of literature in the foreign language teaching, brought about extensive discussions relating to various pedagogical aspects, among other aspects related to teaching a foreign language – when and how to use it. The attempts to explore the issue of the usefulness

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<sup>1</sup> Abb. “English as a Foreign Language”, from now on, simply EFL.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Interview no.1, Appendix II.

<sup>3</sup> A collection of scholarly papers on literature in EFL, publishes by the British Council and OUP.

<sup>4</sup> Topics which explore the linguistic effects of the literature as an EFL teaching resource.

of literature in EFL teaching, with linguists as well as teachers, in late 1970s and 1980s, arose from the simple fact that literature had over the years (preceding the eighties) evidently (and improperly) been neglected as valid exposure to a foreign language's culture and more importantly, its rich and most authentic example of language in context. It is perhaps with this idea that Scott suggests not only reinstating the place of literature in the language syllabus apropos, but furthermore attempts to engage linguists and teachers by laying down the:

(...) long term goal [where] the problem is the rehabilitation and reintegration of literature as an integral part of communicative language programmes not only to minimize the shock of sudden and demanding exposure to primary texts, but also to exploit the high potential of literature for educational enrichment. (as cited in Brumfit 1983: 1)

In the spirit of that long term goal, Carter et. al. (1989: 10) continued the debate along the same methodological lines, where “the main emphasis [of the essay collection] will be on implications for methodology and on classroom practice”. Moreover, the classification of literature as a resource material for language acquisition in EFL classroom practice seemed to have marked a turning point<sup>5</sup> in the value of authentic literary material in EFL (cf. the following chapter).

It is furthermore important to stress what, or who enabled that turning point. In the early years of invoking literature into language teaching, linguists such as H. L. B. Moody, were one of the first to argue (1971: 20) that there should be a clear division between “the twin principles of: 1. literature as experience; 2. literature as language”. This separation has been later affirmed, and widely-followed in subsequent theoretical trend that mostly went with the latter of the two approaches: literature as a resource for language teaching and literature as a product of culture. Even decades later, Maley continued to nurture the underlying methodological distinction, clarifying (1990: 23) that “much of the confusion and controversy surrounding literature in foreign language programmes arises from the failure to keep these two purposes separate in our minds, the study of literature and the use of literature as a resource for language teaching and learning”. What, however, made literature as important as an ELT resource was the idea that, according Moody and many of his contemporaries, “the study of literature is fundamentally a study of language in operation” (1971: 21).

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<sup>5</sup> Turning point from treating literary text as a cultural product, rather than resource, as it had been accepted until recently.

In 1975, linguist Henry Widdowson, easily understood as a pioneer in raising the issues of literary implementation in EFL teaching, was one of the first to discuss the specific didactical and methodological aspects of the literary significance in language teaching. Dispersing illusions about the complexity and impracticality of literature, he had made it clear very early that the main purpose of teaching literature should be:

...not to provide information about the particular pieces of literature in the syllabus but to get the learners to recognize how these particular pieces exemplify more general principles of communication... By asking students to explore the literary language, actually teachers encourage their students to think about the norms of the language use. (Widdowson 1975: 76)

In the same work, Widdowson suggested stylistics as a mode of approaching literature in classrooms, which "... has many obvious benefits to language learners, not the last of which is its concern with the importance of language in literature" (1975:77). Moreover, he refused to dissolve literature and language learning, arguing that "The criteria for [literary] selection are pedagogic rather than aesthetic or historical and have to do with whether the works can be used to develop sensitivity to language in the most effective way" (1975: 75). Diverting the attention away from discussing literature as a product of literary analysis, to treating its material as a process for language acquisition, Widdowson undoubtedly paved a way for new directions of theoretical approaches to literature in the language syllabus, which would then be given more attention with approaches in the 1990s that likewise aimed to bring literature "Down the Pedestal"<sup>6</sup>, into practical week-to-week teaching.

Introducing the enriching literary experience to EFL teachers and learners, most importantly the language-based approach to literature, gained more significant momentum in the late twentieth century. The late eighties and especially the early nineties saw considerable increase in scholarly discussions on the practical methods on using literature in classrooms, which would remain within the frames of common EFL acquisition techniques, with special emphasis on its authentic English language resourcefulness<sup>7</sup>. In addition, there were more determined attempts of bridging the gap between discussing literature in EFL and practically applying it, and the gap between separating teaching literature from teaching language. For example, another collection of ELT papers entitled "Teaching Literature Overseas: Language-Based Approaches" focused specifically on "methodological and concerns the use of literature

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<sup>6</sup> A term coined by Carter and Long (1991) that refers to taking literature (as well as teachers' attitude towards it) down from a pedestal of literary analysis and using it as a teaching resource material, therefore making it highly accessible to learners.

<sup>7</sup> cf. Subsequent chapters.

as a resource for language learning rather than the study of literature” (Carter and Brumfit 1989: 2).

The early nineties reflected this change in the attitude towards literature as a valid resource in EFL classrooms most significantly, especially the teachers and their practical first-hand experiences. Carter and Long, in their invaluable handbook for teachers and trainers, “Teaching Literature”, confidently claimed (1991: 4) “Literature is a legitimate and valuable resource for language teaching”. Arguing that (1991: 2) “The reasons for teaching literature necessarily transcend the particular circumstances, places and contexts in which literature is taught”, they have devised a highly-accessible, three-part model for implementing literature in EFL syllabuses, with a careful regard to methodological and pedagogical aspects – focusing on language-based approaches, which primarily aim to attain English language proficiency (cf. Chapter 1.2) and enjoyment of literature. Outlining the key issues on the role of literature in the context of language teaching, encompassing approaches to authentic literary material in class, offering activities and encouraging the goal of enriching the language through its highest cultural output, Carter and Long have devised a comprehensive support work for teacher’s worldwide and reinstalled literature into its place in EFL teaching.

Although there have been articles that argue against literature in EFL teaching, they are considerably outnumbered by those that highlight its benefits<sup>8</sup>. The recent years have offered further insight into research of teachers’ experience with literature as a resource for every-day EFL teaching, as they have generally understood the relevance of literature for their learners, studying its reception in classrooms worldwide<sup>9</sup>. The long term goal of placing literature in EFL teaching (cf. Scott, as cited in Brumfit 1983: 1), which has been discussed at the beginning of this chapter, seems to have reached its realization to a certain point at least, as more and more ideas, handbooks, and activities suggestions are being published. The authentic literary input is no longer marginalized and its enrichment ignored, as it once was. Still, its relevance and discussion continues as different EFL experiences are being reported regularly. To understand more about the suggested approaches to literature in classrooms suggested in theory, the following chapter explores specific trends and modeled approaches in the most significant theoretical works of the last several decades.

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<sup>8</sup> E.g. Brumfit (1983) Widdowson (1984) highlight the inadequacies. Many resources used in this chapter exemplify the opposites.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Chapter 1.3.



## 1.2. Models and Approaches to Teaching Literature in EFL

Almost every theoretical work, especially guides and activity books for language teachers and trainers, explore different possibilities of using authentic literature practically. Many works also contain general ideas or principles that evolved from their teaching experiences, offering practical advice and activities based on formerly argued theoretic approaches. In order to outline general trends in theory over the last two decades, this chapter analyzes significant theoretical models and approaches to literature as a language resource in EFL, which have evidently influenced practical approaches in EFL classrooms worldwide.

Carter and Walker (1989: 7) have made an important distinction between literature as a language resource material and any other textual teaching material, elaborating that in its authenticity, literature is complex and subtle in ways that cannot be found in other types of material. Besides being highly motivational for learners of a foreign language, literature provides a natural opportunity for discussion and different interpretation to be expressed, which are one of the central aims of CLT; communicative language teaching.

The authenticity and other unique literary benefits have been further summarized by Alan Maley (1989: 13), in one of the first suggestive approaches to literature in EFL, where he explains wherein the literature's authenticity lies: universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy, suggestive power, ambiguity. He suggests treating literature as a resource for language development, with an aim to "ensure students interact with the text and with each other in ways which promote language learning" (1989: 11). Similarly, rather than being burdened by exhaustingly studying some literary work through some established literary procedure, Maley suggests (1989: 13) teachers be free to use literary texts in many ways which suit our purposes which, in the long run more likely to meet with success among EFL/ESL students, as they will certainly develop an understanding of how literature functions as a by-product of their interactive engagement with the texts<sup>10</sup>.

In another attempt to define steps and models for literature-based language acquisition, in "Literature in the Language Classroom. A resource book of ideas and activities", Collie and Slater tried to "put fresh momentum into teaching of literature, to stimulate students to read and to encourage their response" (1987: 7). Their approach is marked by essential stages in introducing literary material: the importance of maintaining interest through interesting topics and learner-centered activities (role play, discussions, etc), supplementing the printed text of

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<sup>10</sup> He also suggests a three-stage classroom literature unit, consisting of Framing, Focusing and Diverging, cf. Maley (1989: 14)

the work, encouraging group and pair work (that stimulates participation and engagement), using the target language, integrating language and literature<sup>11</sup> and encouraging personal responses to each work (confidence, critical thinking, etc)<sup>12</sup>.

Certainly one of the most significant bases to the language-based approach to using literature is Carter and Long's detailed guide, "Teaching Literature". Distinguishing between the study of literature and the use of literature as a resource, they suggest (1991: 2-5) three mutually connected models paying heed to pedagogic practices for learners of language: The cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model. The cultural model "enables students to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own in time and space and to come to perceive... artistic form within the heritage the literature of such cultures endows" (*ibid.*). The most relevant approach for their work, the language model (normally associated with language-approaches) starts from the premise that language is literary medium, and that literature is made of language. The model therefore develops the approach to literature as a limitless resource for linguistic development. The third, personal growth model is closely connected to the language model in terms of methodology, aiming to "motivate the student to read by relating the themes and topics... to his or her own experience". Carter and Long resolutely conclude in the introduction with the claim that "Literature is a legitimate and valuable resource for language teaching" (1991: 5), before they support their thesis with practical activities and language-based approaches to literature in EFL, which serve the main goal in EFL: increasing English language proficiency.

Duff and Maley support (1990: 23) Carter and Long's modeled approach, furthermore connecting its units with three mandatory classroom elements: methodological, linguistic, and motivational. The linguistic element supports the idea that a range of authentic literary material will expose learners a variety of types and difficulties of English language, in its true form. Methodologically speaking, literary discourse sensitizes readers to the processes of reading, e.g. the use of schema, strategies for intensive and extensive reading, and other. Finally, teachers should always be attentive to the motivational factors to their learners, where the criteria for literary choice play the most important role.

In the latest in the survey of guides for trainers and teachers, Gillian Lazar follows suit. She underlines the importance of the language-based approach (1993: 14), where among other language work; students "are encouraged to draw on their knowledge on familiar grammatical, lexical, or discoursal categories" (*ibid.*). According to her, literature serves

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<sup>11</sup> cf. Moody (1971), Maley (1989) among others.

