RESEARCH ARTICLE

MEDIA ADAPTATIONS OF LITERATURE AND ESL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The paper dealt with the "Media adaptations of literature" and how far is it useful in ESL classrooms to teach the target language. Such media adaptations of Literature when incorporated in ESL class can help provide learners with the best atmosphere and techniques to approach the target language. As literature is said to be a window to ones culture, so incorporating target language's literature in a multimedia form can prove to be of benefit. Multimedia forms like movies, songs, TV series, video games and the like, which are a recreation and are been adapted from a literary work. Another aim of this paper is to figure out the ways in which these technologies might be dealt with, and could be adapted in the form of tasks and activities in ESL class, in order to make language learning possible in a constructive and more interesting manner. The study provides an overview to the various literary adaptations explaining how such adaptations can be useful in providing a better language learning environment. The paper provides the importance of such adaptations in ESL pedagogy by devising various tasks and activities based on these media adaptations for the ESL classroom. The study carried out an interview session where the researcher interviewed teachers and students of English both from ELT and Literature backgrounds, and collected their opinions on such media adaptations of literary works and reforming them into ESL teaching aid.

Keywords: Literature, Media, Adaptation of literature, Literature into media, ESL (English for Second language), ESL classroom, Activities/tasks.

Introduction

Today literature is not just limited to books but it is scattered all around us in many forms and is easy to access. Literature is no longer a piece of heavy word play which was only understood and taken interest by those who were studying it or teaching it because it was out of competence for everyone a certain amount of literary competence was needed to make sense of such great works of literature such as, Shakespeare, William Blake, Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth and so forth. Today we are inhaling such great literature in our day to day life without even realising it. Literature is made so easily accessible that globally we are connected through it. We are not just experiencing our native literature but also very thoroughly enjoying global

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literature. This has been made possible by our immensely growing technology. Literature what now we experience is blessed by the hands of growing media and technological advancements, from television to big screen cinema to animation worlds to songs and advertisements, each and everywhere there is the essence of literature. Children are learning and imitating the language which is which is showcased through the multi-media. Even before joining the schools children are speaking and understanding non-native tongue i.e. English language. Such multi-media adaptations are windows to the target language culture. Media is a great source of information to the unknown culture and its language. Watching television and cartoons is no longer a futile job, instead we can get exposed to great literature through such technology. There is an endless list of movies, songs, cartoons, TV series and even video games which are the adaptations of great literary works. The question remain is how such adaptations should be transformed in order to materialise them as a source of pedagogical and learning tool in an ESL classroom. To learn a language does not only mean to know its grammar or to be able to read its literature, but its more than just knowing and understanding. Achieving a fluency level in second language just like one's native tongue is what takes us to the study of ELT and its proponents of what has been done up till now and how and if there is any scope of more improvements. To learn a language means to be able to think like its native speaker to be aware of the native's culture its differences, complexities, values, customs, society, beliefs, myths and all the sociological, psychological aspects because a language one speaks is been influenced and is a product of all these aspects. The field of ELT has gone a long way with respect to the methodologies of teaching a second language. The history of ELT is full of an endless list of approaches, methodologies, syllabus etc, all in quest of a best practice for teaching and learning a second language.

The best way to excavate into a new language is through its literature. Literature opens the doors to that unknown world and when we read it is like relating oneself to it. It is like impersonating the fictitious characters playing their roles by experiencing their happiness and sorrows, understanding their point of views, agreeing, disagreeing, finding similarities and differences to ones culture and language and so on. A big discussion on including literature in ESL classroom has given pave to many studies. Adapted works of literature into media are making the literature reach to a wider audience and spread on a large scale. Such adaptations of literature can be adapted in an ESL classroom or to any classroom for that matter. Media adaptations not only reach the educated public but also to the uneducated audience in the form of TV series, songs, movies etc. It not just entertains the public but also enumerates them with new world knowledge.

Literature Review

Adaptation can be a transpositional practice, casting a specific genre into another generic mode, an act of revision in itself (Julie Sanders, 2006). Literary adaptation is the adapting of a literary source (e.g. a novel, short story, and poem) to another genre or medium, such as in a movie, a song, animation, or even a video game. These adaptations are the forms of technical sources which are developed out of the various written literary texts. It is the transformation of an authentic piece into another authentic piece which gives and makes previous text a visual experience.

A buff of Hollywood movies, TV series, songs, animation, and even video games is seen in today's youth and adults. For example there is this great Academy award winning movie which is the adaptation of a great literary work of fiction the novel "Gone with the wind" bt Margaret Mitchell. The rate of such adaptations have only increased with time, there are many similar examples of the books which were not given slightest of interest until their adaptation into some multimedia form. Media adaptations of literature hold the power of attracting the attention and interests of people.

