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The Use of literature at the University Level :

Observing Literature Specialists in Their EFL Classes

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Article Info

Abstract

Literature is always used for students to communicate with others, by sharing their thoughts and feelings about the literary text being analyzed by the literature specialists. This study observed literature specialists in their EFL classes. It addresses the following questions: can literature be used for developing both language and literature areas, and What are the areas of language and literature developed by the use of literature?

The study aims at achieving the following: Observing literature specialists to arrive at the aims for using literature in their EFL classes, and describing the areas of language and literature, which can be taught by using literature. It is hypothesized that: All the aesthetic features of Literature can be analyzed, literature can develop students' critical thinking, and can help students mastery of EFL. Depending on the analysis and discussion carried out in this study, it is concluded that all the hypotheses of the study are proved.

Introduction

This paper deals with observing literature specialists regarding the uses of literature in English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) classrooms. This area has not been tackled using the investigation tool of observation at the university level in Iraq.

The present study addresses the following questions:

1-Can literature be used for teaching both language and literary forms?

2-What are the areas of language and literature developed by the use of literature?

The study aims at achieving the following :

1- Observing literature specialists in their classes to arrive at the aims for using literature in their EFL classes.

2-Describing the areas of language and literature, which can be taught by using literature.

It is hypothesized that:

1- All the aesthetic features of literature can be analyzed.

2-Literature can develop students' critical thinking.

3- Literature can help students mastery of EFL.

2. Literature Review

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مايو 2024

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2.1 Stylistics and Its Types

2.1.1 Definition

Stylistics is distinct from literary criticism and from linguistics, and that linguistics and literary criticism have a common ground stance that serves as a mediator between the two. It connects the two fields of study, serving an interdisciplinary purpose. Additionally, he claims that stylistics is an area of mediation between two disciplines It aims to demonstrate how stylistics is a synthesis of both literary criticism—linguistics, which provides ways of describing that encourage the reader's response, and literary criticism, which involves the reader's subjective, intuitive assessment (Widdowson,1975).

2.1.2 Types

In the literature, some terms are available which are literary stylistics, linguistic analysis, and pedagogical stylistics. Literary stylistics is the study of literary style. By connecting the critic's concepts of aesthetic appreciation with the linguist's ideas of linguistic description, literary stylistics attempts to provide a satisfactory explanation. These two concepts, aesthetic appreciation and linguistic description, are linked in a cycle whereby linguistic observation prompts literary insight, which in turn prompts still another linguistic observation. Because it looks for the stylistic purposes and effects of language patterning at several levels, literary stylistics is therefore bi-planar in theory but multi-planar at the functional level. Instead of being content with the simple provision of a pure language description of stylistic qualities, the literary stylisticians continue to investigate the functions created(Leech,1981)

There is a kind of balance between the linguistic and literary sides of literary stylistics because neither can fully explain the meaning of a text on its own; both must be combined to do so. According to Carter (1986), understanding both aspects, as in literary stylistics, will lead to a more satisfactory interpretation than is feasible without the aid of linguistics.

Cook (2003) demonstrates that literary stylistics proves to be influential in EFL teaching /learning. This is due to the fact that it connects linguistic options to their effect on the reader, and it also raises the readers' awareness not only to the literary meaning of words, but also to the real-world situational functions of words. In stylistic analysis, many different sentence patterns and a wide variety of grammatical and linguistic tools are used in a methodical way to improve the meaning of language and its capacity for communicative exchange.

Two different facets make up pedagogical stylistics. The first one discusses the pedagogical account of stylistics for teaching the aspects of the language of literature, and the other discusses the role of stylistics in the teaching EFL through literature. The readers' perspectives on the meanings of the text and the text itself are tied to the pedagogical goal of using stylistics in the classroom to teach language and how this language functions. The study of stylistics helps to explain how a particular usage of language functions within a text, as well as how texts are read, interpreted, and comprehended by the reader (Norgaard et al,2010)