<sup>12</sup> Also, they offer a range of activities based on those aims and approaches.

multiple purposes: it is used by students acquire English by focusing on course content, for reading and possibly translating; and finally, for personal enrichment, which aims to make students “more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English, and hence aids [more effective] acquisition” (Lazar 1993: 15). Her conclusions echo the underlying motives of some other discussions, stating that “If we wish to use literature as a resource, then we may not teach ‘literary competence’ but it is still possible that our students will begin to acquire it through their exposure to literary texts” (Lazar 1993: 14).

Evidently, over the past several decades there have been extensive works of theory, resource books and handbooks for English teachers, arguing in favor of the use of literature as not just valid, but necessary resource in EFL teaching. Amidst the different editions and publications, almost every author, linguist and teacher, supports a model-based system of using literature in EFL teaching, which generally outlines the language-based approach to authentic texts as most important aspect of teaching literature in the EFL context. All the theoretic suggestions have the essential and primary aim of using literature in an EFL classroom in common – aiding English proficiency while raising motivation and enabling personal growth and enjoyment of a foreign language’s culture and language<sup>13</sup>. After summarizing the significant suggestions from the last few decades, and before moving on to the research, it is only natural to try to look at the other, just as important, side of the approach – the practical experiences and feedback by both teachers’ and students of EFL, who have had a chance to test the theoretic models and approaches in the natural surrounding.

### **1.3. Teaching Literature in EFL: World Wide Experiences**

As shown in previous chapters, a considerable amount of scholarly debates discussing pros and cons, practical testing of literature implementation, are being regularly published. Their width lies mostly within the theoretical suggestions, yet rarely include practical research of the current state in the EFL classrooms<sup>14</sup>. The research in the field of literature in EFL teaching generally lacks genuine response from worldwide EFL classrooms, which would reflect the theoretical suggestions of implementing literature in every week English language teaching.

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<sup>13</sup> cf. Appendix II, where EFL textbook authors and editors highlight the importance of literature teaching.

<sup>14</sup> At least from the researched material relevant for this work: faculty library material, academic databases (Cambridge Journals, JSTOR, Project MUSE, and others)

One of such few examples is found in a country similar to Croatia as far as EFL teaching is concerned<sup>15</sup>. In “Literature in the EFL class: A study of goal-achievement incongruence”, published in Oxford’s *ELT Journal*, Akyel and Yalçin (1989) undertook a survey in several Turkish schools with an aim of applying some general literature-teaching strategies in EFL countries like Turkey. The two-part research, conducted among both teachers and learners, has shown that there is indeed a significant value of literary resource material. The authors summarize (Akyel and Yalçin 1989: 175) the main teachers’ objectives and experiences with literature as achieving an educational and cultural goal. However, they outline one significant point, which is that teachers do not mention the objective of developing language competence, which they justify as either the fact that the language development has been completed or will automatically be a product of teaching literature.

Moreover, the results of their survey demonstrated a link between students’ language proficiency and their attitudes towards literature, as they show that students with higher proficiency enjoyed classics of English and American literature, while more modest students complained of their complexity, wishing to “read more books that have themes related to youth, friendship, and changing social values” (1989: 176). However, both the advanced and average students reported that their oral abilities (including pronunciation and fluency) and, interestingly, self-confidence in the use of English seemed to improve most in relation to play reading and acting activities.

The most interesting conclusion however, comes from the fact that students, whose needs have been surveyed in greater depth, claimed “They wanted *language skills to be more interlocked with the literary programme*, and classwork to involve more discussion and debate type of activities on the meaning and interpretations of literary texts” (Akyel and Yalçin 1989: 177, emphasis added). Based on the analyzed feedback from teachers and learners, the researchers conclude (1989: 178) that the teaching of literature in EFL should, basically, balance a well-prepared selection of classroom texts and activities, which takes in consideration students’ linguistic levels, choice of literary genres and most importantly, the interest of learners. The research shows their students found poetry boring and useless, drama very beneficial for their oral skills, while they consider novels important for increasing reading comprehension and, relatively less, written skills. The emphasis is put on the students’ needs and choice of texts, as authors claim,

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<sup>15</sup> E.g. Class periods per week.

The students' negative attitude to most of the texts... confirms the view that 'a text which is extremely difficult on either a linguistic or cultural level will have few benefits' (Vincent and Carter, 1986: 214), and that learners are most motivated, *most open to language input*, when their emotions, feelings, and attitudes are most engaged. (Akyel and Yalçin 1989: 178, emphasis added)

Akyel and Yalçin (1989: 178) conclude their research by stating that there should be a major attempt by teachers to develop techniques appropriate to their students' programme of literary and non-literary studies, as teachers too often impose their own views on a literary piece. The authors complain that students do not benefit linguistically that much because of it, not from "the few language-based activities which are aimed at contextualizing their knowledge of language patterns through use of the literary text itself as the model" (*ibid.*). They claim that this can be corrected through two significant and carefully devised steps: activating students' background knowledge of the content area of the text, and improving students' awareness of the linguistic and rhetorical structure of the text. Finally, literature needs to be implemented simultaneously with language acquisition, but only if literature is a reflection of students' needs and if the activities regarding it are learner-oriented, in terms of interest and difficulty.

A recent survey conducted by Tseng (2010)<sup>16</sup> investigated teachers' and students' perceptions of literature in an EFL classroom of a Taiwanese high school. After researching the ways of implementing a pure literature syllabus in an EFL class and reports on the students' attitude towards literature in general, Tseng concludes (2010: 17):

...Most of the students like the presented novels most, followed by plays, short stories, and then poems. ... About half of the students like to read literary works and also like to be introduced to literature. Students like to read contemporary literature rather than classic literature, and such works as movie novels, realistic fiction, fantasies, and mysteries are their favorites.

The author moreover emphasizes that motivational factor, i.e. the need of getting to know your students and their preferences in the area of literature since "only when students get immersed in their favorite texts are they likely to receive the potential linguistic, personal, and cultural benefits that literature teaching claims to provide, and this is also the *ultimate purpose of using literature in EFL language classes*" (2010: 18; emphasis added).

Further relevant results of the research include didactical implications of presenting literary material. The author explored the increasingly popular concept of computer-assisted

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<sup>16</sup> cf. Tseng (2010) for extensive research methods and other intriguing results.

literature teaching (CALT) in preparing and presenting literature, claiming that there was a positive feedback from the students<sup>17</sup>. Challenging the myth of teachers as literary experts, Tseng argues that due to the vast online resource of literary material, teachers “especially those non-literature majors, should not avoid or be afraid of using literary texts in their classes” (2010: 19). Even for teachers who have not had extensive literature-experiences and are uncertain with it, “there is low literature threshold, if any, for teachers to cross before they can teach literature” (*ibid.*).

Another survey, in several EFL classes of international schools in Bangkok, shows that “Both the teachers (37%) and students (68%) believed that literature was an asset to be used as the language teaching resource” (Tasneen 2010: 12). The survey demonstrates in what manner the experience of dealing with various literary pieces in classrooms was interesting for teachers as well as students. More than two thirds of the teachers claimed that the linguistic level of the text and sometimes the cultural unfamiliarity hindered their comprehension of the texts, which the author justifies through their dislocation from the target country. The students, on the other hand, claimed that they liked their teachers to focus on activities that would allow them discuss the literary texts in groups or pairs, but they still depended a lot on their teacher for guidance and instruction in order to understand the literary texts read in their language classes. The overall findings of the study argue (Tasneen 2010: 25) that literature in EFL: offers good resource for learning/teaching vocabulary, improves all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, is interesting for group work, offers a doorway to other cultures, its language level is sometimes too high, the texts sometimes too long and boring, the resources are sometimes lacking.

From this overview of teachers’ experiences<sup>18</sup>, there are certain conclusions to be drawn, which seem to correspond to the general principles of EFL literature teaching. EFL teachers and especially learners are quite interested in engaging with literary texts in their common EFL classroom work, as their interest in the language and motivation seem to increase. Teachers generally seem to employ a language-based approach to literature, with the aim of developing all the four skills in their learners, which simultaneously produces a desired side-effect: cultural enrichment and personal enjoyment<sup>19</sup>. There are, certainly, disadvantages to overcome in specific circumstances (E.g. text choice, levels, methodology, etc.), which make the process demanding and delicate, in providing targeted results. Yet most importantly,

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<sup>17</sup> The computer-based literary teaching (CALT) have been explored by other authors, cf. Papayianni (2007).

<sup>18</sup> As well as some other which illustrate similar qualities, cf. Hwang, Embi (2007), Lazar (1993).

<sup>19</sup> cf. Chapter 1.2. and different approaches and models arguing for similar goals, e.g. Carter and Long.

the learners, who are at the centre of these activities, have to be motivated and interested in the literary texts, in order to experience desired – and arguably, more effective – language, culture and personal goals.

The first, theoretical part of the work has tried to explore the historical development of the role of authentic literature in EFL teaching, examining main theoretical approaches developed over the recent history, which have over the years influenced the practical EFL classroom worldwide. Furthermore, an insight into specific practical experience, however limited, provided a unique response to the theoretical implications in literary teaching, both from the teachers' and learners' perspective. With an aim of exploring that relevant practical experience and further investigating the role of literature in EFL classrooms today, the next part of this work offers survey of the experience of the teachers of English language in primary and secondary formal education in Croatia.

## 2. A Study of the Role of Literature in EFL Classrooms – The Croatian Case

“I once actually used Shakespeare's balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* (unabridged!) with a group of six graders, and believe it or not, it worked up a treat! They loved it, and without any prompting from me, they acted it out! I was in teacher heaven! (...) It was definitely one of the best teaching moments in my 20-year career”.

-- T2/C1<sup>20</sup>

The continuous discussion of literature as a resource of English language teaching today naturally demands a research in the area of practical EFL teaching in formal education. As previous chapters have illustrated, teaching approaches and suggestions for implementing literature in the English language syllabus gain more significant and more specific relevance once they have been tested in the practical English classroom. Naturally, the experiences of literature in EFL teaching may differ between different cultures, continents, or even schools within countries. With that in mind, this study explores the preference of teachers of English in Croatian primary and secondary education. Added to teachers' views, the second part of the research examines the presence of authentic literary material in mandatory EFL teaching material: EFL textbooks used in primary and secondary schools.

### 2.1. Aim(s)

The two main parts (aims) of this research therefore include:

- a) A specific practical reconstruction of the theoretical aspects of using literature to improve the learners' English language proficiency (EFL) in formal education, and
- b) A study of the availability of authentic literature in most commonly used elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate EFL textbooks.