We all are not keen readers, in order to familiarize ESL learners with the target language (English), then such media adaptations would be a good tool to use as a teaching material in order to familiarise learners with the target language. Such media adaptations would help in securing the interests of the learners, the real task for the teacher remain is, how to incorporate such media adaptations in classroom as an authentic material for teaching second language in order to give training in the use of second language.

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Adapting such media adaptations in the form of activities and tasks would train learners in various aspects of the target language covering different accents, standardization, supra-segmental features familiarizing and giving practice in all these aspects. Through media one can observe, listen and engage oneself into the target language culture in the real time inside a classroom setting.

There are many examples of the books which were known before until its multi-media adaptation into movies, some examples to mention can be 'Forrest Gump' (1994) is an American epic romantic comedy-drama film. 'Devil wears Prada' (2003, 2006) is a bestselling chick literature novel by Lauren Weisberger transformed into movie. 'P.S. I Love You' (2004, 2007) is a American drama film based on the novel of the same name by Cecelia Ahern. All these books and more as such became popular overnight after people watched their movie adaptations therefore; such adaptations have a tendency to capture the interests of audiences. When we adapt such media in classroom teaching and make it the medium to teach target language and give training through these adaptations then it will have a positive impact on the learning.

Survey and `interpretation

Media adaptations of literature for an ESL classroom are viewed as a great step towards effective learning and teaching. To support the subject matter of this study, a small survey was carried out in the form of formal interview to gather data in a qualitative form to assess the need and importance of literature and media adaptations of literature in ESL classroom. This survey involves students as well as teachers of English/ELT at AMU (Aligarh Muslim University). The survey has dealt with the usefulness of the multimedia adaptations of literature in ESL classroom.

The responses were gathered and following statements were made:

A M.A. ELT student said that, "yes, in my opinion, multimedia adaptations of literature into various forms can be a good choice for the language classroom. Movies can be used to assist students in their pronunciation and help them practice native like pronunciation of the target language. If the teacher shows samples of advertisements in the language classroom, the students can be acquainted with the language used in advertising. Not only this, audio records of songs made from poems can be a good source of drilling exercises to practice listening. In all these things, the students will simultaneously have a taste of literature and practice their language time."

A teacher responded, "Definitely, it will be a good choice. Language teaching through literature has always been interesting in the classroom. When literature is adapted into multimedia, it facilitates a conducive environment for language learning. Moreover, visuals always help in retaining things into a long term memory. The understanding of stylistics, kinaesthetic, tones and intonation may become easy if multimedia adaptations of literature are used in the language classroom. For e.g. songs can be used to introduce the rhyming schemes to the students similarly, dialogues or punch lines of advertisements may help students to understand the figurative use of language. They may also help students to think critically to understand the various connotations used in the multimedia."

Another teacher responded to this, "Yes, it is good choice for language classroom. Students will get to know through the movies adapted from novels about the social, cultural and anthropological aspects of that particular time and how language has evolved and developed with time and how it is different now. The element of contemporary is very crucial and it gets clear with these media like- movies adapted from novels, songs made up from Ballads, Ode, Folk songs and so on."

The general impression which was gathered through all these responses is quite clear and supports the idea of implementing such media adaptations of literature in a language classroom. Language teacher have long been searching for effective for effective and efficient ways to render the learning experience in class as true to life as possible and to assist students in developing the necessary independent study skills (Brussino, 1996). This search for effective teaching and learning methods has progressed through the use of various media, including text, radio, broadcast TV, audio and video tape and early incarnations of computer assisted learning. Text and workbooks are useful for some aspects of drill and practice, but they neglect the need for meaningful, learner generated written and verbal communication in practical contexts.

Incorporating media adaptations of literature for devising activities/tasks in a language classroom

For using multimedia adaptations in ESL classroom, there must be some form of tasks which should be designed out of such multimedia adaptation. Efforts should be put by the teacher, in order to devise various tasks and activities with the help of such multimedia adaptations of literature, in order to provide aid to learners by providing ample amount of practice in the target language use, through the medium of these developed tasks/activities. The study has put forward the usefulness of such media adaptations of literature in a language classroom, supporting the details with the gathered data from the survey. In order to give these media adaptations a shape of classroom tasks/activities, an educator have to plan it carefully by keeping in mind the outcomes expected out of the learners after employing these tasks/activities.

While designing the language tasks a teacher has to keep in mind some aspects related to the second language teaching. A skilled teacher is aware of the fact that strategies, activities/tasks differs from one classroom setting to another, that is to say, a strategy proved effective for one particular class or learners, might not be effective for some other classroom setting and for its learners. This is because of the difference in the levels, and also the difference can occur at the individual basis. As a syllabus is designed in a graded manner, in the same way the strategies and activities adapted for each level should also be designed in a graded manner, moving from simple to complex according to the needs of the learners. Therefore, tasks/activities development shall be developed keeping in mind all these possible variations.

