

Evaluating the Suitability of Literary Texts in Grade 10 English Text Book for Language Classrooms

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Abstract

Literary texts increase the learners' proficiency of integrated language learning as they enable the learners to apply all macro and micro skills. This study evaluated the suitability of literary texts in grade ten English for Ethiopia textbook for language classrooms. The evaluation was made from two aspects-from the learners' aspect (learners' literary experience, linguistic proficiency, cultural background, level of understanding, age, and interest) and from the text itself (the text's content, topics, themes, language, accessibility, free of bias). The study employed a descriptive design which involves a qualitative research method. Document (textbook) analysis was used as the main tool for gathering data. The Evaluation result indicated that most literary texts do not consider the learner's literary experience, cultural background, language competence, age, and understanding level. Curriculum designers consider all the students in the country in general and classrooms in particular as if they had equal exposure to literary texts. The literary text does not consider the students' cultural background since almost all of the texts are written by foreigners in foreign contexts. However, the literary texts are relatively good in relation to language skills aimed to be improved, their length, contents, topics and themes.

Keywords: evaluation, suitability, literary texts, textbook, language classrooms

Introduction

Literature is constituted by language and it represents one of the most recurrent uses of language. Language and linguistic analysis can also be employed to access literature from the learner's point of view. Brumfit and Carter (1986) already emphasized the role of literature as "an ally of language". This technique is by no means novel since literature has been a widely used teaching tool in different language teaching methods. Literature is the media of teaching and learning the authentic language. The language of literature is well organized and wonderful choice of diction. The recent historical Positions regarding the use of English language teaching, and the inclusion of literary texts may foster the development of reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking skills.

These days, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become a main trend in the language-teaching field. Those not-so-authentic and outdated materials used in the language classroom will greatly impede the application of CLT in Ethiopia. Using literature as a text bridges the gap of materials lacking authenticity and access to develop students' critical thinking ability. Using literature may integrate students' language learning with their life experience and personal feelings together.

Hence, incorporating literary texts in the text books is one way of making them suitable and enjoyable for language learners. To this end, the intention of this paper is to assess the suitability of literary texts in grade 10 English textbook for language classrooms and to introduce teachers about the importance of literary texts for the development of language skills, criteria of selecting these ma-

materials, ways of delivering literary texts in language classes and the integration of these literary texts with the language skills.

Statement of the problem

Unlike the western countries, in Ethiopia, it is uncommon to incorporate literary materials in the textbooks of language learning. It is the researcher's strong opinion that syllabus designers have forgotten the role of literature and literary texts for the four language skills and for students' language competence. It also seems that teachers have not given due attention for literary parts while teaching the textbook.

From the curriculum developers' side, it is quite customary that they give very little attention for literary texts when they prepare the textbooks. They give great emphasis for grammar rules and language skills ignoring the role of literary texts for the four major language skills and other sub language skills like grammar, vocabulary and syntax. They incorporate very little number of literary texts with very limited items- most often extracts of stories, poems and rarely extracts of novels.

As the researcher has also critically observed the textbook, the gap is not only in quantity, but most seriously in quality. The literary extracts added in the textbook lack suitability. They are not prepared in a way that they take in to account the learners' age, religion, culture, literary background, and background knowledge, level of competency, background area, gender and need. They lack variety in items –similar genres of extracts are often used in the textbook. Moreover, most of the literary texts incorporated in the textbook are not appropriate to improve students' language skills. Most of them are not prepared in a way that they develop the language skills interactively. Such tempting situation thus instigated the researcher for carrying out further evaluation to shed some light on the suitability of literary texts for language classes with particular reference of 10th grade textbook. Accordingly, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Do the literary texts in the textbook take in to consideration students' cultural background, literary experience, level of understanding etc?
2. Does the textbook involve literary texts whose topics/themes motivate students to read?
3. Are the literary texts incorporated in the textbook important for language classrooms i.e for the development of language skills and communicative functions?
4. What are the criteria for selecting literary texts for language classrooms?

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this research was to assess the suitability of literary texts of grade 10 English textbook for language classes. More specifically;

- To examine whether or not the literary texts in the textbook consider students' cultural background, literary experience, linguistic proficiency, level of understanding etc.
- To introduce the roles of literary texts as material to develop students' integrated language skills, including grammar, vocabulary as well as build their cultural awareness.
- To examine the type of literary texts (tale, fairy tale, short story, and drama e.t.c) incorporated in the text book for students to be motivated.
- To introduce the selection criteria to incorporate literary materials used for language classrooms.