Of all the linguists and theoreticians (as seen in previous chapters) have suggested main methodological, literary and didactic suggestions for implementing (or not) authentic literary works in the EFL teaching<sup>21</sup>, none of them, even if they have exemplified their approaches in authentic surrounding, have not taught in Croatian schools. The teachers' perspective to literature in EFL countries, as seen in chapter 1.3., serves as a unique reexamination of the literary trends and theoretical approaches to using literary resources in language teaching. Besides enabling a direct confirmation the teaching approaches and suggestions, the teachers'

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<sup>20</sup> The teachers from the research (T1, T2 ...) and their comments (C1...2), will be numbered for easier reference (e.g. T1/C1).

<sup>21</sup> cf. Chapters 1.2 and 1.3.



perspectives furthermore offer an overview of Croatian example of placing literature in EFL classroom nowadays. Although, presumably, most of the methodological aspects argued in world-wide contexts can and will apply to the this study as well, it is still essential to put theory and practice back to back, by conducting a detailed survey among teachers of English language, who find themselves at the heart of issue. The research will provide us with important feedback and continuous debate on literature in EFL classrooms.

The second part of the research, which is an analysis of the most commonly used EFL textbooks in Croatian schools, examines, among other things, the availability of authentic literature in the mandatory EFL teaching material, as well as general authors' and editors' indirect view of literature as a resource for EFL teaching. More importantly, the EFL textbook analysis examines more complex classroom elements – learner level, teaching program, and resource disposal – which cover important methodological ground, specific to formal educational system.

Consequently, framing some of the main theoretical approaches discussed in previous chapters, with the results of this research, enables a study of what general change, if any, literature as in EFL teaching has changed over the period of recent history. The general research questions are as follows:

Analysis part:

- Majority: What is the percentage of teachers that have used authentic literary material in their language teaching? At which level of studies?
- Purpose: What are the most common (and the least) reasons for (not) teaching literature to students of EFL?
- Selection: Which literary genre form is used more frequently, in what form and length (prose, verse, drama, paragraph, chapter, etc.)?
- Responses: How was literature received in a language classroom, both by students and teachers?
- Efficiency: Was the literary input successful, in what way? Did it help improve the language proficiency?
- Examples: What are some authentic examples that teacher's have successfully used in their teaching (authors, titles)?
- Accessibility: How much literature is available in the mandatory resource material, and what is its main purpose (tasks, methodology, and criteria)?

Suggestions:

- Which aspects of language acquisition would literature-oriented classroom improve?
- What kind of literary input in EFL would (and if it would) aid learners' English language proficiency?

## 2.2. Instrument

In order to conduct the research, an online and anonymous questionnaire was designed for teachers of English language in Croatian schools. Structurally, it was divided into three main sections. The introduction was made to provide a general demographic profile of the participants: their length of their English language teaching experience, levels of teaching, and their attitude towards literature in general. Based on the final question in the section – Have you ever presented any kind of authentic literary work in your English language teaching – participants were redirected to the second part of the questionnaire, in which statements were specifically constructed for teachers who have, and for those and have not used literature. Essentially, participants were asked to further elaborate on their experiences on using, i.e. not using literature in their ELT. The final, suggestive part, asked the participants to offer suggestions and opinions based on the teaching experience and the issue of literature as a teaching resource, independently of their experience with literature teaching.

In terms of responses, the participants were asked to rank a statement that best corresponds to their experience, on the one of the two possible scales – frequency and agreement – both ranging from values 1 to 4 (*Frequency*: 1-Never, 2- Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often; *Agreement*: 1- I completely disagree, 2-I disagree, 3-I agree, 4- I wholeheartedly agree). The questionnaire also offered a few free forms, where participants could note specific experiences, e.g. authors, titles, students' responses, as well as general suggestions regarding literature, at the end of the questionnaire<sup>22</sup>. The statements covered a range of topics, from teachers' personal experience with using authentic literary pieces, methodological and pedagogical aspects they paid attention to (purpose, form, type, length, etc.), pros and cons of literature as teaching material (E.g. reading, listening, and intercultural competence, etc.), to students' responses, examples of authors and/or texts, and others (cf. Appendix I).

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<sup>22</sup> As some teachers have done, cf. Chapter 2.4.4.

### 2.3. Sample and Procedure

The teachers of EFL, working in elementary schools and high schools all over Croatia, most of who are members of the Croatian Association of Teachers of English<sup>23</sup>, were invited to participate in the research. Using Google's Documents Form tool, the online questionnaire made the access and insight much more convenient and efficient. Therefore, the teachers were able to participate in the research anonymously, and from any virtual place.

To examine literary presence in EFL textbooks, the second part of the research analyzed over thirty different editions of most commonly used EFL textbooks in Croatian primary and secondary education<sup>24</sup>. The analysis distinguished between different levels, based on the internationally accepted division of language acquisition levels: elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate, and advanced (cf. Chapter 2.4.5).

Table 1 refers to the first part of the questionnaire – the general profiles of the participants. More than half of the participants were high school teachers, with twenty-six per cent of them teaching in elementary schools. Nearly sixty-five percent of the participants claimed they had been teaching English for more than ten years, eighteen percent between five and ten years, and thirteen percent of them have been teaching English in Croatian schools between one and five years (cf. Table 1).

## 2.4. Results

### 2.4.1. Questionnaire

The initial response, most relevant to the research, showed that almost two thirds (74 percent) of the teacher-participants claimed that they indeed have used authentic literature during their EFL teaching (cf. Table 1).

**Table 1** Questionnaire participants' profiles

<b>Individual profiles (30 participants in total)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Years in English language teaching</b>	
Less than a year	4
Between 1 and 5 years	14
Between 5 and 10 years	17
More than 10 years	<b>65</b>

<sup>23</sup> Croat. "HUPE – Hrvatsko udruženje profesora engleskog jezika" (<http://www.hupe.hr/>).

<sup>24</sup> EFL textbooks that have been approved for use in schools, by the Croatian Ministry of Education. For the full list of analyzed textbooks, cf. Bibliography

<b>Currently teaching English</b>	
Elementary	26
Secondary	<b>57</b>
Both	17
<b>Enjoying literature studies at the university</b>	
Not at all	4
Somewhat	9
At times	40
Very much	<b>43</b>
<b>Presented literature in their EFL class</b>	
Yes	<b>74</b>
No	26

#### 2.4.1.1. Response Analysis of the Teachers That Have Used Literature

The second part of the questionnaire intended for participants who *have* used literature in their EFL classes asked them to rank their purposes and preferences, e.g. for reading comprehension, listening, grammar, intercultural competence, and so on. On average, as the Table 2 illustrates, the use of literary material in class was most commonly used to raise awareness and interest in the English language and culture (all three  $M= 3.625$ ): Developing critical thinking skills, encouraging readings English literature and Arousing interest in the English language. In terms of language development, still dominant are the purposes such as reading skills and communication, and vocabulary and writing.

**Table 2** The average value (Mean) and standard deviation (Std. Dev.) for preferences and genres of literature in EFL classrooms

<b>Statements<sup>25</sup></b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
<b>Purposes of literature in class</b>		
1. Developing critical thinking skills	<b>3.625</b>	0.500
2. Encouraging reading English literature	<b>3.625</b>	0.719
3. Arousing interest in the English language	<b>3.625</b>	0.619
4. Developing intercultural competence	3.313	0.793
5. Reading comprehension	3.294	0.588
6. Developing communicative skills	3.118	1.111
7. Teaching vocabulary	3.059	0.659
8. Develop writing skills	3.059	0.748
9. Listening comprehension	2.412	0.939
10. Teaching pronunciation	2.063	0.998
11. Teaching grammar	2.059	1.029

<sup>25</sup> Statements have been numbered for easier reference. E.g. S20/Table 2. The ones in bold contain the highest mean score.

12. Teaching spelling	1.824	0.883
<b>Literary genres used</b>		
13. Prose	<b>3.235</b>	0.562
14. Plays	2.588	0.712
15. Poetry	2.294	0.588
<b>Length preferred</b>		
16. Shorter extract	<b>3.294</b>	0.588
17. Abridged version of a work	<b>3.176</b>	0.883
18. Complete unabridged work	2.588	0.795
19. Entire chapter or equivalent	2.353	0.862
<b>Additional uses of literature</b>		
20. Using audio books	1.941	0.827
21. Giving homework reading assignments	2.882	1.054
22. Evaluating students' reading comprehension	2.941	0.556

The analyses of teachers' preference in the choice of text-type and text-form shows a significant dominance of prose (M=3.235) over poetry (M=2.294) or plays (M=2.588), as well as the greater use of shorter extracts or abridged versions, over complete works (cf. S16-19/Table 2). Audio versions of literary extracts (M=1.941), homework reading assignments (M=2.882) and comprehension evaluations (M=2.941) have rarely been employed.

#### 2.4.1.2. Response Analysis of the Teachers That Have Not Used Literature

A similar analysis has been conducted of the responses given by the teachers who *have not* used literature in their English language teaching, in order understand their main reasons. In these teachers' experience, the main obstacle in presenting authentic literature to learners was their inappropriate level of learning English (cf. S23/Table 3).

**Table 3** Reasons teachers have not used literature in their ELT

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Stand. Dev.</b>
23. Inappropriate learner level	<b>3.667</b>	0.516
24. Lack of purpose in the teaching program	<b>3.167</b>	0.753
25. Lack of students' interest	2.833	1.169
26. Lack of students' motivation	2.833	1.169
27. Lack of resource material	2.833	1.329
28. Curriculum limitations	2.833	1.169
29. Lack of time (teacher, personal)	2.500	1.378
30. Lack of time (lesson)	2.333	1.506
31. Lack of teacher's interest	2.167	1.329

On average, the most frequent reasons for not implementing literature in their teaching relates to the teachers' view that it is inappropriate for their learners, and that literature has little use in the English language teaching program (cf. S23-24/Table 3). On the other side of the scale, the lack of motivation or interest, resource material, and curriculum limitations seem to have rarely been seen as obstacles.

#### 2.4.1.3. Teachers' Views on Their Learners' Response to Literature

In an attempt to obtain authentic feedback on some desired effects literature had had on the learners in EFL classrooms, the participants were asked to describe their learners' general responses to such literature-oriented classes, in four basic reactions (cf. S32-25/Table 4), with an option of adding comments. According to their teachers, learners generally seem to have been motivated, and excited about the employment of literary pieces (cf. Table 4), while they were rarely bored or indifferent.

**Table 4** Teachers descriptions of their students' reactions to literature<sup>26</sup>

<b>Students' reactions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Stand. Dev.</b>
<b>My students were:</b>		
32. Motivated	<b>3.412</b>	0.618
33. Excited	<b>3.235</b>	0.562
34. Bored	2.529	0.717
35. Indifferent	2.000	0.791

Two teachers supported the average results with additional comments. One teacher claimed that introducing literature to their learners made them "simply interested in the subject matter itself and happy owing to a change in the routine" (T4/C1). Likewise, only more enthusiastically, Teacher 1 (C2) claims "they [students] just loved it"!