While devising and selecting tasks/activities for a language classroom, a teacher should be careful about:

- The background of the learner. What is the social background of the learner and what is his native tongue.

- The proficiency level of a learner. As English language learners acquire English as a second language, they progress through five language proficiency levels: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. The rate of progression through each English proficiency level varies according to the individual characteristics of each English language learner. The research base on second language acquisition demonstrates that high levels of proficiency in English can be achieved typically within four to seven years, provided that effective English language development occurs on a consistent basis.

- The educational background of the learner. Whether he comes from an English medium school or regional school where everything is taught in one's native tongue.

- The interest areas of the learners, so that the strategy or activity will be selected which could attract learners' interest and raise his motivational levels to participate in the classroom activities.

The researcher tried out building some tasks/activities by incorporating media adaptations of literature for the ESL classrooms. The activities devised here include some sort of multimedia in it. The devised tasks/activities are included in the appendix of the paper. All these activities are applicable for the language classrooms of varied levels.

Conclusion

Multimedia unites all forms and tools, we receive everything in one box. Such media adaptations of literature are the most modern and effective ways to look upon when it comes to second language learning. Literature is a social document it is the shortcut to any culture's traditions, values, norms, people, and the language which they use. Although it is not a new approach to incorporate literature in language classrooms as literature is considered as the best source for attending the target language use. The new dimension offered by this paper, is the way of incorporating the media adaptations of literature in the ESL classroom in the form of activities and tasks. Multimedia which is successfully and on a great pace transforming these great works of literature into media genres, like movies, TV series, animation, video games. This way they are spreading literature globally making it accessible and easier to comprehend in the form of entertainment. It's an art to transform the lengthy pieces of literature into two hours movie, into a four minutes song, into a daily soap, or into a video game etc. In short, we are experiencing a large amount of literature without even realising this. Therefore, when we talk of incorporating these media adaptations in a language classroom to aid the learners

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in order to familiarise them and train them in the target language, then it becomes an educational approach and pedagogical methodology. Media adaptations are the simplified forms of literature. This study put forward the idea of incorporating such media in the language classroom, and stated its effectiveness to approach the target language. The study presented the ways and techniques for adapting such media in the form of language tasks/activities. These activities would be affective in giving practice to the learners in the use of target language. A language teacher therefore, is required to be very open-minded towards adapting the best possible techniques to equip the learners. Devising media based activities and implementing them in the classroom is one of the qualities of a good educator. A teacher must be trained enough to manipulate things and materials and be flexible in nature to welcome all possible techniques and materials which can aid learners' understanding of the target language. Incorporating media in a classroom transforms it into a smart classroom. Although this might be a little time consuming and also be an expensive venture for some to adapt, many would avoid incorporating such new methodologies. Teachers usually sticks to their old ways of teaching, the reason might be the lack of training and awareness for using such new and effective methodologies. Another reason might be the lack of resources and mostly because educators find compliance in sticking to their old traditional ways of teaching, no one wants to make an effort in transforming these monotonous conventions and any change is not usually welcomed open minded. The need of the hour is to bring a change and make transformations, because these old conventions would not let us progress, this transformation is necessary for our learners to progress.

The present study was carried out in a limited time and scale, therefore, the researcher suggests for future studies for initiating a survey and observation at a large scale and magnitude. The activities and tasks developed by the researcher should be tested for their effectiveness, by implementing them in language classrooms.

Appendix

Media-based tasks/activities

Activity 1

Objective: Giving practice in analysing and making predictions, by making the learners practice in guessing the story of a daily soap by activating their imagination and creativity.

Time: 50-60 mins

Group: Heterogeneous

Level: intermediate

Materials required: video player, an interesting episode of a daily soap.

Skills covered: listening, speaking, writing

Procedure:

- The teacher divides the class in groups of 4 or 5, to initiate a group work and participation.
- The teacher plays an episode of 25 mins, and asks the learners to watch it carefully.
- After watching the episode, the learners are instructed to guess and imagine what can happen in the next episode. For this task learner were given 5mins to decide and discuss among the members of their group..
- After discussing it, each group presents their point of views on what happens in the next episode.
- After listening to each group, the teacher plays the next episode.
- After watching the second episode, the teacher gives a writing task to the students to write down a paragraph on how much does the next episode turn out different/similar from/to their own guess.
- Teacher instructs them to also write about the show and the episodes, whether they liked them, what according to them was their interpretation of the next episode.

Variation: The same activity can be done with movies or animation and other types of media adaptations and with the different group and level of learners.

Activity 2

Objective: Giving practice in understanding the theme, central idea, by making the learners differentiate between different types of songs by comprehending their meaning.