Delimitation

This study focused on evaluating the suitability of literary texts in grade ten English textbook. In view of constraints of time and resources, the researcher has limited his scope just on one grade level. Its result, however, is not area specific; rather it works everywhere at which English is being given as a discipline.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical perspectives in using literature for language classrooms

In the early times, not much was actually said about literature in the foreign language classes. Literary texts of the target language were read and translated, used as examples of good writing and ‘illustrations of the grammatical rules’. The focus of this teaching method was on form, on learning the rules of grammar and the lexical items as they are appeared in the texts. There was no literary interest, nor interest on content. Approaches focused on using language in social situations and syllabuses were designed along ‘functional/notional lines’ (Brumfit, 1985 p. 6). There was little space for creativity and literature in such language teaching context. (cited in Lima 2010:p.110).

In near recent years, the role of literature as a basic component and source of authentic texts of the language curriculum rather than an ultimate aim of English instruction has been gaining momentum. Among language educators, there has been a lot debate as to how, when, where, and why literature should be incorporated in ESL/EFL curriculum. Many teachers consider the use of literature in language teaching as an interesting and worthy concern (sage1987:1). The different genres of literature play a great role for the development of language skills. Thus, the place of literature as a tool rather than an end in teaching English as a second or foreign language is unearthed.

Many scholars have also argued that the effectiveness of the use of literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Those against its use argue that the language used in literature is structurally complex, conceptually difficult to understand, and unique to a particular culture or authentic situation and therefore does not support the goals of teaching grammar or helping students meet their academic and occupational needs (Kay, 1982). However, others counter these reservations with their own arguments.

Van (2009), for example, believes studying literature in an EFL classroom is beneficial for many reasons: it provides meaningful context; involves a profound range of vocabulary, dialogue, and prose; appeals to the imagination and enhances creativity; encourages critical thinking; and is in line with Communicative Language Teaching principles.

Why is literature significant for language teaching?

Literature is the main vehicle for teaching and learning language. Literary works provided additional material of grammar practice, vocabulary learning, and translation (Liaw 2001; cited in Khatib, Hossein and Rahimi 2012: p.32).

The use of literature in the EFL classes was also supported by McKay (1982), who argued that “literature offers several benefits to ESL classes. It can be useful in developing linguistic knowledge both on a usage and use level. Secondly, to the extent that students enjoy reading literature, it may increase their motivation to interact with a text and thus, ultimately increase their reading proficiency. It may also enhance students' understanding of a foreign culture and perhaps "spur their own creation of imaginative works."

Brumfit (1986) shared the same idea that literature was a skill subject, not a content subject and stressed the potential of literature in enhancing the reading skills (p.277). Literature is viewed as a rich resource for language learning. To Brumfit and Carter (1986), literary texts contain lots of meaningful contexts in which used in a natural way. By this I mean, the students will be able to be exposed to a variety of unexpected uses and types of linguistic expressions. Then they gradually gain familiarity with different linguistic uses, conventional forms of written mode and develop their communicative capacity. With this aspect, literature offers learners a chance to process and interpret new language in a specific context. Loff (1988) introduced literature because literature will extend

linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax.

The purpose of using literature in a language classroom is to make the class interactive and it can be stated that an interactive class can obviously improve communicative competence of the learners and keep a lasting impact on their mind. Such a class can enhance the critical thinking abilities of the learners and at the same time maintain a learner centre environment. Literary texts are rich sources of classroom activities and can surely prove to be very motivating for learners.

Integrating literary texts with language skills

Using literature is a popular technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) in our times.

Literature plays an important role in teaching four basic language skills. However, when using literature in the language classroom, skills should never be taught in isolation but in an integrated way. Teachers should try to teach basic language skills as an integral part of oral and written language use, as part of the means for creating both referential and interactional meaning, not merely as an aspect of the oral and written production of words, phrases and sentences.