#### 2.4.1.4. Suggestions

The third and final section of the questionnaire aimed to investigate the teachers' opinions and suggestions on the potential enriching use of literature in everyday EFL teaching practice. Table 5 offers an overview of those statements, where some are bolded for emphasis and relevance (e.g. importance of literature, level, choice, textbook offer and other).

<sup>26</sup> cf. chapter 2.4.1.4 for additional teachers' experiences and comments.

**Table 5** The average score and standard deviation on general ideas on using literature in EFL teaching (Scale applied: Agreement). Certain statements are bolded for emphasis.

Statements	Mean	S. D.
<b>36. Literature is important in English language acquisition.</b>	<b>3.50</b>	0.67
<b>37. Both English and American literary works should be used.</b>	<b>3.73</b>	0.55
<b>38. More contemporary English and American literary works should be used.</b>	<b>3.32</b>	0.65
<b>39. ELT resource materials in schools should offer authentic literary works.</b>	<b>3.41</b>	0.67
40. The lack of time is the main reason why teachers generally do not use literature in class.	3.10	0.83
41. The lack of students' interest is the main reason why teachers do not use literature in class.	2.55	0.91
42. The teacher's lack of interest and motivation are the main reasons why they do not use literature in class.	2.45	0.86
43. Literature should be present in English teaching only at advanced levels (E. g. high school).	2.05	0.86
<b>44. Literature should be a means of teaching English, even in earliest stages (E. g. fairy tales, fables, etc.).</b>	<b>3.14</b>	0.64
45. The formal educational curriculum hinders the use of English literature in ELT.	2.77	0.61
46. Students are more likely to enjoy reading more popular, contemporary works (E.g. Stephenie Meyer's <i>Twilight</i> ).	3.14	0.64
<b>47. Literature in English classrooms improves / would improve students' English proficiency.</b>	<b>3.57</b>	0.51
48. Electronic resources (Internet, online communication) are likely to increase the usage of literature in ELT.	3.05	0.67
49. Interactive media (Computers, Smart Board, etc.) are likely to stimulate students' interest in literature in class.	3.05	0.50

At the end of the questionnaire, where participants could note unique experiences or general attitudes, several teachers decided to enrich their feedback with valuable comments. Observing their students' interest and motivation, one teacher noted his or her positive experience with their learners':

I've noticed students love Poe, so besides reading his works, we watched a documentary about his life and read two works - one of them is poem (The poem some of them memorized by heart and performed so I gave them grades). On the other hand, they find Shakespeare extremely boring, despite watching the movie 'Shakespeare in Love'. (T2/C2)

In terms of the appropriate guidance and effort, which encompasses teachers' interest in promoting literature with EFL learners, Teacher 4 concludes that

The children of today are reluctant readers, but a gentle nudge in the right direction usually does the trick. If, however, you yourself are not an avid reader and truly fond of literature, you won't really be able to pull it off. (T4/C1)

Even though motivation and interest are essential, Teacher 6 still stresses out that “appropriate methods used in the classroom are very important for making your sts [students] interested in literature (as any other area you want to teach)” (T6/C1). Learners have to be an important element in deciding what to read, as Teacher 1 suggests, as well as extending the role and activities of literature, even outside of the EFL classroom:

In my opinion, we should encourage our students to do some homereading also by letting them choose the kind of thing they want to write their individual (ised) reports on. They can also do it as pair / group work if they are friends, neighbors, together on facebook, like blogging ... It is good to encourage them to read both prose and poetry. They can also write mini-sagas and / or poetry of their own. (T1/C2)

Same teacher raises the issue on introducing learners to plagiarism and other issues related to literary world: “One of the dangers is plagiarism and pupils should be warned about it (recent experience: Wikipedia report on Notting Hill by Richard Curtis sent to the teacher as email attachment;...” (T1/C3).

Finally, experience with literature in the relatively early stages of language acquisition offers a motivating insight into an enthusiastic EFL classroom atmosphere:

I once actually used Shakespeare's balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet (unabridged!) with a group of six graders, and believe it or not, it worked up a treat! They loved it, and without any prompting from me, they acted it out! I was in teacher heaven! (...) It was definitely one of the best teaching moments in my 20-year career. (T1/C1)

- **Authors and Titles**

In addition to classroom experiences, several teachers also supplied exact titles and authors of literary works they used in their ELT. The list of titles they have discussed with their learners (cf. Table 6) ranges from classics (“Hamlet”) to contemporary works (*The Sun Also Rises*), from prose to poetry, and even non-fiction. In terms of length and form, most of the works are the adapted or abridged versions.



**Table 6** Authors, titles and comments teachers provided from their experience

Source <sup>27</sup>	Authors and Titles	Summary/comments
T1/C3	<i>'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'</i> (R. L. B. Stevenson); <i>"Reading for Study and Pleasure"</i> (Mia Pervan Plavec), Poetry by William Wordsworth <i>"The Daffodils"</i> ; Robert Frost; <i>"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"</i> , Shakespeare;	Shorter prose works, and Adapted versions.
T2/C3	Anna Sewell, <i>'Black Beauty'</i> , O. Henry, <i>'The Last Leaf'</i> , , e. g. G. K. Chesterton, A. Christie; Bill Gates, <i>'Business @the Speed of Thought (recommended reading)'</i> , <i>'Ethan Frome'</i> , Edith Wharton; <i>'The Last Sherlock Holmes Story'</i> , Michael Dibdin, <i>'Who Sir? Me, Sir'</i> , K. M. Peyton, <i>'Great Crimes'</i> , John Escott, <i>'A Morbid Taste for Bones'</i> , Ellis Peters, <i>'Frankenstein'</i> by Mary Shelley, <i>'The Third Man'</i> , Graham Greene, Thomas Edison, <i>'Shaggy Dog'</i> , Kurt Vonnegut, <i>'A Horse and Two Goats'</i> , R.K. Narayan	"Stories of Detection and Mystery", Classics and contemporary works of fiction, generally prose
T3/C1	E.A. Poe, J. K. Rowling, Agatha Christie, Somerset Maugham, <i>Sherlock Holmes</i> , etc.	American and English classics
T4/C2	Wordsworth's <i>'Daffodils'</i> ; Dr Seuss' <i>'Green Eggs and Ham'</i> , <i>'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'</i> , <i>'A Christmas Carol (Dickens)'</i> , Harry Potter, Swift: <i>'Gulliver's Travels'</i> , Defoe: <i>'Robinson Crusoe'</i> ; Roald Dahl; E. A. Poe, <i>'Tales of Mystery and Imagination'</i> , Oscar Wilde, <i>'The Picture of Dorian Gray'</i> , Roald Dahl, <i>'The Wonderful History of Henry Sugar'</i> , <i>'The Hitchhiker'</i> , Mary Shelley <i>'Frankenstein'</i> , Bill Gates – biography, <i>'Forrest Gump'</i> , <i>'Skyjack'</i> , <i>'Rabbit-proof Fence'</i> .	"fairy tales and children's stories, various short stories and legends"; classics and modern works, prose, poetry
T5/C1	E. A. Poe <i>'The Tell-Tale Heart'</i> , <i>'Annabel Lee'</i> , E. Hemingway <i>'The Sun also Rises'</i> .	"Victorian authors, Shakespeare, Agatha Christie, Mark Twain, Hemingway, Contemporary authors and their best-sellers;"
T6/C2	Shakespeare, Dickens, Shirley Jackson, William Wordsworth, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle..., Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet (abridged version)</i> , R. L. Stevenson's <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (extract)</i> , Che Guevara's <i>Motorcycle Diaries (extracts)</i> .	"Extracts and abridged versions"

#### 2.4.2. Textbook Analysis

The second part of the research looks at the material that is most directly available to teachers their foreign language classrooms – EFL textbooks. The analysis has been conducted in search of authentic literary material in over thirty different EFL textbook editions, used at some point in EFL teaching in Croatian schools. To clarify the specificities of EFL teaching in Croatia, it should be noted how the different levels of editions are used. During the elementary education (grades 1-8), the editions are commonly numbered with the reference to the year of learning English (e.g. "Dip In 6" refers to sixth year of learning English, i.e. six-graders<sup>28</sup>). In the secondary, high school education, the intermediate level textbooks are

<sup>27</sup> Same as before, the six teachers and their comments are given abbreviated markings (e.g. T1/C3). The list of authors, works and comments are directly quoted and therefore unaltered.

<sup>28</sup> English as a FL is taught in Croatian schools from the first grade of elementary school (ages 6-7).

regularly used in the first and second grade teaching (grammar school), where English is the first foreign language (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> year of English learning). The highest level of EFL teaching is the upper-intermediate or advanced, determined to be used in the third and fourth grade of high school (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> year of learning English).

- **Elementary education**

The analysis of the most commonly used textbooks used in elementary schools<sup>29</sup>, shows a relatively small quantity of authentic literary material (cf. Table 7).

**Table 7** Authentic literature in elementary level EFL textbooks<sup>30</sup>

Level <sup>31</sup>	Title	Author	Genre / Length	Tasks and Skills
7	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	Daniel Defoe	Adventure / Two chapters	Comprehension tasks (reading and listening-audio version);
7	“Christmas Carol”	Charles Dickens	Social / Two chapters	Comprehension and Language exercises (Q&A, True/False, etc.)
8	“True Love”	Isaac Asimov	Science-Fiction / Short extract	Comprehension and written skills: a different ending to the story, a letter to the character; In character’s shoes; Written and oral ex.- Matching terms and definitions, ordering events, describing characters and their actions.
8	“Devil’s Larder”	Jim Crace	Social / Short extract	Mostly the same as with Jim Crace’s “Devil’s Larder” (same unit)

*Robinson Crusoe* and “Christmas Carol” (both of which have been listed by questionnaire participants, cf. T4/C2, T6/C2), dominate as shorter extracts of the lengthy classics of English literature. In terms of language, comprehension tasks usually introduce learners to understanding the texts, i.e. aim at developing their language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking). After working on the receptive skills, i.e. reading and listening, learners are engaged in productive oral and writing tasks in order to improve their text comprehension, and develop their communicative abilities. All this evolves in an authentic language context, as the authors (presumably) motivate learners by exposing them to literary examples of adventure, Christmas, and science fiction (cf. teachers’ comments chapters 2.3).

<sup>29</sup> For the full list of analyzed material, cf. the Bibliography section.

<sup>30</sup> Table 2 and subsequent tables list the only literary material found in more than 20 different textbooks. Interestingly, these have been used in the *Dip In* series and *Building Blocks*, the latest of the EFL teaching textbooks, and both are published by Croatian publishers (2007).

<sup>31</sup> The level number refers to the year of English learning (1-8).