Time: 15-20 mins

Group: heterogeneous

Level: Early advanced

Materials: audio tape, four songs (in English/Target language), pen-pencil-paper

Skills covered: listening, speaking, reading, writing

Procedure

- The teacher makes the learners to listen to 4 different songs.
- After each song, the learners are provided with a handout in which they are required to write about the main idea, theme, and related details of the song which they have heard.
- After writing about all the four songs, the learners were directed to differentiate between the four songs and also find out the similarities between them.
- Teacher initiates a whole-class discussion, where the learners discuss and share ideas among themselves.

Variation:

*Teach a song that uses slang expressions (e.g. "I heard it through the grape vine")

*Teach a song that uses s new tense you have introduced.

*Add variety to your reading comprehension lesson. Learners can read lyrics and search for main idea, theme, and details.

Activity 3

Objective:

- To make the learners perform the various language functions.
- To familiarise the learners with the characters and story of the video game, by engaging them in a RPG (role play game).
- To engage them in discussions and conversation using the target language.
- To activate their cognition and senses.

Time: 45-50mins

Group: Heterogeneous

Level: Beginner/intermediate/advance

Materials required: computer/play station, a RPG video game.

skills covered: listening, speaking, reading, kinaesthetic (to enact and play the game)

Procedure:

- All RPGs have stories, and all stories have a setting. Before having the students play a game, the teacher ask the learners about their knowledge of different cultures.
- Let the learners debate about the similarities and differences in their cultures (if a multicultural classroom) or of different cultures in general (if a monocultural classroom).
- After the class discussion, the teacher tells the learners that they are going to play a video that has elements of different cultures.
- The teacher should give them a bit of information about the game and its characters.
- RPG games are generally based on pretending to be someone else, where players take control of a character and embark in journeys rivalling the greatest Homerian tales of the Narnian adventure.
- The players become exposed to long hours of in-game dialogues, as well as heavy amounts of written text. As the player collects information by talking to the characters, he or she advances through the game in order to reach a final goal.
- During this playing time, the learners would be exposed to English language dialogues, probably with various accents, which would help the learners develop their aural skills.

- RPGs would also help in reading skills, as the game will not continue unless the player achieves certain goals which are communicated to the learner through either spoken communication or written text.

Variation:

***The teacher should design certain activities to get the learners talking about the experiences they just had.

*Learners can be asked to analyse their favourite character from the game. Beginners or elementary learners could be asked to talk about how the character looks, talks, and acts, while advance learners could talk about their character's behaviour, thoughts, and purposes.

Activity 4

Objective: to teach suprasegmental features of the target language, with the help of the song.

Time: 30-45mins

Group: heterogeneous

Level: advanced

Materials required: audio player, song, pen-pencil-paper

Skills covered: listening, speaking, reading, writing

Procedure:

- The teacher give directions to the learners, to pay attention to the song and understand the rhythm, stress patterns, and syllable divisions in the song.
- Before playing the song the teacher provide learners with the written lyrics of the song. Teacher should play the song more than once.
- While listening to the song, the learners are directed to carefully mark the intonation patterns (do the syllable division, mark the stress, check for the tone (high-fall, low-fall, fall-rise, or rise-fall).
- After completing the task, teacher asks the learners to read aloud the lyrics, and read them according to the intonation, which they have marked.
- Cross check the sentences their intonation, and do the corrections.

Variation: songs can be an effective way to teach rhyme scheme to a literature class.

Activity 5

Objective: To familiarise learners with the song by asking them to reorder the jumbled-up lyrics, by giving them practice in reordering the jumbled-up lyrics of the song.

Time: 15-20mins

Group: Heterogeneous

Level: Beginners

Materials required: audio player, song, activity sheet, pen-pencil-paper

Skills covered: listening, speaking, reading, writing

Procedure:

- Learners are directed to pay attention to the song which is going to be played for them.
- After listening to the song, the teacher distributes activity sheets to the learners. The activity sheet consist the lyrics of the same song in a jumbled-up form.
- Learners are asked to reorder the lyrics correctly.
- Teacher plays the song again, and asks the learners to check their arrangement of the lyrics.

Variation:

*you can use songs to consolidate grammatical structures and vocabulary.

*can initiate a discussion, for revision, or to focus on word order.

Activity 6

Objective: Giving practice in completing the sentences, by recalling the lyrics of the song and make full sentences after listening to it.

Time: 10-15 mins

Group: Heterogeneous

Level: Beginner

Materials required: an audio player, a song, pen-pencil-paper, a handout consisting of completion type sentences.

Skills covered: Listening, reading, and writing

Procedure:

- The learners are directed to carefully listen to the song which is being played.
- After listening to the song, the teacher distributes handouts consisting of completion type exercise. In the exercise there are given incomplete lyrics of the song which the learners have just heard. The learners are required to complete these sentences by recalling the lyrics of the song.

Variation:

***Teacher can also give activities on cloze and information-gap, matching, and also multiple choices.

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