2.2 Teaching Literature in EFL Classes

2.2.1 Aims

Literature can aid in language learning since it encourages the reader's personal involvement. After reading a literary work, the learner starts to inhabit it and s/he becomes absorbed in the text. It becomes less important to understand the meanings of lexical terms or phrases than to focus on the story's progression. As the story's conclusion approaches, the student becomes eager to learn what occurs because he feels a connection to certain characters and understands their feelings. The entire process of learning a language may benefit from this. At this point, it is clear to see how important it is to match the choice of a literary book to the students' requirements, expectations, and interests as well as their language proficiency. S/ He can overcome his identity issue and become more outgoing through this approach. (Collie and Slater 1990)

It may be said that employing literature in a language classroom serves the objective of making the class dynamic, and that an interactive class can clearly improve the learners' communicative ability and leave a lasting impression on their minds. Such a class can retain a learner-centered environment while also enhancing the students' critical thinking skills. (Collie and Slater 1990)

2.2.2 Teaching Language Through Literature Genres in The EFL Classes

1. Drama

Melodrama is a sensational theatrical work with inflated characters and thrilling events meant to evoke strong feelings. Drama is divided into Acts, which are key sections of a play. Acts are broken into scenes in plays, which can contain up to five acts. Each scene represents a separate episode in the plot of the play. (Betti, 2018)

There are a variety of affordances for various drama exercises. Zeeland (2000) divides dramatic action into four categories: Setting the scene, using simulations, determining the goals of the characters, and creating maps containing examples of context-building action. Narrative action, emphasizing the story, includes hot seating, in which students improvise their characters while being interviewed by classmates, and teacher-in-role. Poetic action, generating symbolic potential, includes forum-theater, role-reversal, and small-group playmaking. Reflective action emphasizes inner thinking (e.g., group sculpture, i.e., students creating a sculpture with their bodies, taking sides, thought tracking).(Ødegaard,2003)

Dramatic learning can assist develop students' empathy and broaden understanding of various ethical viewpoints. The pre-service teachers believed that by assuming the roles of various stakeholders, they were able to comprehend the complexity of the problem more fully. They also mentioned that after the drama experience, they felt more confident in their own scientific knowledge and comprehension. Significantly, they believed that drama-based education was fun, memorable, and would "stick" in their minds. (White & Rafael,2022)

2. Poetry

Poetry is characteristic of sense, sound and structure devices including rhythm, rhymes, and imagery Poetry is being used by authors to provide readers with new or deeper perspectives (Ribero, 2007). According to Spack (1985), all facets of grammar and

language resources are cleverly and fully used and portrayed in literary works, which substantially aids learners in comprehending and recognizing grammatical structures as well as enhancing their vocabulary.

On the other hand, incorporating literature into language instruction helps pupils become more linguistically aware. Students learn how words are connected in meaningful ways and how vocabulary is put together in sentences through literary examples. In other respects, literature provides authentic instances, which unquestionably improves students' understanding of linguistics and, over time, results in efficiency and effectiveness in language.

Literature, according to Collie & Slater (1990), promotes communication in language classes and is intrinsically linked to language. Literature is essential for improving classroom activities and lively debates among the students. Moreover, students will have plenty of chances to put their grammar studies into practice through the literary classes and topics on the curriculum. Supplementary to this, incorporating literature into language instruction helps students become more linguistically aware. Students learn how words are connected meaningfully and how vocabulary is put together in sentences through literary examples. The students will study how language may be used for diverse communicative roles and so learn to make meaningful interactions with each other when they read the utterances of the characters or watch their interactions in the literary works.

3.The Novel

The novel is a fiction genre, and fiction is the artistic expression of human existence in words by a writer. A novel is a lengthy and illustrated account of a set of events that occurred throughout the life of a character, not a brief prose story. It is a comprehensive autobiography of a character from the novel. Novel serves as a mirror that reflects the image of whatever placed in front of it. (Aliyev,2021)

In this regard, using novels in foreign language lessons is a helpful method. A thoughtfully chosen novel makes the literary lesson engaging and enjoyable for the students. The majority of students have trouble reading books that are written in a foreign language. The use of this literary form in language classes, however, helps improve reading comprehension and vocabulary. In this situation, EFL students may

broaden their perspectives, become more used to foreign cultures, and hone their international communication skills (Collie & Slater, 1990).