Naturally, textbooks used in earlier stages of EFL acquisition (ages 1-6) generally aim to improve the four basic skills in simplified material<sup>32</sup>. As Table 7 illustrates, the authentic literary text is found only in final two grades of elementary education (ages 13-14). This lack of literature in earlier stages could correlate to teachers' view that the inappropriate learner level and lack of purpose in the teaching program (cf. chapter 2.4.1., Table 3), yet not with the teachers' suggestion that literature should be present in the earlier stages of language learning (M =3.14), and that authentic literature it is only meant to be presented in advanced levels (cf. S43/ Table 4).

- **Secondary education**
  - **(Pre)Intermediate level**

The more advanced level of English acquisition naturally engages learners into more demanding language-comprehension tasks. Unlike the elementary level of EFL in Croatia, the common practice on intermediate and upper-intermediate levels is the use of foreign language EFL course-books, e.g. Oxford's *New Headway* and Pearson Longman's *New Opportunities*. Table 2 illustrates the considerable amount of literature extracts in textbooks of pre-intermediate and intermediate level.

**Table 8** The available literary texts in the intermediate level textbooks

Book	Title	Author	Genre/ Length	Comprehension and Language Tasks
<b>Poetry</b>				
Head.	"Funeral Blues"	W. H. Auden		Critical thinking – "understand the overall message" (123). Listening and reading skills; Oral discussion (Poet's intent, learning the poem by heart, etc.)
Opp.	"The Knight's Tale"	Geoffrey Chaucer		Reading and listening tasks (ordering events, comparing characters, ...); Discussing issues in the story (e.g. position of women)
InF. <sup>33</sup>	"If"	Rudyard Kipling		Understanding the poem's message; Language: Poem figures (alliteration), Oral practice (reading and listening).
<b>Prose</b>				
Head.	<i>David Copperfield</i>	Charles Dickens	Social / Two chapters	Reading tasks; Oral and written practice: Literary discussion, vocabulary exercise, synonyms (filling the gaps, e.g.)
Opp.	<i>Frankenstein</i>	Mary Shelley	Horror / Chapter	Reading and listening comprehension, completing the sentences; Discussing the issue and the characters (e.g. "Did you feel sorry for the monster?")

<sup>32</sup> Analysis shows traces of literature in earlier stages, yet in retold, or summarized form, not authentic.

<sup>33</sup> Abb. Log On @ "In Frame" Textbook. The In Frame series are published by Croatian printing houses. Other abbreviations used: Head. = *Headway*; Opp. = *Opportunities*.

Opp.	<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	Jane Austen	Love / Short extract	Reading and listening tasks, Q&A, matching words and definitions; Oral practice: Story discussions (e.g. “Which of the two sisters do you identify with most? Why?”)
Opp.	“Lamb to the slaughter”	Roald Dahl	Horror / Short extract	Reading comprehension, True/False; Retelling the story; Oral practice: Discussing story’s main ideas and actions;
Opp.	<i>A Horse and Two Goats</i>	R. K. Narayan	Social / Short extract	Reading and listening comprehension; Oral discussions of the poem;

Demonstrated on the examples of poetry (*Headway, In Frame, Opportunities*), structural language exercises are no longer at the center of literature-oriented units, with attention diverting to improving learners’ critical thinking abilities and literary understanding. This occurs of course with the precondition of higher acquired language competence, but through various discussion of the issues contained in those texts (and provoked by the authors), aims to improve the “English ability”<sup>34</sup>. The activities and discussions are, still, encircled by tasks of implicit language-based approaches, e.g. learning the poem by heart or developing listening comprehension (cf. Poe, Table 2).

The Oxford’s *New Headway Intermediate* edition contains many such examples as well. The two complete chapters from Dickens’ classic elicit reading and thinking abilities, and oral and written consolidation. On the other hand, *Opportunities Intermediate* provides significantly greater number of texts – extracts from two classics and contemporary stories. Interestingly, every *Opportunities* edition contains special “Literature Spots”, usually four different literary extracts at the end of the textbook (aside from occasional piece in the main part). Generally, each text is followed by reading (or listening) comprehension tasks, language exercises (vocabulary-related), concluding with questions provoking critical, especially with poetry (cf. Table 2, “If”).

**Table 8 (contd.) Drama**

<b>3. Drama</b>				
Head.	“Romeo and Juliet”	William Shakespeare	Tragedy / Short excerpt	Topic-Love & Shakespeare’s plays in general. Reading and listening; Eliciting literary discussion (“Whose fault was the tragedy? Juliet was 13. Do you think this is too young to fall in love?”)
InF.	“Julius Caesar”	William Shakespeare	Tragedy / Shorter Extract	Comprehension and discussion (“What arguments does he use to disprove Brutus’ claim that Caesar was ambitious?”) Developing speaking techniques: tripling, dramatic contrast, rhetorical questions;

<sup>34</sup> This term intentionally used here describes not only the main linguistic ability, but also the higher competence in a foreign language in general: literary, cultural, communicative, and others that transcend common structural and language tasks. Cf. chapter 3 for further discussion.

Drama as a literary genre is represented with excerpts from two Shakespeare's classical tragedies: "Romeo and Juliet" and "Julius Caesar". However, the authenticity is minimal in case of the former, as only memorable sentences (and an audio of staged play) in authentic old-English form are printed along a summary of the work, whereas the extract from "Julius Caesar" is actually the unadapted funeral oration by Marc Anthony. Appropriately then, the latter encourages learners to contextualize important literary techniques (cf. Table 2 contd. tasks), this way in a foreign language.

### ○ Upper-intermediate level

The highest level of EFL acquisition, for third and fourth graders demonstrates the proportionate increase in literary material with the learner level. Table 9 illustrates on examples of prose and drama.

**Table 9** The upper-intermediate level (prose and drama)

Source	Title	Author	Genre / Length	Comprehension and Language Tasks
<b>Prose</b>				
Head.	<i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i>	Thomas Hardy	Drama / Two extracts	Adjectives, prefixes and suffixes; prediction ex., Discussions of the topic in the text, literature preferences and readings ("What kinds of books do you like reading?")
Head.	<i>The Blind Assassin</i>	Margaret Atwood	Thriller / Short ext.	Reading, vocabulary comprehension, Q&A. Oral discussions: The story before and after.
Opp.	"The Pickwick Papers"	Charles Dickens	Humor / Complete w.	Vocabulary ("cling" - holding people), synonyms, text comprehension, collocations; Oral discussion: "Have you ever been in a situation like Mr. Winkle when you lied about your abilities?"
Opp.	<i>Blood Pressure</i>	Damon Runyan	Thriller / Short extract	Written exercises (completing the missing words ("suddenly", "then", "following"), synonyms; antonyms;
Opp.	"No Crime in the Mountain"	Raymond Chandler	Crime / Extract	Reading, Ordering events, Q&A, language work (adjectives to describe characters); Listening to the ending (audio version).
Opp.	<i>Martian Chronicles</i>	Ray Bradbury	SF/ Short extract	Reading comprehension, Q&A, T/F, Discussing the text's main ideas.
Opp.	"The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"	Robert Stevenson	Fantasy / Short extract	Reading and vocabulary exercises; Q&A.
InF.	<i>Hard Times</i>	Charles Dickens	Social / Short extract	Oral discussion: "How is his character shown in terms of his mouth forehead voice? What is the tone of the writing, serious, comic, emotional, and sentimental?"
InF.	<i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>	Thomas Hardy	Social / Short extract	Oral practice: (Dis)agreeing w. statements. General text comprehension (e.g. "which part of the text does each comment refer to).

InF.	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	William Golding	Adventure/ Short extract	Multiple choice questions testing comprehension; short language work (vocabulary, definitions).
<b>Drama</b>				
InF.	“The Importance of Being Ernest”	Oscar Wilde	Drama / Shorter extract	Discussions: Characters and the issue of love. (Comparing to other lit. pieces on the page).

The traditional literary input continues in the same manner as in previous textbook editions. In addition to the oral and written language-based tasks of comprehension (vocabulary, grammar), strong emphasis is placed on improving general literacy: developing the students’ thinking skills, intercultural competence and raising literary competence in general (cf. chapter 2.4.1.1).

As Table 9 (contd.) shows, both *In Frame* and *Opportunities* editions feature a greater number of poems compared to lower level editions, implicitly proving that higher linguistic competence allows a greater poetry engagement. Furthermore, activities related to poetry at this level deal mainly with improving literary competences, which demand greater language comprehension and skills (e.g. Poe’s “Annabel Lee”).

**Table 9 (contd.)** Upper-intermediate level – Poetry

<b>Poetry</b>				
InF.	“Annabel Lee”	Edgar Allan Poe		Reading and listening tasks; Figures of speech (“Which lines exemplify assonance? Alliteration?”). Language activities: Describing the tone (annoying, echoing, ...)
InF.	Sonnet CXXX	William Shakespeare		Vocabulary exercises; Discussion: “What comparisons can you make between her and Shakespeare’s mistress in terms of physical beauty?” (interrelated with other poems from the unit)
InF.	“Us”	Emily Dickinson		Characters and the issue of love (interrelated with other poems from the unit).
InF.	“The Soldier”	Rupert Brook		Poem comprehension (multiple choice questions)
Opp.	“The Jaguar”	Ted Hughes		Poem comprehension; Language exercises (matching, T/F, comprehension); Oral discussions (critical thinking, images); Speech figures (metaphors, similes)
Opp.	“Cautionary Tales For Children”	Hilaire Belloc		Reading comprehension, Oral practice and discussion (moral, story)
Opp.	“Declaration of Love”	Steve Turner		
Opp.	“Love Song for Alex”	Margaret Walker		
Opp.	“I Wish I Could Remember That First Day”	Christina Rossetti		Four poems related through the common topic: Love. Oral discussion and comprehension of main issues; Language: Vocabulary, figures of speech and stylistic figures (e.g. Alliteration, bathos, and image)
Opp.	“My Mistress’ Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun”	William Shakespeare		

## 2.5. Discussion

### 2.5.1. Teachers' Experience

The collected data from the questionnaire was used to offer an overview of the current role of literature its eventual input in practical EFL teaching, with teachers of English language in Croatian primary and secondary education. Through average scores and teachers' suggestions, the research has shown a relatively major dominant presence of literature in Croatian EFL classrooms, confirming theoretical assumptions supporting the enriching benefits of literature as a resource for improving the EFL teaching and proficiency.

The demographic profile of the participants shows that more than half of the participants were experienced teachers with more than ten years in English language teaching (cf. Table 1), with most of them experienced at advanced level teaching. More importantly, however, the result that made the research substantial arises from the fact that roughly two-thirds have indeed used literature during their teaching career in EFL classrooms.

