

5. The Appropriateness of Literary Texts in Teaching Reading Skills: The Case of Some selected High Schools in Dembecha Woreda

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to assess the appropriateness of literary texts in teaching reading skills at four selected high schools in Dembecha woreda. The study employed descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire, interview and document analysis were instruments used in this study. Four hundred twenty nine students that were selected through stratified sampling were involved in the questionnaire while 7 purposively selected EFL teachers were part of the interview. The collected data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Interview and document analyses data were analyzed qualitatively using narration and direct quotation whereas questionnaire data was analyzed quantitatively using percentage, mean and grand mean. Findings of the study revealed that the majority of the literary texts are found to be linguistically very difficult, culturally unfamiliar and unsatisfactory to students' interest. In addition, the study found that most reading activities do not give useful cultural background, stimulating tasks, previewing key language and language awareness activities. The study concluded that the literary texts integrated for teaching reading skills and activities are not helpful to teach reading skills.

Key words: Literarily texts, reading skills, reading activities, cultural background, language awareness

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Learning reading skills is essential for learners of English as a second or Foreign Language. Carrell (1988) stressed that reading skills is one of the most important macro skills for students' academic progress, achievement and development in their present and future professional careers. To achieve this, scholars in the field of language teaching tried to find more efficient pedagogy that enables the learners to become more proficient readers.

Communicative language teaching has been very popular for a long time since it gives students the chance to practice different language skills in real contexts (Van, 2009). It also gives credit to the use of authentic language. Like in many other skills, the use of authentic materials in teaching reading in EFL classes gives students contexts that increase interaction with the texts (Van, 2009). Literary texts are useful since they use natural language. According Lazar (1993), literary texts offer universal themes which are relevant to students' own experience. Long (1986) also argues that literary texts expose students to a wide variety of authentic language that has the power to motivate students to read a lot. This is to mean, literary texts use real like language that provides students contexts that promote interaction in reading comprehension. Ghasemi and Hajizadeh (2011) also show that literary texts are relevant to reader's experience and this contributes the learning process of reading comprehension. From this discussion, it is understood that literary texts are indispensable pedagogical tools to develop language skills.

Though literary texts are proved to be core materials in teaching reading and other skills, there are different factors that need attention. One of the basic factors is text selection. Many scholars stressed that text selection is a crucial factor in making literature a resource for language teaching (Maley, 2001; McRae, 1997; Lazer, 1993; Collie and Slater, 1994 and Hill, 1994). Collie and Slater (1994) emphasized that text selection should consider "each particular group of students, their needs, interests, cultural background and language level" (1994:5). Lazar (1993) also asserted that the text should be within the student's grasp in terms of their linguistic, literary, intellectual, and emotional capacities.

In addition to text selection, the design of the activities from the selected texts also affects the effectiveness of using of literary texts in teaching reading skills. According to Collie and Slater

(1994), it is best to prepare reading lesson activities around the texts" highlights: plot, characterization, point of view and language. Lazar (1993) suggests designing activities that integrate both the reading comprehension and the literary text. From this discussion, it is clear that text selection and the design of activities are key factors in using literary texts in EFL classes. Thus, it is necessary to properly evaluate the literary texts and activities to make sure that they meet the required criteria.

Research outcomes also strongly recommended the evaluation of language courses containing literary texts as resource materials (Vethaman, 2010, Bobkina and Dominguez, 2014). Bobkina and Dominguez"s (2014) study also suggested more research on a systematic evaluation of different language courses which use literary texts. In addition, like other EFL contexts, in Ethiopia, research findings have reported complaints about the suitability of reading materials for students. For example, Dereje (2000) cited in Rekyia (2010) reported that the content of reading materials is not in harmony with the learners" current and changing perception of language learning needs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia, English language is one of the key subjects from primary up to preparatory schools and it is also the medium of instruction in secondary high schools and tertiary levels of education. So reading skills is very important for students" academic success and future progress. That is why much effort has been done from time to time by different stakeholders such as material designers to develop students" reading skills. For example, attempts have been done to integrate literary texts into students" text books to teach reading and other skills. However, in Dembecha District High schools, complaints rise regarding students" reading skills. The researchers have noticed that the large majority of Dembecha District Grade ten students struggle to succeed in reading comprehension. However, they fail to read and comprehend texts integrated in their English textbooks in different reading sessions. From the researchers" experience, this problem was more magnified while students used literary texts.