Zyngier (1994) emphasizes that novels are not only stories spoken; rather, they are priceless facts that are consistently and irrefutably transmitted to people all over the world. They teach us everything about a foreign culture, including their tradition, values, history, and—most importantly—the way in which they talk and the various linguistic forms they have used throughout history or for various social classes within that community.

2.3 Literature Aims in EFL Classes

Several authors, including Allen (2009), Paesani (2006), Plummer and Busse (2006),Timucin (2001), and Yaez Prieto (2010), have shown different levels of improvement in learner L2 as a direct result of stylistics-based classroom interventions

1. Increasing FL Performance

Fogal (2010) states that there are three key topics which are recognized in the literature on L2 pedagogical stylistics . The following are some of the themes: stylistics as a method for increasing FL performance; stylistics' contribution to language development and stylistics as a tool for building academic skills beyond L2 acquisition. The underreporting or under collection of data is a flaw that many other researches have, according to Fogal's study. Third, this study makes five recommendations for modifications to future empirically based research in this context, going beyond simply reiterating calls for more general demands for such studies. A positivist shift in pedagogical stylistics research should not be sacrificed in order for such improvements to occur.

2. Developing Language Awareness

Some studies show that literary stylistics ability to raise language awareness amongst L2 learners, and suggest that such awareness engenders L2 competency, and in the case of Warner (2012), improved analytic skills that are transferable across academic contexts.

3. Satisfying Learners' Needs

Puig (2020) states that language is used in context in literature: "Therefore, language use in literature is uniquely. It provides a chance to investigate genuine human difficulties and experiences that are "reflective of the wider language." When studying a particular canonical work, the emphasis in the language class need not be on imparting the entire historical or literary context; rather, it should be on using the text as a tool to improve language instruction.

The literary text is a tool to be used for learning rather than an example to be taught".

Teachers can therefore prepare assignments involving the use of literary texts using the pedagogical concepts they are already familiar with. Moreover, literature can offer insightful perspectives into a particular culture and give pupils the chance to exercise their imaginations, think critically, and come to independent judgments. Students respond to literature and create new meanings while using the instruments provided by modern technologies for communication and sharing since literature is interactive and can take into account social context and individual student profiles. In this

situation, the instructor more closely resembles a facilitator who spreads passion as opposed to imparting knowledge (Puig 2020).

4. Developing the Reading Skill

Literacy and the ability to write the language's symbols are the main focus of reading instruction in schools. This task is referred to as beginning literacy instruction. Readers have the ability to deepen their comprehension of new meanings and possibilities, which they have not previously experienced, by utilizing the many models presented here (Fillemoun 2021).

5. Developing the Writing Skill

EFL teachers should adopt a dynamic, student-centered approach toward comprehension of a literary work. In the reading lesson, the 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 (Stern 1991).

After comprehending a literary selection at the literal and inferential levels, the students are ready to do 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. They should use this opportunity to express how they feel about the work's inherent cultural themes and challenges. In addition , the personal/ evaluative level encourages students to consider the work imaginatively and challenges their capacity for problem-solving. Such inquiries can serve as the basis for both oral and written exercises (Stern 1991).

6. Cultural Development

Literature is thought to reflect culture and society by imaginatively and creatively expressing people's thoughts and aspirations when they are placed inside specific temporal and spatial contexts. It is frequently seen as a reliable source of cultural representation because it both represents and stimulates social developments. However, literary texts should not be viewed as documents that accurately and impartially depict a society (Schewe, 1998).

Though fictional, the world envisioned in literary works serves as a rich and vivid backdrop for literary protagonists, whose upbringing, attitudes, beliefs, values, routines, and everyday activities reveal to the reader the norms and codes of real society (Collie and Slater in Schewe 1998).