Literary texts and Reading

In reading lesson, discussion begins at the literal level with direct questions of fact regarding setting, characters, and plot which can be answered by specific reference to the text. When students master literal understanding, they move to the inferential level, where they must make speculations and interpretations concerning the characters, setting, and theme, and where they produce the author's point of view. After comprehending a literary selection at the literal and inferential levels, students are ready to do a collaborative work. That is to state that they share their evaluations of the work and their personal reactions to it - to its characters, its theme(s), and the author's point of view. This is also the suitable time for them to share their reactions to the work's natural cultural issues and themes. The third level, the personal / evaluative level stimulates students to think imaginatively about the work and provokes their problem-solving abilities. Discussion deriving from such questions can be the foundation for oral and written activities (Stern 1991:332).

Literary texts and Writing

Literature can be a powerful and motivating source for writing in ESL / EFL, both as a model and as subject matter. Literature as a model occurs when student writing becomes closely similar to the original work or clearly imitates its content, theme, organization, and /or style. However, when student writing exhibits original thinking like interpretation or analysis, or when it emerges from, or is creatively stimulated by, the reading, literature serves as subject matter.

Literary texts, Speaking, and Listening

The study of literature in a language class, though being mainly associated with reading and writing, can play an equally meaningful role in teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, pantomiming, reenactment, discussion, and group activities may center on a work of literature.

Selecting literary materials for the language classrooms

While selecting literary texts to be used in language classroom, the students' language proficiency, interests, age, sex, etc should be taken in to account in order not to bore students with inappropriate materials.

In general, when we select literary texts for language classroom, the criteria should be set from two angles: from the angle of *the text itself* and from *the learners'* angle. The text aspect may include its content, length, exploitability, accessibility, language (vocabulary, grammar, syntax) and

the four language skills. The learners' aspect, on the other hand, may involve their cultural background, linguistic proficiency, literary background, age, level of understanding.

Lazar (1993), summarized three factors which teachers should think when choosing literary texts for their suitability to the students in language classes. These are: the students' cultural background, the students' linguistic proficiency and the students' literary background.

A. The Students' cultural background

When selecting literary materials for language classes, we have to think how far the students' cultural background and their social and political expectations will help or hinder their understanding of a text. It is too difficult to talk about a certain person's story without having any information about the societal background from which that person comes. We need to have some sort of knowledge about that person's culture.

It is also true that texts which may appear to be very remote in time and place from the world today may still have appeal for students in different countries around the world. This is either because they touch on themes (such as industrialization or life in the city) which are relevant to the students, or they deal with human relationships and feelings (such as conflict between parent and children) which strike a chord in the students' own lives. Besides, many students may have a strong sense of curiosity about another culture and enjoy studying its life because they believe it reveals key insights about that group of society.

B. The Students' linguistic proficiency

Learners may be advanced and communicate with ease in an English-speaking environment. Yet they might not be able to cope with the language of the texts because it may strikingly differ from the usual norms of language use; it may use metaphor, dialects. Therefore, when we select literary texts, we might need to ask ourselves questions like:

-Are students sufficiently familiar with the usual norms of language use to recognize when these are subverted?

-How much of the language in the text will students be able to infer?

-Will students find it useful and enjoyable to study the text, or will they feel demotivated by the difficulties of the language?

-Even if the language is difficult, will students be motivated by other factors to study the text?

C. The students' literary background

If the students have some kind of literary competence in their mother tongue, they may already know similar conventions for reading and interpreting literature in English. On the other hand, students who have little literary knowledge, but are linguistically proficient, may find themselves understanding each individual word on the page without being able to make sense of the literary meanings behind the texts.

Those who grew up in cities or towns may relatively have access to literary materials to read than those who grew in remotes or rural areas. We need to carefully consider where our students are, not just geographically (and meteorologically) as Marshall notes, but culturally, historically, and cognitively, not to mention the most immediate issue that concerns us as language teachers, i.e. linguistically.

Besides, the texts we select for language classes should consider the students' age, interest/need and their level to understand texts. Finding a text with the right language level is crucial. It should neither be too difficult that students cannot infer the meaning of particular lexical items and are forced to look up words too frequently; nor too easy that there is no challenge and no vocabulary gain. Meaning, the texts must be in accordance with the learners' maturity level.

However, since Lazar's criteria above are very student-centered, the researcher added other supplementary criteria that are related more with the text itself including length, content (topics & themes) and the language (grammar, vocabulary, syntax etc).