From the researchers" observation, the most acknowledged cause of students" ineffective reading is losing reading interest immediately. The researchers have noticed that many students try to read a

story or poem as they are guided by the teacher but soon lose interest with which they start reading the text. The other problem students encounter is vocabulary. In every paragraph or stanza, or even in every sentence, or every phrase students come across some new words which create a constant obstacle for them to understand the meaning. They failed to guess contextually and try to look up new words in dictionary.

Experiencing this situation, the researchers started worrying about this issue because students' failure in reading results in a failure in their academic success. Without good reading skills, these students will have a difficult time, not only in schools, but also in their future opportunities. There could be various factors that attributed to failure of students to develop their reading skills. However, the researchers think that the quality of the accessible reading materials may have attributed to their ineffective reading. Haregewoine's (2007) study revealed that in Ethiopian secondary schools the low quality of teaching materials seem to have aggravated the students' low reading proficiency. All these need closer examination and evaluation to improve the situation in this area. The current study, thus, attempted to see how appropriate the tasks and literary texts are to teach grade 10 students reading skills in EFL contexts.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to assess the appropriateness of literary texts in teaching reading skills. The study had the following specific objectives:

To evaluate the suitability of the selected literary texts for students in teaching reading skills

To evaluate the appropriateness of reading activities designed from literary texts to teach reading skills

2. Literature Review

2.1. Selecting Literary Texts

To use literary texts in teaching language skills, many scholars suggested criteria to select materials. According to Lazar (1993), the criteria ultimately depend on the students' linguistic proficiency, literary and cultural background, relevance and interesting texts.

2.1.1 Student's Linguistic Proficiency

Duff and Maley (1989) suggested choosing texts within students' language proficiency. They explained that if the language of the literary text is quite straightforward to the linguistic level of students, students will want to have more access to literary works and find these texts more relevant to their experience. Hill (1994) suggests that archaic language, slang, foreign words, allusions, or language that imitates the speech of a particular locality and long complex clauses tend to contain multiple ideas and therefore should be avoided. As students will not understand these sentences and words, they will get bored and not read the work. Heng and Abdullah (2006) also argue that sentence structures that are with unambiguous order and logical organization and structure aid reading whereas inconsiderate texts are often difficult to interact with.

2.1.2 Student's Literary Background

Brumfit and Carter (1986) cited in Lazar (1993) argued that effective readers of a literary text possess 'literary competence', in that they have an implicit understanding of, and familiarity with, certain conventions which allow them to take the words on the page of a play or other literary work and convert them into literary meanings. Lazar (1993) attempted to pinpoint certain conventions of literary competence which might include anything from recognizing and appreciating a full range of genres to simply following the plot of a short story.

According to Lazar (1993), literary background of the students and their linguistic competence do not necessarily go together; 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. Thus, when choosing text to use in EFL class, we should look at its specific literary qualities and whether our students can navigate their own way through these.

2.1.3 Students' Cultural Background

According to Carter and Long (1991), in selecting literary texts considering how far the students' cultural background and their social and political expectations will help or hinder their understanding of a text and how much background the teacher will need to provide for students to have at least a basic understanding of the text should be given emphasis. Lazar (1993) also

suggested that the texts selected should be within the teacher's and student's competence culturally and such literary works can touch upon a wide range of meaningful topics which are related to the reader. Ali (1994) also suggests that the texts should allow learners to view literature as an experience that enriches their life. He further elaborated that in culturally familiar texts the reader brings to the text past experiences, prior knowledge, social, cultural and psychological assumptions, surrounding circumstances which may play an important role in the making of meaning of the text to be read. Thus, it is clear that in selecting literary texts for EFL classes, culturally familiar texts should be selected to impart the required language skills.