7. Developing Critical Thinking

To foster critical thinking in EFL students through the teaching of literature, instructors must first recognize and prioritize strengthening their learners' critical thinking in the design of their instructional approaches. Learners should be encouraged to ask themselves questions about texts that spark critical thinking, enabling them to think more critically about the assigned literary passage rather of simply learning 'what' to think about it. They should also be encouraged to grasp and investigate the fact that there is no single point of view on any particular problem, and that viewpoints can shift through time (Shukri & Mukundan, 2015).

3. Methodology

3.1 Description of Observation

The tool of investigation consists of the non-participant observation for Iraqi university literature specialists in their classes. The researcher attended thirty lectures delivered by some staff members in the department of English, college of Education for Humanities, University of Thi-Qar. The lectures attended by the researcher include lectures about English poetry, the novel, short stories and drama. The issues investigated are those related to the aims and objectives of teaching language and literature which are to be achieved inside the literary classes. The non-participant type of observation is one in which the researcher was passive describing the teaching process. Some university members, whose lectures are attended, are specialized in English literature; others in stylistics; and others in teaching English Literature.

The aspects of teaching literature which are described as a result of the observation process include the following:

1- The types of literary forms to which the lectures belong.

2- The techniques of teaching literature which are used by the teacher.

3-The general approach adopted by the teacher inside the literature classroom.

4-The literary aspects taught in the classroom.

5- The linguistic aspects enlightened by the teacher .

3.2 The Participants

The staff members whose lectures are being observed are staff members in Departments of English, college of Education for Humanities, university of Thi-Qar. Some of them are specialized in English literature; others in Stylistics; others in teaching English Literature. They have academic degrees between professor, assistant professor and lecturer.

4.Data Analysis and Discussion

The researcher attended thirty lectures given by several staff members of the university of Thi-Qar, College of Education for Humanities, Department of English. These lectures cover a variety of literary genres, including drama , the novel, and poetry. A Number of university staff members are being observed by the researcher. Some university staff members being observed are specialized in literature; others are specialized stylistics or methodology of literature. Some of these staff members explain the aesthetic features of texts, others only explain texts as language. Meanwhile, others explain the literary texts as both literature and language.

The aspects of teaching literature which are described through the non- participants observation are explained below:

1- The types of literary forms to which the lectures belong

The types of literary forms to which the lectures belong include poetry, drama, and the novel. Several lectures are being observed. Some of them are about Strindberg's The stronger and Shakespeare's Hamlet, Beckett's Waiting for Godot belong to drama, Other lectures are about the novel, Bronte's Wuthering Heights and Golding's Lord of the Flies. Others belong to poetry, like Blake's What is it about? .

2-The techniques of teaching literature which are used by the teacher

The techniques of teaching literature which are used by the teacher are referred to below . In one lecture ,a mixture between the literary method and the linguistic one in teaching a literary text, is used . He uses a form of brainstorming in teaching the text. This can assist students' guessing of the story by using different vocabularies or idioms based on their own experiences. The instructor uses literature to develop and improve teaching EFL, for example, he asks learners to read parts of the text to improve their reading and speaking skills and pronunciation, exemplify grammatical structures and present new vocabulary.

In another lecture, the lecturer uses a purely analytical literary analysis that is based only on reading the literary texts. The instructor did not use literature to develop language. He emphasizes the value of reading literary works rather than analyzing them based solely on their language features. The instructor considers how the author uses literary techniques to create meaning. He emphasizes on the play's background, characters, etc.

In another lecture, the professor attempts to merge literary analysis with linguistic analysis

techniques. The instructor concentrates on "Wuthering Heights'" major developments as well as character analysis. He solicits feedback from the class from the beginning to the end of the lecture. This will eventually improve students' listening and speaking skills.

The teacher, in another lecture, begins the novel with its title and describes it using semantic analysis. He also uses various exercises to get the students involved in the lecture and to share their opinions on the literary analysis of the text. The lecturer uses discussion and critical thinking in the classroom to improve students' language skills through literature.

The teacher practices, in another lecture, the idea that critical thinking, debate, and discussion may be sparked in the classroom using the text. Using drama and all the forms of literature in the classroom can be effective ways for influencing students' decisions.