Accordingly, applying those criteria to the evaluation, the researcher added the following text based criteria, which are particularly important considerations for evaluating literary texts used for language teaching:

Content:

- The power of topics/themes to stimulate students' emotion
- Relevance and appropriateness of topics/themes for target students (age).
- The acceptability of values and ideas advocated by the texts according to the learners' culture.
- Free of bias in sex, religion or race

Language:

- Vocabulary
- Dialogue & prose.
- Grammar.
- Deviants/informal language forms or structures

Others:

- Availability: texts should easily be accessible.
- Length: the length of the texts should not be too long

Therefore, the evaluation/ analysis was made considering both the text itself and students.

Meaning, the criteria for the evaluation were:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The students' cultural background | 4. The texts' content |
| 2. The students' linguistic proficiency | 5. The texts' language |
| 3. The students' literary background | 6. Others: length, exploitability, accessibility |

Methodology

Design

For this study, descriptive design which involves qualitative method was employed.

Instruments

Document (textbook) analysis has been selected as the main instrument of the study because it offers the most economical and reliable means of reaching a decision concerning the relative suitability of literary texts in the textbook under scrutiny.

Method of Data Analysis

After the researcher critically observed all the literary texts in the textbook, he picked them out and grouped in genres as short stories, poems and novel extracts. Then, he evaluated/analyzed these genres based on the criteria set above and upon the results, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher presented a critical evaluation/analysis of the selected textbook, grade 10 English textbook based on the criteria mentioned above. Here, it is not the entire textbook to be evaluated. Rather it is the literary texts in it for their suitability in language classrooms. That is, the analysis/evaluation was on the suitability of literary texts incorporated in the

textbook. Therefore, the evaluation/analysis was made from two angles: the text itself and the learners.

Analysis of short stories in the textbook based on the criteria discussed

Short stories make the students' reading task easier due to being simple and short when compared with the other literary genres, enlarge the advanced level readers' worldviews about different cultures and different groups of people, provide more creative, encrypt, offer a world of wonders and a world of mystery, gives students the chance to use their creativity, promote critical thinking skills, facilitates teaching a foreign culture i.e. serve as a valuable instrument in attaining cultural knowledge of the selected community. Moreover, short fiction, like all other types of literature, makes contribution to the development of cognitive analytical abilities by bringing the whole self to bear on a compressed account of a situation in a single place and moment (Sage 1987:43).

To begin with, students' cultural background is one of the criteria when we select literary materials used for language students. As Lazar (1993) emphasizes, we need to have a list of cultural aspects to consider in texts. We could refer to such a list when using literary texts with our students in order to anticipate the cultural problems students might experience when reading the texts.

When we come to our case, the stories in the textbook have not tried to introduce the cultural background, social and political expectations of the person or things being described/ narrated. Almost all of the stories are written by foreigners in foreign contexts. The texts are not localized in Ethiopian context. These will bring a great failure to teach the target language integratively through literary texts. A case in point is the story on page 44 entitled '*The friendship cake*'. In this short story, the writer is a foreign and so is the context. He used his own cultural expressions that students in his country can enjoy easily, appreciate their culture. Of course sharing ones' culture creates strong sense of curiosity about another culture if the text is written in a common cultural background. It enables students to relate the culture in the story with their own culture. However, most of the stories added in the textbook treated foreign cultures which have never been practiced in our country. This creates identity/cultural crisis on the targeted learners. Of the critically observed 14 short stories in the textbook, two of them are written by Ethiopians in an indigenous cultural context.

With regard to students' linguistic proficiency, most stories incorporated in the textbook employ relatively difficult language. The stories are written in unusual norm of language use so that students cannot easily infer the meaning from the texts. They are prepared in complex and unclear sentence constructions. Based on the researchers' critical evaluation of the short stories, the language of these literary texts are alien for the learners and they could not understand them. The learners' language competence has its own impact on their understanding skills of the content of the text.

In a similar manner, in relation to students' literary background, the stories in the textbook do not consider students' literary experience and access to these literary texts. The stories in the textbook consider all the students in the country as if they had developed a good habit of reading literary materials, but the reality is not this. Either due to the teachers' carelessness, lack of skills, unmanageability of the texts or due to the learners' problems, all the students have no equal orientations to literary texts. Those who grew up in urban areas may have better literary experience because they may have developed the habit of reading different texts like poems, lyrics, short stories, fictions and so on. Where as those from rural areas may have very little chance of being exposed to such literary texts. As result, they have limited literary orientation.

