Language Arts in Asia

Literature and Drama in English, Putonghua and Cantonese

Edited by

C. A. DeCOURSEY
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CHAPTER EIGHT

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE INTEGRATIVELY BY USING LANGUAGE-BASED APPROACH: AN INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

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Abstract: So far, the teaching of English language and that of literature are implemented separately. This paper is concerned with how to teach both subjects in integration by using a language-based approach. The reason is that for students of English as a foreign or second language, the language of literary works is difficult, and in order to appreciate the subtleties within the students need to explore and examine the linguistic properties. Based on action research with two groups of students of different levels, a model of how to exploit classroom teaching materials using this approach will be demonstrated. It is evident that through the model, the separation of the teaching of the two subjects can be bridged.

Keywords: language-based approach, linguistic properties, integration

1. Introduction

In the Indonesian university context, English literature is taught in the department of English both under the Faculty of Letters and the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. It includes such subjects as “Introduction to Poetry”, “Introduction to Prose”, “Introduction to Drama”, “Poetry Analysis”, “Prose Analysis”, “Drama Analysis”, and “Literary Criticism”. In addition to English literature, linguistics and English skills in various forms are also taught in the two departments (Fakultas Sastra dan Seni Rupa, 2010). In non-English departments, English is taught over two semesters. However, there is a demarcation that English literature and English language (including linguistics and English skills) are delivered as separate subjects. The academics from the two fields keep arguing that the two subjects are not complementary and that they cannot work collaboratively.

As Indonesia is a setting where English is a foreign or second language, works of English literature are often considered difficult by learners of English. The most salient contributing factor to the difficulty might be that the language of literature is different from that of ordinary English. In other words, what students find difficult is the distinctive literary style that is not found in the language they are learning. The approach can be used to teach the same materials to different levels. It is hoped that this paper will assist literature lecturers in eliminating the difficulty and motivate lecturers in the literature and linguistics fields to cooperate and share their expertise to integrate the teaching of the two seemingly disparate subjects.

2. Language-based Approach and the Teaching of Literature
2.1 Language-based Approach

Language-based approach is an approach to the study of literature through the exploration of its language. Whereas this approach seeks to integrate the study of literature and language, it is less concerned with literary texts as products and more concerned with literary texts as processes (Brumfit & Carter, 1986: 110-132; Carter & Long, 1991: 3; MacCarthy & Carter, 1994; Carter, 1996: 2). In the view of this approach, reading a literary work means