2.1.4. Personal Involvement

Collie and Slater (1994) also noted that selecting texts that can stimulate a kind of personal involvement and arouse the learner's interest is very crucial too. Duff and Maley (1990) also assert that if the learners' ideas, experiences, and needs are completely at variance with what they are asked to read, it is useless to expect them to be motivated. This is to mean that students read and enjoy a text if the subject-matter of the text is relevant to their life experience and interests. In connection to this, Almi (2011) stated that texts that touch the learners' needs and interest can be more suited for aesthetic reading which further develops reading proficiency; interpretive abilities make inferences, understand multiple levels of meaning and develop skills in critical thinking.

2.1.5. Student's Interest

The other key factor to consider in selecting literary texts is whether a particular work can arouse the learners' interest and provoke them to strong and positive reactions. Duff and Maley (1990) defined interesting texts as texts that are relevant to the tasks, are easily accessible to the students, have colorful photographs and illustrations. They explained that if the text is meaningful and enjoyable, reading is more likely to have a lasting and beneficial effect upon the learners' linguistic and cultural knowledge. Collie and Slater (1994) also suggested that it is important to choose books which are relevant to the life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner because when the assigned literary text is meaningful and enjoyable, learners will try to overcome the linguistic obstacles.

2.1.6. Length of Text

In selecting literary texts, the other issue that demands attentions is the length of the material. Lazar (1993) suggests that when selecting literary texts, teachers should bear in mind whether they have enough time to work on texts in class, how long students have to work on the text at home (reading) and how much background information of the text the teacher needs to give students. Duff and Maley (1990) believed that the length of the text is also seen as the major difficulties. They noted that for some texts, longer texts may appear more difficult, whereas for others shorter texts present more difficulties simply because they do not offer extended contextual support and repetition which longer texts do.

2.2 Designing Reading Activities from Literary Texts

The bases for designing reading activities from literary texts are the problems that students frequently encountered in reading literary texts. The most common problems that students faced are difficulties to understand the cultural background, lack of motivation to read literary texts, inadequate reading strategies and comprehension problems. The comprehension problems include problems of following the plot, understanding the characters, understanding the vocabularies and narrator, analyzing and interpreting texts, and appreciating the style (Lazar, 1993).

According to Collie and Slater (1994), the best way to prepare activities was highlighting the elements of the literary texts. These elements are plot, characters, setting, narrator, theme, and language style and language awareness. According to many scholars, such as (Harmer, 1998; Lazar, 1993; Hernández, 2011; and Sánchez, 2009), to make reading more realistic and interesting three stages are recommended: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Design

Descriptive survey design was employed to achieve the objectives of this study since it helped the researchers to collect data from wide areas.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study was conducted in Dembecha District High Schools, Ethiopia, viz. Dembecha Comprehensive Secondary and Preparatory School, Yechereka, Wade Addisalem and Yezeleka High schools. In 2019 academic year, there were 2,378 (two thousand three hundred seventy eight) Grade 10 students and 17 grade 10 EFL teachers in these four schools.

Through simple random sampling technique, three schools (except Yezeleka) were selected as samples. For interview, 7 Grade 10 EFL teachers who took the course of literature in language teaching in their Master of Education programme were purposively selected. The total number of students from the three sample schools was 2,076. Thirty percent of this figure was taken as sample to fill in the questionnaire. Then 687 sample students were selected using stratified sampling technique. However, 434 students filled in and returned the questionnaire.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Document analysis, interview and questionnaire were employed to collect data.