When we come to the students' age and level of understanding, the short stories in the textbook have great limitations. They do not take in to account the students' maturity level and their level of understanding because the sentences in the stories are too difficult to understand even for teachers.

As we see the short stories in the textbook from the text itself aspect, the contents of the short stories, their roles for language skills development, their length, exploitability and accessibility are the issues to be considered. Accordingly, the contents of the literary texts and the topics of the short stories treated here are relatively suitable because they arouse/stimulate the learners' deep emotion. For instance, the topic '*The friendship cake*' on page 44 creates the emotions for food and this makes students to be eager to read the story with pleasure. Similarly, the themes are relevant and appropriate to the target learners i.e. for grade ten students. More strongly, the authors of the short stories never used words, expressions or ideas that bias some group, race or sex.

As we see the language skills aimed to be improved, the short stories in the textbook relatively tried to take in to account the four language skills, vocabularies and grammars. For example, in the tale entitled with '*The snake-man and the Girl*' on page 47, the literary text (the tale) is added aiming at introducing students for grammar about reported speech. Here in the story, although the focus is on teaching grammar, other language skills like reading, dialogue, vocabulary can be developed concurrently. The story on page 62, which is extracted from '*The African Child*', is another substantial example depicting the role of the short stories in the textbook for the students' language improvement. In this short story, both reading comprehension and vocabulary skills are aimed to be improved. For example, the words like scattered, tangle, penetrate, decay and tyrant are new words in the text that students are expected define their meanings contextually in the story.

Extremely long texts do not enjoy students to read the whole text. They make students bored and demotivated. The shorter ones do not also enable students to develop their language skills particularly reading skills. In this regard, the length of short stories in the textbook is also appropriate and medium in their size. They are not more than 3 pages. To substantiate this, one can refer to the short story on page 62 extracted from '*The African Child*' by Camara Laye. Here the story is relatively short and appropriate in its length. It is one and half a page that students can enjoy reading it without being bored. In this story, it is not only the page of the text which is appropriate, but also its sentence construction.

As we go through the exploitability of the texts, however, most of the stories in the textbook are less exploitable. Since the stories are written in unusual language, and most often complex sentence, students cannot easily exploit the themes, images and meanings of these short stories. For example, to confirm this, let's see an extract from the short story entitled with '*Who Killed Danny?*'

Joseph didn't say anything. "I suppose they must have shot him," he thought. "Why? Danny was just running. The police could have caught him, beaten him locked him up... but why shoot him? Why did they do that? What had Danny done?" (Page 102 in the text book)

As one can vividly see from the extract above, the text is too difficult to be exploited and will make students challenge to draw a meaning and theme from the whole text.

Another criterion is students' need and interest. Some of the literary texts in the textbook take in to consideration students' need and interest that they involve stories which motivate students' skill to feel the stories, appreciate them and relate them with their own real life.

Another more serious issue is the accessibility of literary texts. Almost all the literary texts are extracts. They are not in their full versions particularly short stories and novels. Learners, especially those in the country side cannot easily access the full version when they find them necessary. Thus, the literary texts incorporated in the textbook are not easily accessible.

Analysis of the poems in the textbook

The poems incorporated in the textbook are also evaluated/analyzed from the students' angle and from the text itself as follows.

Analysis of poems from the learners' aspect

When we analyze the poems from the learners' side, their cultural background may come first. Most of the poems in the textbook do not consider students' socio-cultural and political expectations. The poems do not take in to consideration the culture of the society in which the students grew up. They focus on other countries culture, tradition and socio-political aspects. In fact, knowing other countries culture has multifarious role for the development of students' language skills as well as for sharing of life styles, love, conflicts and their management. But students should first be acquainted with their own culture, tradition, or socio-political affairs because this makes them base for further knowledge of such peoples' culture. In addition, the poems in the text book do not provide cultural information about the place, person, scene or things which are being narrated. Due to this, they do not help students to articulate the socio-cultural factors involved in the poems. Most of the poems in the text book present the cultures of people outside Ethiopia. However, it does not mean that knowing other countries' culture has not roles for the students' language development. For instance, the poem entitled with '*The Fulani creation story*' introduces students about the culture of people in West Africa. The poem describes how people in West Africa believe the world found. It narrates how milk is their center of culture. This enables students to be acquainted with the cultures of other countries. As result, when students read the poem about different cultures, they develop not only their reading skills but also their vocabulary and grammar practiced there. Of course, this is a positive side of knowing the cultures of other countries. But, 'first things first' Therefore, related to the students' cultural background, the poems in the text book, have limitations in giving particular attention for the students' their own cultures.