The main purposes of using literature as a resource in EFL (with a high  $M=3.62$ ) have equally been: "Developing critical thinking skills", "Encouraging reading English literature", and "Arousing interest in the English language", which indirectly corresponds to theoretical approaches that literature raises learners' motivation through enabling personal growth and enjoyment of a foreign language's culture and language<sup>35</sup>. At the same time, through raising motivation and involving their learners in the web of language's most authentic form, the teachers have undoubtedly used language-based, i.e. skill developing approaches (S2-7/ Table 2). Besides improving basic language skills in terms of reading, communication, and writing, the highly-ranked purpose also includes developing intercultural competences ( $M=3.313$ ). The teachers have therefore expectedly employed literature to try to raise the level of their teaching (cf. e.g. T6/C1) on both the interest and motivation level as well as language development (cf. Table 4, T2/C2).

As far as literary genres are concerned, the general (and expected) preference of prose as genre over poetry (cf. S13-15/Table 2), could, in one way, be interpreted with the fact that the most of the resource material (textbooks) offer prose works<sup>36</sup>. Also, due to its practicality and obvious benefits in terms of length, manageable difficulty and availability, the dominance of prose works justifies the experience. The benefits of poetry still seem to be relatively rarely

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<sup>35</sup> cf. Models by Carter and Long (1991); Chapter 1.2.

<sup>36</sup> cf. Chapter 2.4.2.

enjoyed, despite many supporting theoretical activity books<sup>37</sup>. Furthermore, the preferred shorter extracts and abridged versions over complete unabridged forms (cf. S16-19/ table 2) could be rightfully attributed to practical reasons of a class lesson of 45 or 90 minutes, if not accounted for by the availability of the resource materials<sup>38</sup>. Interestingly however, audio material and home reading assignments have scored relatively low, as at the same time some teachers claimed they would encourage reading more, (cf. T1/C2).

The general impression remains that teachers have tried to set up a motivationally higher learning atmosphere, breaking the routine of rules and structures of a common EFL class (cf. T4/C1, T1/C2), thus arousing interest in the English language by offering its most authentic and attractive practical use (cf. T1/C2). Following their students' interest (cf. Table 4) the teachers have still undoubtedly attempted to develop their students' language skills which is demonstrated in their ranking the purposes and general conclusions after such experiences (cf. T2/C2, Table 5). The research results lead to the conclusion that literature is beneficial in raising the level of English proficiency (cf. Table 5, S47), supporting the general theoretic arguments discussed in chapter 1.2. Analyzing experiences with authentic literature input relates back to theory to illustrate the authenticity and uniqueness of literature as an EFL resource material. Table 2 shows it has rarely been used for bare language structure demonstration, outside of context (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary), as other EFL material usually is. On the contrary, literature in its authenticity and specificity<sup>39</sup> has been placed in context with a literal and cultural aim (improving extra-linguistic abilities: critical thinking, intercultural competence and reading) and personal enjoyment (improving motivation and interest), while at the same time not neglecting the improvement of important language acquisition skills (reading, speaking, and writing, cf. Table 2).

The other group of participants, with no literature-teaching experience, provided the comprehension of some experience-based reasons against using literature in class. The teachers consider the "inappropriate learner level" (M=3.667) and "lack of purpose in the teaching program" (M=3.167) the main reasons against introducing their students to literature (cf. Table 2). Corresponding to the general attitudes that characterize literature as too complex and unnecessary for EFL learners, these issues have been argued and overall rejected in many theoretical works (cf. Chapter 1.1, 1.2.). The reasons such as lack of students' interest, motivation and resource material have ranged in the average score of 2.833, which shows that

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<sup>37</sup> cf. Carter, R., Long M. (1987), (1991), Lazar (1993), Hill (1986).

<sup>38</sup> For additional material, abridged versions are the most commonly used resource.

<sup>39</sup> cf. the uniqueness of literature, Maley (1989).



the main arguments disfavoring literature in EFL classrooms have stayed the same over the course of history<sup>40</sup>. The relevant obstacles are not so much based on practical reasons, but rather on the genuine lack of interest and motivation (cf. S23...25/Table 3). However, with the appropriate methodological approach (cf. T4/C1) and interest in using literature as an EFL resource material, as demonstrated by the experience of the majority of teachers, literature in EFL surely results in positive outcomes.

One of the most important conclusions of the research, as it has been found in surveys discussed in Chapter 1.3, are the undisputable positive effects of literature input on the learners, most evident in the teachers' judgments and additional comments. While Teacher 4 states the students were "simply interested in the subject matter itself and happy owing to a change in the routine!" Teacher 1 claims their students "just loved it!", describing the experience as one of the "best moments in my teaching career". The motivation and interest in authentic language undoubtedly provides a stepping stone for a better language acquisition<sup>41</sup>. Still, this does not suffice, as there exists a definite need for didactic guidance by the teacher and the right methodological approach (cf. Surveys, T4/C1, T6/C1). Furthermore, in terms of the diversity of literary material, the general myth of using only classical literature has been dispersed. Of the vast number of suggested titles and authors from the questionnaire confirms these conclusions so far. Although some popular authors are generally always present, teachers' experience reveals both classical and contemporary literary input in EFL classrooms. Finally, the overall process will be successful only if the literature and language activities center on learners' interest, and learner-centered activities. With the high motivation and interest, the enjoyment of literature and by that, language as well, has presumably not been left out.

The third part of the questionnaire has offered further decisive findings which support many theoretical arguments: "literature is important in English language acquisition" (M=3.50), "Both English and American literary works should be used" (M=3.73), "ELT resource materials in schools should offer authentic literary works" (M=3.41), and most importantly, Literature in English classrooms improves / would improve students' English proficiency (M=3.57). The experiences of teachers in Croatian schools also supports the conclusions drawn from surveys discussed in chapter 1.3, and of course, the basic theoretical assumption that literature is an important, if not essential element of the EFL teaching and learning.

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<sup>40</sup> cf. Chapter 1.1

<sup>41</sup> cf. Chapter 1.1 and 1.2.

In extension to this study it would be quite interesting to investigate and analyze the students' perspective and their experiences with literature regarding similar aspects, as well as, over a period of time, its potential effects on their English language development. Probably the most motivating elements for this research and the discussion have been teachers' additional comments in the questionnaire (cf. p. 8), who strongly argue literature deserves a definite place in an EFL teaching.

### **2.5.2. Authentic Literature in Textbooks**

The EFL textbook analysis aimed to examine the availability of authentic literary material, the authors' relationship to it as ELT resource material, and its methodological and didactic aspects. On the elementary level, literature appears only in final stages of language development (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> year of English learning), with the most common aim of explicitly developing language competence<sup>42</sup>. Literature is handled mostly like any other textual material in EFL resources, with comprehension tasks of reading, matching, ordering, listening, while its use can be attributed to motivation and interest-oriented tasks (cf. Table 1). The relatively limited amount of material suggests the general publishers' and authors' reluctance to introduce even simple literature to improve learners' basic language skills<sup>43</sup>, which would then contradict the teachers' attitudes and experiences (cf. S44/Table 5), who predominantly advocate the use of literature even at the earliest stages of EFL, and not only higher levels (S43/Table 5). Also, based on several teachers' comments, they reach out for the material for introducing learners to literature on these levels outside the textbooks (cf. e.g. T1/C1), yet at the same time, the titles the authors based on their experience correlate to the exact titles available in some intermediate and upper-intermediate textbooks, among others, Stevenson's "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", Poe's "Annabel Lee", etc. (cf. Table 6 and Table 8, 9)<sup>44</sup>.

General conclusions from this analysis correlate well to teachers' experience with literature in ELT, among others, the prevalence of prose works over poetry and drama, and preference of shorter extracts, and matching purposes of literature in EFL classroom (thinking

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<sup>42</sup> Correlating to some teachers' belief that the inappropriate learner level is the main reason against using literature in class (cf. Table 3).

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, at this elementary level (1-8), almost all textbooks have been written by Croatian authors and published by Croatian publishing houses.

<sup>44</sup> It is worth noting that the overall situation in Croatian public schools does not support extensive extra-material in libraries, nor do learners experience this practice. The teachers are mostly left at their own efforts, financially and otherwise, to engage with additional material, hence, the relevance of analyzing the mandatory material.

skills, encouraging reading and intercultural competence, reading and communication)<sup>45</sup>. At the same time, the lack of literature in elementary level corresponds to teachers' views for not using literature (cf. Table 3) as a resource for teaching. In terms of common titles, an overview of works relates in two basic terms with teachers' experience from the previous analysis: general presence of both contemporary and classic fiction, of both English and American literary production, as well as a variety of different topics and genres<sup>46</sup>.

Regarding the methodological aspects of literature in EFL teaching, the overview of comprehension and language tasks indicates common, language-developing, tasks in EFL textbooks. The majority of tasks aim to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary exercises, and oral and written exercises develop writing and communicative competences, especially at the lower level, where the pedagogical aspect of developing basic language skills prevails. However, as the level of language learning raises, the attention switches to more cultural and personal aspect, especially with poetry (cf. Table 3); e.g. critical discussion, or in other words, developing students' awareness of the literature in the foreign language. This is equally evident in teachers' experience with literary studies in EFL classrooms (cf. Table 2). Indeed, the comprehension and language tasks for literature extracts furthermore confirm the fact that, while still different from common textual EFL material, literature can be and is used to develop and practice English language proficiency equally if not more efficiently than other textual material.

There is also an interesting additional aspect worth further research. Croatian elementary level textbooks material shows only a recent turn to literature – the latest of the EFL material published in Croatia<sup>47</sup>. On the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels, where foreign editions are commonly used, the more recent Pearson Longman's Opportunities offer considerably greater literature amount, even with assigning a special place within an edition ("Literature spot"). Oxford's Headway engages literary material throughout the textbook, yet considerably less and mainly in the upper stages of language development rather than the intermediate (cf. Tables 3, 4). Although it requires wider analysis in terms of different publishers, the amount of literature in EFL textbooks seems to be on a rise.

- **What the Authors Say**

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<sup>45</sup> cf. Chapter 2.4.

<sup>46</sup> These general views are also evident in teachers' suggestions (cf. Table 5).

<sup>47</sup> For example, over ten older editions analyzed provide no literary material. Only "Dip In" and "Building Bridges", published in 2007 and 2008, respectively.

The authors and editors consider a wide range of material and adapt it to the EFL levels in textbooks. John and Liz Soars, the long-time authors of the most widely-used EFL course book series, *The New Headway*, support the idea of implementing authentic literary texts, claiming that “there is an enormous boost of satisfaction in reading a REAL piece of REAL literature in a foreign language, understanding it and appreciating it. You feel as if you are partaking in that language's culture as an equal”<sup>48</sup>. Methodologically, the same principles apply, as they explain “It is... much easier to select texts for a higher level. A literary text that has been heavily edited to bring down the vocabulary level or linguistic complexity doesn't have the same impact as the unadulterated authentic text”. Essentially, however, literature should be used “...for pleasure and enrichment – where these two come from isn't necessarily more from the classics than the modern”.

Similarly, commissioning editor of Macmillan's main EFL course book *New Inside Out* considers authentic literary text “extremely important on a range of levels”, as they

... allow for challenge both in terms of the use of language and the cultural messages they contain. They can be used as springboards for further discussion, and, in that they are authentic or at least slightly adapted, *they motivate the students because they allow them to see that they can work with texts they might find outside the classroom.* (Hornby-Smith; emphasis added)

The authors and editors support the general trends of the importance, or rather, the essence of literature as a resource in EFL teaching material, highlighting its uniqueness, authenticity, practical, and other enriching benefits it proposes – argued among linguists, and teachers alike.

## 2.6. Conclusion

Essentially, there certain general proposals that arise from the two-part research: students' interest in literature and their proven high motivation of dealing with it transcends the learning level and potential obstacles (cf. Teacher 1 and 2 comments); there is always a need of an appropriate methodological approach and teacher's guidance when introducing literature (teacher 4 and 6), there are significant enriching benefits of literature on the overall enjoyment and acquisition of language in terms of the four basic EFL acquisition skills (Comments and Table 5). Furthermore, the research leads us to believe that the role of

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<sup>48</sup> Interview(s). cf. Appendix II. All subsequent quoting refers to the same source.

literature in EFL has developed mostly from the late twentieth century theoretical approaches that emphasized its benefits to learners. Literature as the resource material has, at least in these examples, not lost its role in EFL teaching, but it has, through careful implementation, guided by the appropriate methodological and pedagogical aspects of its teachers, motivated a wider learner audience, and enriched them on multiple, equally important, EFL acquisition levels – language, cultural and personal.

One of the aspects that seem to arise from this work is the fact that there is an implicit need of a systematic development of the role of literature in EFL. Although linguistics, teachers and publishers (authors of textbooks) emphasize to some extent the role of literature in EFL teaching and learning, literature is still a free tool without a distinct formal role or position in the overall language acquisition. Most of its usage depends largely on teachers, and although the majority seems to use it to improve language acquisition, there is no formal criteria that would cement the very essence of literature for developing the English ability. The students who are left without literary exposure, surely, at least based on the ideas this work tried to pursue, are being limited in terms of the richness and authenticity of the lingua franca, the most wide-spread language in the world. Amongst the discussions and theories, with the help of researches such as these, it would be pedagogically wise to try and bring literature “down the pedestal”, and into EFL teaching curriculum.

### **3. Conclusion: The English Language Classroom – Teaching Literature to Develop the English Ability**

The aim of providing practical testing to theoretical approaches is what makes this work more relevant in the ongoing debate on using literature in EFL teaching. The responses on the subject given by practicing teachers, some of which have been outlined in chapter 1.3, show that although there can arguably be no general approach that could be universally applied in every EFL teaching context, many common elements arise from this as well as previous research studies.

In applying specific theoretical models to literature in EFL in general, we need to look no further than Carter and Long's comprehensive work "Teaching Literature" (1991). While numerous authors summarize different ways of approaching the sensitive topic, implementing literature in practical teaching can be justly summarized by the three models the authors suggest: cultural, personal and language-based approach. After all, a research has shown that once the learners "get immersed in their favorite texts are they likely to receive the potential linguistic, personal, and cultural benefits that literature teaching claims to provide, and this is also the ultimate purpose of using literature in EFL language classes" (Tasneen 2010: 18). Indeed then, the practical implications and testing of the theoretical models in English language classroom, among EFL teachers and learners, can be the most significant contribution to improving the level of EFL acquisition.

In researching the "enriching benefits of the glories of a country's literary output"<sup>49</sup> in the Croatian context, the study has confirmed the general trends on literature. As a unique resource material for language enrichment, it is a widely accepted and valued, following similar methods and techniques in Croatia, as in other EFL countries, which emphasize its enriching and beneficial linguistic, cultural and personal factors. While length and form of literary works mainly depends on teachers and textbook authors, the students' role in the choice of work becomes defining, as they as recipients inadvertently determine the overall effect literature may exert on them. If this is accomplished, as much as possible, learners will undoubtedly benefit in language development, as well as cultural and personal, the aspects of teaching which are all mutually connected, and equally important.

Teachers, on the other hand, are responsible for presenting literature to their learners in the best possible way. Even if they are reluctant readers, they do not have to be literary

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<sup>49</sup> Soars, Liz and Joan. cf. Appendix II: Interviews

experts, as Tasneen (2010) suggests, quite because of the vast resourcefulness of material offered today – from teacher guides, to activity books and literary material, CALT and others. The teachers' main role is therefore “simply” taking in consideration classroom methodology, pedagogy and didactic in presenting such a delicate material to their learners. Guided by theoretical models discussed in this work, teachers, as those from the questionnaire, choose the appropriate material to introduce, activities, language work and tasks that aim to develop and nurture, among other skills, the language-based approach. After all, they know their learners' abilities best.

Regarding the bridging the gap and acquiring the “English ability”, discussed in chapter 2.4.2, I am most stimulated by the idea that communicative competence is more than acquiring mastery of structure and form, as Savidou argues in her article:

It is apparent that EFL speakers still have difficulties in comprehending the nuances, creativity and versatility which characterize even standard and transactional forms of English, as these humorous public notices demonstrate: *Would you like to ride on your own ass?* – Advertisement for donkey rides in Thailand. Or *you are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.* – Japanese hotel. (Savidou 2004)

To achieve the English ability takes both the skills of communication, mastery of forms and basic language skills. Too often are learners programmed EFL speakers, taught in the methods of isolated examples, sentences illustrating grammar, and artificial communicative situations, which achieve all but stimulate motivation for foreign language acquisitions. Literature can and should bridge that gap.

Finally, what this work aimed to suggest is the definite need for a further study and research of literary implementation in the EFL classroom, which would include both teachers and students alike, in order to observe the benefits of literature in teaching and language acquisition. A detailed study would need to have two principal aims in continuous scholarly discussions: either to confirm the theoretic models and trends that support its implementation, or find and support important ways of improving it – an approach essential for improving learners' competence in English as a foreign language in general – literary, cultural, communicative, and other competences that transcend common structural and language tasks, or the so-called “English ability”.

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### **EFL Textbooks**

Note: The full list of Ministry approved textbooks is available at <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=9848&sec=2354>

#### **Elementary level**

- Anić, V. *Way to go 2 plus*. Udžbenik. Zagreb, 2007.
- Anić, V. *Way to go Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 2001.
- Ban, S., Blažić, D. *Dip in 4 Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 2007.
- Ban, S., Blažić, D. *Dip in 4 Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 2009.
- Breka, O. *Way to go 3 plus Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 2007.
- Čajo, K. [et al.]. *Building blocks 1 Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 2003.
- Čajo, K., Knezović, A. *Building blocks 3 Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 2005.
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- Rijavec, M., Zorić, V. *Super 1 Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 2000.
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- Salaberri, S. [et.al.]. *Teamwork Starter*. Zagreb, 2000.

### **Secondary level (Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, Advanced)**

- Aston, P., Edmundson, E. *English now Intermediate*. Oxford, 1989.
- Aston, P., Edmundson, E. *English now Upper-intermediate*. Oxford, 1989.
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- Bauer, B., S. Parminter. *Network 2 Student's book*. Oxford, 1999.
- Bawler, B., Parminter, S. *Network 1 Student's book*. Oxford, 1998.
- Brieger, N., Jackson, A. *Advanced intermediate English*. London, 1989.
- Carden, S. *New Connexions 3 – What's happening to us*. London, 1989.
- Cunningham, S. [et.al.]. *Cutting edge Student's book*. Horlow, 2005.
- Doolan, M. [et.al.]. *In frame 1 Udžbenik*. Zagreb, 1999.
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## Appendices

### Appendix I: The Questionnaire

#### “Using Literature in English Language Teaching”

*Dear English teacher,*

*Thank you for opening this poll.*

*I am a graduate student of English language and literature at the University of Osijek and this survey is a part of my Master's thesis research – Using literature in English language teaching.*

*What I am mostly interested in are the different aspects (pros and cons) of using authentic literary works in English language teaching (English as a foreign language) in Croatian schools (as you will see in the questions below). Your practical teaching experience would, therefore, aid to my research in the best possible way.*

*If you have ever taught English in a Croatian school, you're eligible to take the survey!*

*It only takes about five minutes, so if you would be so kind as to fill it out, I would appreciate it a lot.*

*Best wishes, and thank you for your time!*

*Sincerely,*

*Gaj Tomaš  
gtomas@ffos.hr*

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1. Where do you currently teach English (or have taught)?

- Elementary
- Secondary
- Both

2. How many years have you been teaching English (primary/secondary education)?

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1 and 5 years
- Between 5 and 10 years
- More than 10 years

3. During your English studies at the university, to what extent did you enjoy your literature courses?

(NOTE: 1 - not at all, 2 - somewhat, 3 - at times, 4 - very much)

4. Have you ever presented any kind of authentic literary work in your English language teaching? (Based on your answer, the poll will open the next section of questions.)

- Yes.
- No.

**Yes, I HAVE used literature in my English teaching.**

Please pick the number on the scale that best corresponds to your situation (Scale: 1 - Never; 2 - Rarely; 3 - Sometimes; 4 - Often).

I have used literature to teach Listening comprehension:

I have used literature to teach Reading comprehension.

I have used literature to teach Vocabulary.

I have used the text to teach Grammar:

I have used literature to teach Pronunciation:

I have used literature to teach Orthography/Spelling:

I have used literature to develop Intercultural Competence:

I have used the literature to develop critical thinking skills:

I have used literature to improve my students' writing skills (e.g. composition):

I have used literature to develop my student's communicative skills (e.g. debate, discussion):

I have used the literature to encourage reading English literature:

I have used literature to arouse students' interest in the English language:

I have used audio books (any kind of literary work in audio format):

I have given my students reading assignments (E. g. reading journal for homework):

I have tested / evaluated my students' reading comprehension:

### **Literary selection**

Please choose the appropriate option (Scale: 1 - Never; 2 - Rarely; 3 - Sometimes; 4 - Often)

I have used works written in prose.

I have used works written in verse.

I have used dramatic works.

I have used a complete, unabridged literary work (short story, novel, poem, ...).

I have used an abridged version (E. g. Cambridge Abridged).

I have used an entire chapter or an equivalent length.

I have used a shorter extract.

If you can remember, please name the author and/or the title of the work you've used.

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### **Students' reactions**

Can you remember your students' general reaction to literature in your English classroom?

(Scale: 1 - Never; 2 - Rarely; 3 - Sometimes; 4 – Often).

My students were EXCITED.

My students were MOTIVATED.

My students were BORED.

My students were generally INDIFFERENT.

Other response:

### **No, I have NOT used literature in my English teaching.**

If you have not used literature in any form in your English language teaching, please try and specify possible reasons according to the scale (Scale: 1 - Never; 2 - Rarely; 3 - Sometimes; 4 – Often).