3.3.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis was used as the major tool to gather data about the appropriateness of literary texts and reading activities designed from them. The document analysis has two parts. The first part of the checklist focused on the selection of literary texts. These items were adapted from Lazar (1993). The second part of the checklist dealt with the design of reading activities of the literary texts. This checklist was adapted from Phillips (1993).

3.3.2 Interview

Semi-structured interview, adapted from Lazar (1993) and Phillips (1993), was chosen to elicit detailed information to supplement data from documents analysis and questionnaire.

3.3.2 Students' Questionnaire

Questionnaire was used to collect data from students to supplement the document analysis and teachers' interview. Five close-ended Likert scale questionnaire items were used. The questionnaire which was adapted from Lazar (1993) focused on the selection of literary texts.

4. Result of the study

4.1 Literary Texts Incorporated in the Textbook

From the general overview, the text has incorporated fifteen literary texts to teach reading skills. These literary texts included two novel extracts, five short story extracts, seven poems and one play extract. Poems are found predominantly in the text. Short stories take the second position next to poems. Novel and play extracts are found in small proportion. None of these literary texts were extracted from Ethiopian literary books.

4.2 The Evaluation of Literary Texts

The main evaluation criteria were the literary texts' relation with the students' linguistic proficiency, literary and cultural background, life experience, interest, reading speed and suitability. The following sections present the findings.

4.2.1 Linguistic Level

This study found literary texts that contain very long sentences, poorly organized structures, complex structures, colloquial words, very loaded vocabulary and expressions. For example, extracts "*Shipwrecked*", "*Makeda's Story*" and "*Difficult Situation*" contained very long sentences. Moreover, extracts such as "*Dealing with a drug dealer*" and "*Nigerian Market Place*" contain complex structures.

To some up, though some of the literary texts were found good in sentences length, vocabulary level, syntax and structure, the majority of the literary texts contained very long sentences, difficult words, archaic language, slang, allusions, dialectical variations or complex structures and expressions for student's level.

4.2.2 Cultural Familiarity

The second criterion used in this study was the appropriateness of literary texts for students' cultural background. In this study the document analyses showed that there are literary texts that included beliefs, objects and languages that depict unfamiliar cultural background. Literary extracts like the "*Fulani Creation Story*" and "*Nigerian Market Place*" contain culturally ancient tradition and this traditional belief is far from students' cultural background. As a result, students

may lack prior knowledge and past experiences in relation to this belief so as to aid comprehension of the texts.

In addition, specific objects like *Doondari*, *Gueno Mammy wagon*, *Mission car* and *Bartered lorry* are included in “*Nigerian Market Place*” which are not familiar in the target students’ cultural background. That is to mean, the cultural meaning of these objects cannot be understood by the target students in this study.

To conclude though some literary texts contain traditions, ceremonies and objects that depict culture close to the target students’ cultural background, the majority of the literary texts depicted traditions, religious beliefs, ceremonies, objects and rituals that are far from students’ cultural background.

4.2.3 Relevance

It is expected that the literary texts should be relevant to the target learners’ ideas, experiences and needs. It is also believed that the subject-matter of the text should be relevant to their life experience and interests. However, the document analysis showed that there are literary texts that are not relevant to the day to day life experience of the learners. Extracts like the “*Difficult Situation*”, “*Nigerian Market Place*” and “*The Fulani Creation Story*” contain topics that are not practiced in the contemporary day to day life of the target students in this study.

As evidence, let us see a brief analysis of one of the texts entitled “*A difficult situation*”. This story describes the undemocratic treatment of younger boys at school in Guinea in the 1930s. An extract reads “*So at an order from the older boys, we would line up like laborers about to reap a field, and we would set to work like slaves*” (Paragraph 4, lines1-2). This direct quote talks about the period of slave trade which is an outdated topic.