In a lecture, the lecturer does a linguistic and literary explanation of the poem. The professor employs certain techniques to explain and ask the students to read the poem carefully, explaining it, and sharing their opinions on it. Reading the poem gives the students the chance to practise using vocabulary, grammar, and syntax rules and it develops language abilities such as vocabulary yet. In another lecture, the lecturer asks the class to read and respond to the play. Reading can expand and improve language skills. Thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

3-The general approach adopted by the teacher inside the literature classroom

According to the general approach adopted by the teacher, the instructor in one class highlights the significance of linguistic features in comprehending and interpreting literature. The lecturer applies that language and literature are intricately linked through his teaching technique. Students cannot study the four language skills unless they read literature. This indicates how essential language is to the majority of students in literature courses. After all, literature does not exist unless it is spoken or written.

In another lecture, the lecturer emphasizes the value of reading literary works rather than analyzing them. This is based solely on their language features. Literary analysis, in the instructor's opinion, is a helpful tool for understanding literature.

In another lecture, the instructor attempts to merge literary analysis with linguistic analysis. He emphasizes the importance of both language aspects and literary analysis in understanding and interpreting literary works through analyzing the literary text. He emphasizes the value of literary analysis and linguistic considerations in comprehending and interpreting literary works through analyzing these texts.

The lecturer elsewhere emphasizes the importance of reading and studying literature while refining language skills. He asks students to practice vocabulary, grammar, and syntax rules by reading the poem. In the appropriate setting, reading poetry promotes the growth of key linguistic skills. By increasing the students' exposure to language, reading literary pieces helps them develop their language skills.

The majority of staff members emphasize the importance of language. Students' textual analysis for a variety of literary works is improved by language education, and exposing

students to examples of actual events that were utilized in various literary works is valuable.

4-The literary aspects taught in the classroom

As related to the literary aspects taught in the classroom, the staff members make an overall analysis and scrutiny of the texts from a variety of sides (theme, characters, settings, conflict, and plot). These aesthetic aspects are important for teachers who seek to help students connect grammar and syntax to fine reading and writing. The students must master the fundamentals of organization in order to follow and comprehend the content they read. In another lecture, he emphasizes the play's background and characters, and he underlines the importance of these literary components rather than examining them only on their linguistic features.

The instructor concentrates on the novel major developments as well as character analysis to more learn about the plot and the links between the different characters in another lecture. This way helps to comprehend characters and how each character and viewpoints might advance the story.

In a lecture, the lecturer focuses on the elements of the poem (rhyme, figurative language, sound devices, and meter) in order to evoke a wide array of meanings. He employs figurative language and many literary strategies to imply alternative meanings for the words or to inspire concepts not directly related to the words. To produce musical effects, sound mechanisms including alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia are used. Poetic devices like juxtaposition, symbolism, and irony render a poem open to several interpretations. Similar

to this, poetic elements like metaphor and simile are employed to establish a connection between many images that were not before noticed. Thus, critical understanding of the elements of the texts is developed in the students. Thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

In another lecture, the instructor concentrates on analyzing the plot of the play which contains the following plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution to keep the students interested and involved.

5- The linguistic aspects enlightened by the teacher

The majority of staff members emphasize the importance of language aspects in understanding and interpreting literary writing. The instructor uses language aspects such as many synonyms, like "tempt and seduce," "toy and doll," and so on. He also employs syntax and phonology. (ex: the pronunciation of characters, actors, actresses). Understanding the meanings behind word order, sentence structure, and punctuation is made possible by syntactic skills. We can assist readers in comprehending ever-more complicated texts by supporting their development of syntactic abilities. Teaching students phonology and morphology improves their entire ability to express themselves, particularly when it comes to speaking and reading with fluency, or ease of expressions

In a lecture, the instructor uses a variety of linguistic features. He emphasizes semantics and phonology. He focuses on phonology , semantics and morphology. In a lecture, the lecture uses semantics in his teaching. Semantics frequently is used in explaining the literary text , where words can have both literal

and figurative meanings. Looking at the context of a word or phrase is usually the best approach to evaluate whether it has a literal or metaphorical meaning in a given situation.