In relation to the students' literary background, the poems in the text book have also great limitations. The designers consider all students in the country in general, and in the classrooms in particular had equal exposures and experience of practicing literary texts. In fact, the language of a poem by its very nature is compressed, deviant and complex. To substantiate this, let's see some extracts of a poem written by Kofi Awoonor of Ghana:

The sea eats the land at home
At home the sea is in the Town,
Running in and out of the cooking places,
Collecting the firewood from the hearths
And sending it back at night. (page 168)

As one can see in the above poem, the language used is very compressed and difficult to analyze the theme of the poem although the words in the poem seem common. The word with metaphors create difficulty to understand the overall meaning of the poem. The composition of the poem creates unfamiliarity on students. It may challenge students to come up with the theme, tone and voice of the poem unless they develop the habit/experience of reading poems before. From this, one can deduce that the poems in the textbook lack considering the literary background of the learners because most of the poems in the textbook are difficult to be analyzed even by the teachers.

Concerning to the students' linguistic proficiency, most of the poems in the textbook have also great backdrops. They are written without considering students' language ability and level of understanding. The poems in the text book are complex to understand because the language of a poem deviates from the usual norm of the language use. In brief, the poems are not designed considering the students' language proficiency. The designers consider students as if they are proficient enough in all language skills regardless of their background area and age. The poems are prepared as if the students can read the poem properly, analyze the tone, sound and voice of the poem, but they

are very challenging even for the teachers. To substantiate this, let's see an extract from the poem '*The man I killed.*'

And so I tore in to his bowels
 And felt strengthened by the scene of his blood.
 And now by the nature of steel
 I fearlessly committed the unforgettable sin. (page 72 in the text book)

As can be seen from the extract, the poem is too difficult to be understood by the students unless they have developed good language proficiency in their preceding grade levels. The difficulty rises from the very nature of deviation in poems. Due to this difficulty, students may not develop their language skills.

Similarly, the poems in the textbook have the problem of hasty generalization. It is unthinkable that students in general and students in a class room in particular, have equal level of understanding of a certain text. Students in the class have different level of understanding and different age level. However, the poems in the textbook have also great limitation of considering the learners' age and level of understanding. The poems are not prepared in a comprehensive manner. They are not prepared considering the students' age and the three students' performance that students believed to have i.e slow learners, medium learners and faster learners (that have higher thinking skills). The designers do not consider slow learners and those who have no background knowledge of reading and comprehending poems. They consider only those who are matured and those who grew up in towns and cities reading different literary texts particularly poems. For the purpose of confirmation, let's have a look on an extract from the poem entitled with '*Witness*'

I witnessed yet again today
 Something I wish I'd not say.
 The lowering of a loved one
 In to earth's deep belly
 The deep dark grave like a cave.

As it is clearly seen in the above poem, the text is too difficult to be understood by all students. Since it is full of metaphor, only few students can infer meaning *from this poem*.

Analysis of poems from the aspect of the text itself

Here the analysis is made from the content, language and others like the length and availability perspectives of the literary texts in the textbook.

Content

When we see the poems in the textbook from the aspect of their content, most of the poems have their own strengths. The topics/themes are emotionally engaging and intellectually stimulating students. The themes /topics are relatively relevant and appropriate to the target students though there is still limitation of considering students' language proficiency, literary experience, age and level of understanding. To confirm this, let's see an extract which is a continuation of the poem written by Kofi Awuonor of Ghana.

The sea eats the land at home:
 It has eaten many houses:
 It came one day at the dead of night,
 Destroying the cement walls.
 And carried away the fowls,
 The cooking pots and the ladies. (page in the text book 168)

As it is clearly observed from the extract, the theme/topic from each stanza creates some sort of emotion -emotion of sympathy in this case and it stimulates students to read and enjoy it.

Similarly, the values that are advocated and the ideas that are presented by the texts are well organized and are according to the learners' cultures. In addition, there is no sex, no swearing, no racial bias that the author subjectively displays or racial epithets/stereotypes involved in the dialogue that are unnecessary to the story.

Language

Language is another aspect when the researcher evaluates the suitability of poems in the textbook. When we see the suitability of the languages items in the poems, most of the poems in the textbook are almost suitable for students to develop their language skills. The vocabulary level is suitable for the target students' language proficiency level. They are good sources to increase word power that involve a profound range of vocabulary, dialogue and prose. The poems here in the textbook are rich with variety of grammars which help students for their writing skills. There are few deviants/informal language forms in the texts (though poems use deviant and compressed languages). For instance, let's see the suitability of poems for language class in the poem entitled with 'Destiny'

Have you ever once felt
As though you were on a road,
A road leading you somewhere
And yet...nowhere?
And at one point or another
felt like jumping off the road
but ...to where?
Because even though your
destination was unknown,
At last you had a destination?
So often these days,
And although my destination is
unknown,
I trudge on, wearily, to the end.

Despite its deviation, in the above poem, different linguistic features like Grammar (about present perfect tense, the usage of 'as though') and vocabulary items are treated. Therefore, poems in the textbook are suitable for the development language skills.

Others: length, accessibility and exploitability of the text

The length of the poems in the textbook is suitable and manageable for the students to develop their language skills. All most all poems in the textbook are half a page. This leads students to read them. Whereas, the poems are not easily accessible. The full version the poems cannot easily be found whenever and wherever students find necessary. In a similar manner, the poems in the textbook are not exploitable. They create difficulty on students to understand the sentences, to create meaning from them and to answer both the stated the implied questions.

Moreover, the tasks designed for poem are not well organized in such a way that they enhance students' language skills. Most of the tasks in the poem are while reading tasks which limit students on the specific points of those poems. Pre reading tasks, which promote students' prior knowledge, are not designed for almost all poems in the text book. Post reading activities, which develop students' high level of thinking and relate the poems' situation with students' real life, are also neglected from the poems and as a result students' language skills may be limited.

Analysis of the novel extract in the textbook

As one of the most common literature genres, novels play pertinent roles for both learners and teachers. From the teachers' perspective, 'using a novel with the English language learners can provide teachers with unique opportunities for educational and linguistic development.' For students, because "a good novel addresses itself to complete situations and adult dilemma" (Lazar1990:204), it may engage them in to intellectually, emotionally, and linguistically.

These can be achieved if and only the teachers select and deliver suitable and appropriate literary extracts to their students in the classroom. Normally, it is also the designers' task to consider such type of tasks during the preparation of the textbooks.

What makes the literary text (novel extract) different from the rest literary texts in the text book that the researcher analyzed is that it is presented as a completion task. Moreover, it is the only novel extract incorporated in the textbook. In the researchers' view, the designer of the textbook did consider the unmanageability and difficulty of the novels for this grade level.

For the purpose of clarity, let's see how the extract is presented in the text book as follows:

Direction: The following text is taken from Grace Ogot's novel, *The Promised Land*. Here, Anna Apoko, one of the main characters in the story, is describing the first time she traveled by bus. Choose the correct alternative for each blank space.

The first time I traveled by bus, I remember, was in 1948, when I was seven years old. I cannot forget the first ride. I (1)_____with my mother to my grandmother's house, about fifty kilometers away. I can still hear the noise of the engine and (2)_____the humping of the bus. It all seemed strange and frightening to me then, escaping when I (3)_____a remarkable discovery. Wondering if we would ever get to Grandmother's house, I (4) _____round to look at the passengers behind me. They (5)_____at all. Everyone in the bus (6) _____still, remaining in exactly the same position. When I looked out of the window, I (7)_____ it was the trees and grass and house along the road that (8)_____not the people on the bus. To me this (9)_____an amazing sight .I (10)_____and trying to figure it all out, when the bus (11)_____ 'Come out, Apoko, come out !' my mother was saying. For we (12)_____my grandmother's house. (page 51)

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. a was traveling | b.travel | c. had traveled |
| 2. a felt | b. feel | c. was feeling |
| 3. a make | b. made | c. was making |
| 4. a turned | b. had turned | c. was turning |
| 5. a did not move | b. had not moved | c. were not moving |
| 6. a was sitting | b. had sat | c. had traveled |
| 7. a had seen | b. saw | c. was seeing |
| 8. a had moved | b. was moving | c. were moving |
| 9. a was | b. had | c. were |
| 10. a still wondered | b. had still wondered | c. was still wondering |
| 11. a had stopped | b. was stopping | c. stopped |
| 12. a reached | b. had reached | c. were reaching |

As the researcher did for the short stories and poems, the analysis of the above novel extract is made from both the students' perspective and the text itself.