Lack of interest - teacher.  
 Lack of interest - students.  
 Lack of purpose in the teaching programme.  
 Lack of time (teacher, personal)  
 Lack of time (lesson):  
 Lack of students' motivation  
 Lack of resource material:  
 Curriculum limitations:  
 Inappropriate learner level:  
 Other:

### **General ideas on using literature in English teaching**

Regardless of your literature teaching experience, please choose the category of your preference. (Scale: 1 - I strongly disagree; 2 - I disagree; 3 - I agree; 4 - I completely agree).

Literature is important in English language acquisition (English as a foreign language).  
 Both English and American literary works should be used in ELT:  
 More contemporary English and American literary works should be used in ELT:  
 English teaching resource materials in schools should offer authentic literary works.  
 The lack of time is the main reason why teachers generally do not use literature in class:  
 The lack of students' interest is the main reason why teachers do not use literature in class:  
 The teacher's lack of interest and motivation are the main reasons why they do not use literature in class:  
 Literature should be present in English teaching only at advanced levels (E. g. high school).  
 Literature should be a means of teaching English, even in earliest stages (E. g. fairy tales, fables, etc.)  
 The formal educational curriculum hinders the use of English literature in ELT.  
 Students are more likely to enjoy reading more popular, contemporary works (E.g. Stephenie Meyer's Twilight)  
 Literature in English classrooms improves / would improve students' English proficiency.  
 Electronic resources (Internet, online communication) are likely to increase the usage of literature in ELT.  
 Interactive media (Computers, SmartBoard, etc.) are likely to stimulate students' interest in literature in class.

### **Additional**

If you remember, please name some authors and/or titles of literary works you've used in class (authors / titles / ideas, ...):

### **General suggestions**

If you have anything you would like to suggest or add, regarding literature in class please do:

## Appendix II: Interviews

### Interview No. 1

With Mrs. Liz and Mr. Joan Soars, the authors of Oxford's *Headway* series.  
The interview was conducted by e-mail on 27 June 2011.

#### **Q. How important you do believe authentic literature is in EFL teaching?**

A. It depends. No more, no less than any other text - if it's interesting, it's interesting whatever the source, 'authentic' or not. Also you have to distinguish whether you mean a work (book, story, poem etc.) or an extract and the fact that some students will be more interested than others for a variety of reasons. Having said that, there is an enormous boost of satisfaction in reading a REAL piece of REAL literature in a foreign language, understanding it and appreciating it. You feel as if you are partaking in that language's culture as an equal.

#### **Q. What were your criteria in choosing the literary texts for your New Headway editions (E.g. Intermediate)?**

A. The criteria are the same as for choosing any text 'Is it interesting? Will it engage students? Is it suitable for the level? Is the vocab. overload too great?' etc. It is of course much easier to select texts for a higher level. A literary text that has been heavily edited to bring down the vocabulary level or linguistic complexity doesn't have the same impact as the unadulterated authentic text.

#### **Q. Do you believe teachers and students should be concentrating on more contemporary literary works than English and American classics?**

A. No, whatever interests you and your students is good. Some students get real satisfaction from tackling pieces of literature that are well-known, classic or modern.  
It really isn't a matter of dictating what students should be reading – in their own language any more or less than in a foreign language. Reading should be done for pleasure and enrichment – where these two come from isn't necessarily more from the classics than the modern.

**Q. What is your idea of implementing literary texts for students of English as a foreign language? What should be the main purpose in the classroom?**

A. In the classroom is tough because time is so limited. In the classroom you are restricted to extracts, short stories and poems. But students can read outside the classroom, come to class and discuss their understanding either of the same book (ie all students read the same book at home) or different books (ie you have a class library and students discuss what they've read, whether they recommend it ... and based on that students borrow their next book.

**Q. Would you say literature spots in English textbooks will expand in the future editions, and do you believe literature will play an even greater role in the future English language teaching (as well as the Communicative Language teaching)?**

A. Sorry, I can't see the future. I see no reason why the amount of literature will increase. I see no current revival for literature. Literature went out of favour in the 80s and 90s because it wasn't perceived as practical, useful or communicative – but this is more of a reflection of the narrow-mindedness of the commentators rather than the usefulness, pleasure, enriching benefits of the glories of a country's literary output.

## **Interview No. 2**

With Mr. Andrew Hornsby-Smith, Commissioning Editor with Macmillan Education.

The interview was conducted by e-mail on 1 July 2011.

*Dear Gaj (if I may),*

*Thank you for your email concerning the use of literary texts in EFL teaching, which has been forwarded to me to respond from an editorial perspective. I should point out that this is a personal response, and doesn't necessarily reflect the views of Macmillan Education as a company.*

**Q. 1 and 2: How important you do believe authentic literature is in EFL teaching? What were your criteria in choosing the literary texts for your editions (E.g. Intermediate)?**



A. My own view is that literary texts are extremely important on a range of levels. Firstly, of course, literary texts are written by authors who are deliberately trying to portray particular characteristics and genres. They allow for challenge both in terms of the use of language and the cultural messages they contain. They can be used as springboards for further discussion, and, in that they are authentic or at least slightly adapted, they motivate the students because they allow them to see that they can work with texts they might find outside the classroom.

The choice of texts will depend on the overall profile of the material that is being used. For example, if the material is intended to practice a particular language point then the author will select a text that contains the target language. However, in most modern material the criteria the author uses will be far broader, and will depend much more, for example, on the topic of the unit. This is certainly the case in *New Inside Out* and very specifically in our *Global* course, which I'd recommend that you have a look at as the choice of literary extracts is made very much an overt feature of the course. It has a strapline 'Learn English, Learn through English, Learn about English' and, as well as literary extracts, contains articles by Prof David Crystal on aspects of the development of English as a language family (to include local varieties of English).

**Q. Do you believe teachers and students should be concentrating on more contemporary literary works than English and American classics?**

A. I don't think that the only way you can make a text relevant is to use contemporary literary extracts. In the course I'm developing we have used an extract from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, for example. Both with much classical literature and with poems, for instance, there are universal themes: love, jealousy, anger, heroism, sadness, goodness/evil, etc. that transcend the particularities of the English as it was written at the time. Of course, I think it's important to choose texts that are appropriate to the language level of the student, such that the text is accessible, but I think there is a place for both contemporary and classical literature.

**Q. What is your idea of implementing literary texts for students of English as a foreign language? What should be the main purpose in the classroom?**

A. As I've alluded to above, texts can serve a number of teaching purposes, both as springboards for discussion or writing activities, and for introducing or exemplifying language points such as grammar and vocabulary. Texts serve a wider purpose too. They

allow for self-reflection, and they can simply be intrinsically a pleasure to read, which in turn serves a motivational purpose. Texts help students to develop a range of reading skills, too. Students often find authentic material daunting, so helping students to an understanding that we read texts in our own language for a range of purposes helps them to improve their ability to recognise a) why they are reading something, and b) to apply a relevant set of reading sub-skills in order to decode and respond to the text.

**Q. Would you say literature spots in English textbooks will expand in the future editions, and do you believe literature will play an even greater role in the future English language teaching (as well as the Communicative Language teaching)?**

A. This is a very difficult question to answer. I take as my starting point the length of lessons and the curriculum requirements of the students. In most teaching contexts students are restricted either to a 50 minute lesson, or an hour and a half. If they have just one lesson a week, then the opportunities for consolidation and development of the theme of material designed for one particular lesson are limited. In some teaching contexts a high proportion of the students may be able to attend one lesson but not the follow up lesson. In most teaching contexts, reading will be only one of a number of teaching strands that are regarded as essential by the institution, or, for example, as part of preparation for particular exams.

All of these features constrain what the author is able to achieve on what, in most coursebooks, will be a two page spread. There are, for instance opportunities for the use of reading in supplementary texts. In addition to readers, some coursebooks focus on reading skills, but skills based coursebooks are not, historically, bestsellers. The readers markets are, on the other hand, quite successful, but readers are primarily for self study. Where I think there are opportunities for expansion is through the explosion in digital publishing. In business English, for instance, we see publishers providing regular online eLessons involving reading texts from contemporary business magazines. But if you were to focus purely on literary texts then I'm not sure that digital publishing helps that much, other than to increase the options available to the teacher to tailor the course to the needs and interests of their students. How much a teacher is prepared to tailor and select material is a much wider discussion, as it depends on the level of training, the teacher's own teaching load and what the students' expectations are.

## Sažetak

“Je li književost jezik? *ili* Je li jezik književost?” naslov je članka C.J. Brumfita i S. J. Burkea, jednog među prvima koji raspravlja o jezičnom pristupu književnosti u poučavanju engleskog kao stranog jezika. Premda većinom odbijene te zanemarene kao valjano sredstvo poučavanja jezika prije 1980-te, broj akademskih rasprava o različitim metodama i tehnikama uvođenja književnosti u program poučavanja engleskog jezika značajnije se povećao tijekom posljednja tri desetljeća. Kasne osamdesete, a posebice rane devedesete prošlog stoljeća, donose brojna izdanja, kako lingvisti tako i profesora jezika, koji započinju prepoznavati značaj književnog izričaja kao vrijednog izvora za poučavanje jezika, pritom naglašavajući različite pristupe ponovnom uvođenju književnosti u nastavu engleskog jezika. Posljedično tome, dotada okarakterizirane kao odveć kompleksne i nepraktične, djela poezije, romani te drame postaju obogaćujući, ispunjujući te čak obavezni elementi u usvajanju engleskog jezika.

Međutim, problem poučavanja nečega tako jedinstvenoga, obogaćujućeg i ugodnoga, ali i nepredvidljivog, neizmijenjenog te kompleksnog, prirodno zahtijeva detaljno istraživanje temeljnih gledišta poučavanja: pedagoških, kulturnih, metodičkih, te naravno, jezičnih. U svrhu uspješnog predstavljanja književnosti u učionicama stranog jezika, potrebno je razmotriti teorijske pristupe, kao i jednako bitno iskustvo “iz prve ruke” – učitelja i profesora. Nastavljajući, tj. proširujući analizu književnosti u nastavi jezika, ovaj rad nastoji pregledati daljnje značajne razvoje te nedavne pristupe uvođenju književnosti u nastavu, usredotočujući se pritom na praktičnu stranu – poučavanje u učionici engleskog jezika. Pomoću neprocjenjivih povratnih informacija, dobivenih od profesora engleskog jezika, rad dovodi raspravu na jedinstvenu razinu obrazovanja u Republici Hrvatskoj, s idejom da će saznanja iz ovog istraživanja biti primjenjiva u sličnim svjetskim kontekstima, gdje se engleski također uči kao strani jezik. Istražujući teoretske pristupe i njihove praktične primjene, ovaj rad nadalje namjerava ponuditi, u svome suvremenome pristupu, studiju uloge te položaja književnosti u današnjem jezičnom poučavanju, kao i njene koristi u usvajanju Engleskog kao stranog jezika.

Ključne riječi: Engleski kao strani jezik, književnost, poučavanje, nastava, prijedlozi i pristupi