On the other hand, few of the literary texts are found to be relevant to students’ day today life experience. Extracts like “*The Friendship Cake*”, “*The man I killed*” and “*Destiny*” contain issues that are relevant to the day to day life experience of the target students. For instance, the topic of the poem “*Destiny*” describes the importance of making decisions wisely. Hence, this poem is relevant to the student’s day to day life experience. Similarly, the topic of the extract, “*Dealing*

with a drug dealer” exposes the bad consequence of drug abuse on people’s life. This topic is a burning issue for the target students’ life experience as many young people mostly have been victimized emotionally by drug abuse.

4.2.4 Interestingness

The fourth criteria the researchers used to evaluate the literary texts was checking out if they are appropriate for students’ interests and needs. The document analyses showed that there are literary texts that lacked these. Extracts like *“Difficult Situation”*, *“Nigerian Market Place”* and *“The Fulani Creation Story”* contain outdated topics. As an example we can see one of the analyzed extracts entitled *“Nigerian Market Place”*. From the analyses, the poem depicts the traditional bartering system that was practiced in Nigeria some time ago. This kind of marketing system was the ancient form which is not practiced now. So the topic of this poem does not reflect the current needs and motivations of students about marketing systems.

In addition, literary extracts *“Dealing with a drug dealer”*, *“Ayantu to the rescue”*, *“Shipwrecked”* and *“A difficult situation”* are linguistically very challenging as explained above. Furthermore, *“The Fulani creation story”* and *“A sudden Storm”* are also culturally unfamiliar. When literary texts are culturally unfamiliar, students cannot understand them and this results in boredom in students as linguistically difficult texts may demotivate students’ interest. On the other hand, the study found that some of the literary extracts contain contemporary, relevant, linguistically challenging and culturally familiar topics. A good evidence for this is the *“Friendship Cake.”* The story shows that cooperative work makes people successful.

4.2.5 Length

The last criterion used in this study was whether the length of the literary texts is appropriate for students’ level. The study found that *“Ayantu to the rescue”*, *“Three combined poems”*, *“Makeda’s Story”*, *“Shipwrecked”* and *“The Snake -Man and the Girl”* are very long extracts. Specifically, *“The snake man and the Girl”* covered three pages (47-49); *“Shipwrecked”* has nine paragraphs and 69 lines and *“The Three Combined Poems”* is comprised of four pages (PP. 218-221.) These literary extracts look very long for students’ level. When the length of the text does

not match with the students' reading speed and linguistic level, students may feel frustrated, bored and discouraged from reading.

However, this study found the majority of literary extracts seem to have appropriate length for students' level. We can see "*A poem*", "*Friendship Cake*", "*The man I killed*" and "*Nigerian Market Place*" as instances. The extract "*A poem*" has six stanzas and 32 lines; "*Friendship Cake*" consisted of 6 paragraphs and 29 lines and "*Nigerian Market Place*" comprised of 6 stanzas and 21 lines. The extract entitled "*The Man I killed*" has also moderate length.

4.3 Evaluation of Reading Activities

The document analysis was also used to evaluate the reading activities designed from literary texts. Focus was given if activities help students to get background hints; if they help to stimulate the students' interest and pre-teach key words and if they develop language awareness and interpretation of main themes.

4.3.1 Creating cultural awareness and Interest in pre-reading

According to the document analyses, it was found that pre-reading activities lacked stimulating activities. They lacked to include previewing, prediction, discussion, providing sample extracts' key language practice activities to anticipate the content of the text. As an example, we can look at the activities on pages 72 and 164. These pre-reading activities instruct students what to do and how to do. However, they do not give opportunities to students to anticipate the contents of the extracts. This implies that the pre-reading activities designed from literary texts failed to motivate students' interest and help them to pre-view key languages. However, the study indicated that some of the activities are good in that they help students to get hints about the cultural background of the literary texts. Activities on page 43 are instances for this.

The Fulani are a people of West Africa. They are traditionally cattle herders and milk is at the center of their culture. Below is traditional Fulani poem which describes how they believe the world was founded. (The Fulani creation story, P. 43)

This kind pre-reading activity gives hints for students about the setting, the economic activity practiced, the main food, and religious belief of the people and the characters of the literary

extract. These activities help students to get clue about the context of the extract and help them to sense the content of the extract.

4.3.2 Helping to Develop Comprehension Skills

The while-reading activities were also evaluated. The analyses revealed that most of them are found to be good in helping students to develop surface comprehension skills. For instance, the instruction of the activities on page 38 reads: *“Skim the text to get the general idea, and then work in groups to complete the following chart about the title, authors, what the story is about, characters, where the story is set, what happens in the story and type of story”*. Such activities were designed to skim the literary extract, find out general ideas, read the text to give title, identify the authors of the extract, scan the characters and understand its setting.

Similarly, the document analysis indicated that most of the while reading activities are good to develop language awareness. The following activity on page 138 is a good example:

The poet uses words to help us see and hear things in our minds as we read. Here are some examples: The wind howls. The tree sways. The children skip home. A).match the verbs the poet has used with these more commonly used verbs: move, go, blow .B). Find some other examples that help us hear the noise of the storm and the things it causes (A Sudden Storm, pp. 137-138).

However, the analysis showed that a good number of the while reading activities lacked to include activities that help students to understand language function and style. For instance, we can look at some activities that followed the novel extract entitled *“Dealing with a drug dealer “as shown below:*

Work in groups to discuss the following questions:

- 1. Do you think it is a good conclusion? How does it compare with your suggestions for what Joseph should do?*
- 2. Can you suggest any other ways Joseph could stop the drug trafficking?*

(Dealing with a Drug Dealer, p. 103)

As indicated above, these activities were designed to engage students to relate their personal experiences to the text they read. That means, they were designed to integrate the topic of the text to the real life experience of the students. That means these activities should be preceded by

language analysis activities so as to enable students to do these tasks successfully. However, the document analyses showed that these were the only activities designed from the literary extract. From this, it is shown that language awareness activities including analyzing functions of language, grammar awareness, and possibility of variety structures and practicing previously learnt grammar items, analyzing possible implication of the languages used by the author to convince his message were not included.

To sum up, from the document analyses, most of while-reading activities were designed to understand the surface information (basic comprehension) and vocabulary. That is to say, activities are intended to develop and improve vital skills including identifying the main ideas and supporting details, and learning vocabularies from context and other strategies. However, most of the while-reading activities lacked language awareness tasks including identifying functions of language, grammar awareness and possibility of variety. In addition, the activities failed to develop higher order comprehension skills such as analysis and synthesis.

4.4.4 Helping to Interpret and Develop Personal Response in Students

In addition, the post reading activities were evaluated if they are good in helping students to encourage interpretation of the main themes and develop personal creative response in students. So according to the document analysis, some of the post-reading activities were good in helping students interpret the text and develop creative response in students. For example, when we look at activities on pages 64, they are good evidences for these.

4. Discuss these questions in groups.

- a. Do you think the children should have told their parents? If so, what could the parents have done?*
- b. Do you think this situation of senior students being cruel to younger children in the same school still exists? Why do you think senior students behave in this story?*
- c. Have you ever had occasions in your own life when you had been uncertain about what to do?*
- d. Discuss these occasions with your group .What would they recommended?*

(A Difficult Situation, P.64)

As indicated above, these activities require students to evaluate, relate and give their personal views to the characters' actions, to justify their reasoned arguments for their evaluations, to give their recommendations to the characters actions and to share their ideas in the classroom. This means, the activities help students to get opportunities to reach on their own interpretations and express their personal views in relation to what they read.

However, some of the activities did not encourage interpretation and personal response to the text in students. For instance, as shown below, the activities which were designed from the literary extract entitled "A poem" are good evidence for these:

2. Answer the following questions:

1. Give three examples of what the sea has washed away?

2. Why was Aku weeping with her children?

3. When was the storm which caused the destruction by the waves?

4. What sounds does the poet describe?

5. What was Abena most sorry to lose?(A poem, P.169)

Such questions in the post-reading activities ask for answers which are explicitly stated in the text. This implies that these activities did not encourage students to reach on their own multiple interpretation of the text and allow students to express their feelings, suggestions or connect the text to their life experiences.

4.3 Analysis of Teachers' Interview

4.3.1 Appropriateness of Literary Texts

When asked about the appropriateness of the literary texts' linguistic level for students, almost all teachers said that they are not appropriate. They believed that the vocabulary, language structure, the meaning of some phrases and the symbolic meaning of some of the expressions of the literary texts are very difficult to students. Teachers believed that the linguistic level of the literary texts incorporated in grade 10 students' textbook is difficult for students' level.

Teachers were also asked whether the culture depicted in the literary texts was appropriate for students' cultural background. For this item, interviewees expressed that most of the literary texts are not appropriate for students' cultural background. For instance, teacher 1 responded:

I think that the traditions reflected in most literary texts are not appropriate. For example, ceremonies, traditional wedding ceremonies and traditional wearing styles reflected in some literary texts are uncommon for our students. Other participants also felt that the traditions implied in the majority of the literary texts are not appropriate for students' cultural background.

The interviewees stated that the majority of the literary text deals with ideas that are not directly relevant to the students' day to day life experience. Teacher 4 for example reported, *"I believe that they are irrelevant. Since most of them describe issues which are unrelated to students' culture and life."* Teachers believed that the majority of the literary texts are irrelevant to the students' background and day to day life experience.

The other question raised to teachers was whether the literary texts were interesting to students. The majority of interviewees said that literary texts do not match with students' interest. For instance, teacher 3 reported, *"I do not think so because most students feel bored to read them and stop reading immediately because the literary texts are not attractive."* This means that the participants thought that the literary texts are not interesting to students.

When teachers were asked whether the length of the literary texts was appropriate for students' level, many believed that their length is inappropriate. For instance, teacher 4 reported *"I think the texts are inappropriate since they should not struggle with two things at a time, i.e., a foreign language and a long and complex text."* Teachers thought that difficulty students have on the language should not be worsened by of length.

4.3.2 Appropriateness of Reading Activities

Under this section, teachers were asked if the pre-reading activities help students to prepare for a more serious reading activity by giving historical and cultural background and linguistic clues and if the while-reading activities help to develop language awareness and higher order knowledge. In addition to this, teachers were asked if the post reading activities help students to develop creative and personal response.

When teachers were asked if activities help to get background context by giving historical and linguistic clue about literary texts, the majority of the respondents expressed that most pre-reading activities failed to do so. Teacher 3, for example, reported that *"Most literary texts do not have*

questions or hints before the reading texts.” This interviewee recognized that most literary texts have not pre-reading activities so as to give background context about the literary text. Similarly, teacher 6 stated *“As I experienced almost all literary texts lack activities that precede the passage. In fact, few texts are only preceded by instructions.”* The interviewees said that nearly all the literary texts lacked pre-reading activities.

The other interview question asked teachers if the while-reading activities help to develop language awareness and ask questions of analysis, interpretation and analysis. Teachers stated that many of the questions in the while reading activities ask for answers which can be answered at a simple glance. For instance, teacher 5 stated *“of course there are a lot of while reading activities. However the questions are inappropriate for the level since they do not require deep reading”*. Teacher 7 reported, *“There are a lot of while reading questions. However, the questions focus on facts and knowledge that need simple scanning.”* Teacher 2 responded that *“Truly. Some of the while-reading activities asked students the meaning of language structures found in the text.”* From the analyses, it is indicated while- reading activities attempted to create language awareness. However, teachers clearly indicated that many of the while reading questions do not ask for higher order knowledge such as analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating.

The next question teachers were asked was if the post-reading activities encourage students to develop personal and creative responses. Teacher 7 reported:

“Yes. Especially, poems include questions that assess students’ reaction, feelings, or judgments about the poem. In my understanding when readers [students] express their reactions to the poem, they may respond to the message of the writer creatively.”

This interviewee understood that the post reading activities require students to bring their feelings, opinion or judgments in relation to the literary texts they read. This implies that the design of post-reading activities was given attention and the activities were designed to give students opportunities to make reasoned arguments and connect the text to their own views.

4.4 Data from Questionnaire on the Appropriateness of Literary Texts

Under this part, the focus of the questionnaire was what students feel about the literary texts appropriateness, content, relevance, length and other aspects of the literary texts.

No	Items	Responses									
		SA=5		A=4		UD=3		D=2		SD=1	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I can find out the meaning of new word without the help of a dictionary.	44	10.3	64	14.9	80	18.6	121	28.2	120	27.9
2	The language of the literary texts is difficult to comprehend the text.	91	21.2	154	35.8	-	-	90	20.9	94	21.9
3	The topics of the literary texts are close to my background and day to day life experience.	61	14.3	92	21.4	45	10.5	192	44.8	39	9.0
4	The literary texts are interesting to read.	49	11.4	54	12.6	-	-	142	33.1	184	43.1
5	The content of the literary texts is worth to cover in class.	33	7.7	139	32.4	96	22.4	90	20.9	71	16.5

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=undecided, D=disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

From the table above, it is indicated that when students were asked if they could find out the meaning of new words without the help of a dictionary, 56.1 % replied “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the idea while only 26.2% of them expressed their agreement. This implies that the majority of students find the meaning of new words in the literary texts difficult.

The purpose of item 2 in the table above was to find out if language was an obstacle to comprehend the literary texts found in their textbook. So 57 % of the respondents responded that the language of the literary text is difficult to comprehend the literary texts while 41.8 % of the respondents found the language of literary texts easy to understand. This implies that the language of the literary text is difficult to the students.

As depicted in the table in item 3, 53.8 % of participants reflected that the topics of the literary texts are less relevant to their background and day to day life experience. This implies that the topics of the literary texts are unrelated to the students' background and day to day life experience. Likewise, in item 4, when students were asked if the literary texts were interesting 76.2% of them expressed "disagree" or "strongly disagree". This shows that the texts are not interesting to them.

In the same table, in item 5, by far less than half of the respondents (40.1%), which is the sum of 7.7% strongly agree and 32.4% agree expressed that the content of the literary texts is worthy to cover in class while 22.4% of the respondents said undecided. On the other hand, 37.4%, which is the sum of 20.9 % disagree and 16.5% strongly disagree reported that the content length of the literary texts is less worthy to cover in class. This implies that it is difficult to conclude whether the content length of the literary texts is worthy to cover in class or not.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The following are the conclusions drawn from data from interview and questionnaire.

- The literary texts are not in harmony with the level of students. The linguistic level of the texts is very challenging and complex and the culture and beliefs depicted in them is far removed from the socio-cultural background of students. The contents and topics of the texts are not appealing and relevant for students' needs, expectations and lives. In general, the literary texts are not suitable for students from different perspectives
- The reading activities are not well designed to teach reading skills effectively. Top-down reading activities that help students get background context, create interest to the text and practice key language are not covered. The activities also lack to cover language and style awareness tasks which help students to understand the texts in depth and do post-reading tasks effectively. Most of the activities were meant to develop lower order thinking skills. In short, the activities are not well-designed to teach reading skills interactively.

6. Recommendations

Ministry of education should think of revising students' text books so that appropriate literary texts could be included and activities are re-designed. Until this is done, there are a number of activities teachers should do. For example, teachers could supplement the textbook by bringing different

texts that fulfill the criteria mentioned in the literature. In addition to this, they should revise and use the activities provided in the textbook.

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