Accordingly, when we see the extract from the students' cultural background perspective, it helps students to develop cultural expectation and social relation with the character in the story. It considers the students culture in that the culture in the story is also true in target learners' area because learners may practice similar frustration during their first voyage by bus. Visiting one's

grandparent is also the actual practical culture of learners in the classroom. Besides, it enables students deal with human relationships.

In relation to the students' linguistic proficiency, the text above is very safe for students if they read after the blank spaces are completed with the appropriate words/phrases. There is no deviant language in the extract that subverts the normal language use and so that students can infer the language of the text easily. Students will enjoy the language to study the extract.

In the same analogy, the extract considered the students' literary experience. The author used usual expressions which students are supposed to be familiar with. All most all the words in the extract can easily be understood. Those students who have literary background in their mother tongue can easily read, comprehend, generate meaning and interpret literature in English language.

When we see the suitability of the above novel extract for the language class from the perspective of the text itself, its content may come first. In the extract, the title 'The Promised Land' itself stimulates students to engage on their reading of the text emotionally. At the same time, the theme of the extract instigates students to re read and enjoy the text. The value treated in the extract – 'the first travel by bus in this case is also the experience of the students in the classroom. Moreover, in the extract, the author did not use any bias of sex, religion color and race.

Another major issue with the suitability of literary texts for language classrooms is the language skills targeted to be developed. As we can clearly see in the above novel extract, the main targeted language skill is teaching grammar for language students using this novel extract. The focused grammar type is about mixed tense. Students are expected to read the extract with the blank spaces and then to fill these dashes with appropriate words/phrases so that they can find the full version of this particular extract. In doing so, they learn not only grammar items, but they also develop other language skills like reading and vocabulary.

The length of literary texts is another topical issue to be considered when using them for language classes. Too long literary texts may distort students' ideas. Too short texts again are not suitable for the development of language skills particularly for writing. Therefore, being too short is the limitation of the above novel extract.

Conclusions and Recommendation

The conclusion for the analysis is made not only from the learners' perspective and the text itself, but also from the genres of the literary text incorporated in the textbook (short stories, poems, and the novel extract).

Therefore, most of the short stories in the textbook are incorporated without considering the students' cultural background, linguistic proficiency, literary experience, age and level of understanding. Almost all the short stories are written by foreigners in foreign contexts. They do not let learners to be acquainted with their culture first though knowing foreign cultures are not so bad. The language they are written is difficult and they do not consider the maturity and understanding level of the learners. Most of them consider all students as if they had good practices of reading literary materials ignoring those who grew up in rural areas where there is no access to these literary texts. Moreover, the full versions of the stories in the textbook are not easily accessible when students find necessary.

Similarly, the poems incorporated in the textbook did not take in to consideration almost all the parameters related to the students. In relation to the students' cultural background, the poems do not help students to entertain their own cultures in the class. Of course, knowing others' cultures enables students to develop their language and share different ways of life, but the culture treated here in the poems are not as such pertinent for such purposes. The students' literary experience is

not also considered in the poems. However, when we see the poems in the textbook from the perspective of the texts themselves (content, language skills to be improved and others) most of the poems have their own strengths. In relation to their content, the topics/themes of most poems are emotionally engaging and intellectually stimulating students. Similarly, the poems in the textbook are relatively suitable for students' language improvement. Each of the poems in the textbook is designed aiming at developing the language skills in one way or another.

In the evaluation of the extracted novel, it can be concluded that the extract, with the exception of its shortness, is suitable for the language class. It creates some kind of emotion on students if they read after they complete the blank spaces. Although the text's main aim is to develop students' grammar knowledge, it concurrently develops their reading and vocabulary skills.

While preparing literary materials for language classes, curriculum and textbook designers need to consider not only the content of the text itself and the language aimed to be improved, but also the students' cultural background, linguistic proficiency, literary experience, need, interest age and level of understanding. The literary texts incorporated in the textbook need to be easily accessible, appropriate in their length and exploitable. Although the intention of the paper is on suitability, the literary texts incorporated in the textbook are even insufficient particularly novel extracts. Thus, curriculum and textbook designers should incorporate sufficient literary texts with variety. Besides, teachers should collect literary texts which they find appropriate and make them accessible for their students.

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