In a lecture, the instructor bases his lecture on syntax. In the appropriate setting, it promotes the growth of key linguistic skills. He also uses semantics and repetition. The ability to emphasize specific details that the writer or speaker selects. It signals to the students that they should pay close attention to the language.

In addition , the instructor refers the association of meaning of lexical terms gathered from texts in the form of lexical analysis. The lecturer describes the numerous settings and conditions in the story using a variety of nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

The instructor refers to synonyms, in the text, like "tempt and seduce," "toy and doll," and so on. He also employs syntax and phonology(ex: the pronunciation of characters, actors, actresses). The professor would like to underline the significance of linguistic features in comprehending and interpreting literary literature. The instructor uses a form of brainstorming by asking questions about the synonyms and antonyms in the text. This can assist students guessing the story by using different vocabularies or idioms based on their own experiences. The lecturer wishes to emphasize the importance of language aspects in understanding and interpreting literary writing. As a result, the significance and status of spelling and punctuation as a linguistic level of analysis can influence meaning and produce aesthetic effects. Thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

5. Conclusions

Depending on the analysis of the tool of investigation which is the nonparticipant classroom observations made by the researchers and the discussion carried out, the following conclusions are arrived at regarding the use of literature in EFL classes:

1-Literature can be used in teaching English language in EFL classrooms.

2-Reading prose improves EFL students' written skills.

3-Literature helps in the learning of various figures of speech in literary texts.

4-Literature can be used in language learning to increase students' language awareness.

5- Literature can help to teach vocabulary and grammar.

6-Using literature in the classroom improves learning and may be an effective motivator in FL education contexts.

7- Students can make sense of literary works by merging language and literature. Literature and language can help students correctly to comprehend a literary text.

8-Literature improves teaching language fundamental skills which are listening, speaking, reading and. writing, and academic skills.

9-Literature can be used to engage students on the personal and emotional levels.

10-Students can become acquainted with various aspects of written language by reading a large and contextualized corpus of literary texts.

11-Literature in general, with all of its types improves students' communication skills.

12-Drama is an excellent tool for engaging students in the learning process.

13-Using Novels in Foreign Language Lessons can help Students to strengthen their Critical Thinking.

14-Literature may help students to express their feelings and viewpoints, and make comparisons between their personal and cultural experiences, and those experiences available in the literary text.

15-Literature improves students' intellectual capacity for long-term mental development and growth.

16-Reading literature empowers and liberates the intellect, as well as the citizens of any society, and it is necessary since literature holds the key to both the real and fantasy world.

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استخدام الأدب على المستوى الجامعي ملاحظة اختصاصي الأدب في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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خلاصة:

يستخدم الأدب للتواصل بين الطلبة انفسهم ومع الآخرين كالمعلمين ، من خلال مشاركة أفكارهم ومشاعرهم حول النص الأدبي الذي يتم تحليله من قبل المتخصصين في الأدب. درست هذه الدراسة المتخصصين في الأدب من خلال ملاحظتهم في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

تحاول هده الدراسة الإجابة عن اسئلة من قبيل: هل يمكن استخدام الأدب في تطوير مجالات اللغة والأدب وما هي مجالات اللغة والأدب التي يمكن أن يطورها الأدب عن المتعلمين للغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية من خلال استخدام الأدب؟ تهدف الدراسة إلى تحقيق ما يلي: - ملاحظة المتخصصين في الأدب في تحقيق أهداف استخدام الأدب في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، ووصف مجالات اللغة والأدب ، التي يمكن تدريسها باستخدام الأدب. وتفترض الدراسة أنه: يمكن تحليل جميع السمات الجمالية للأدب ، ويمكن للأدب أن يطور التفكير النقدي للطلاب ، ويمكن للأدب أن يساعد اتقان الطلاب للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

وبناءً على التحليل والمناقشة التي تم إجراؤها في هذه الدراسة ، استنتجت الدراسة أن جميع فرضيات الدراسة قد تم إثباتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استخدام الأدب ، المستوى الجامعي ، الملاحظة ، متخصصو الأدب ، اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية.