Literature as Ideal Material and Rich Source of Lexical Chunks and Recycling of Syntactic structures to Develop Language Skills in ESL/EFL Classroom

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Abstract: *Literature as teaching material plays a pivotal in EFL/ESL teaching programs. This article reviews the reasons put forward by scholars and further argues that literature holds a unique position as teaching material for any aspect of learning language. In the first part it focuses on authenticity, critical thinking, language skills development, cultural awareness, sociolinguistic awareness and selection criteria and the classroom method. The second part argues and demonstrates how literature is the ideal material to explore the lexical chunks, which repeat and recycle throughout a literary work, leading to their entering the long term memory. It also argues that literary works are the ideal place to notice variety of well contextualized grammatical structures repeating and recycling throughout a work and that these structures can be considered larger lexical chunks.*

Key words*: literature as material, lexical chunks in literature, critical thinking*

Introduction

Literature, which once occupied the English language classroom, fell into disuse in the late 19th century**.** But with the emergence of the 'communicative approach' and the learner-centeredness in language learning, literature in the language classroom was revived and researchers and language professionals have been exploring, for over two-and –a- half decades, various ways in which   literature can be used in the EFL /ESL classroom, as materials, for developing the language skills. The purpose of this article is to highlight the fact that literary works, if selected carefully, can be the best materials for acquiring the target language. In no other kind of material can the learners make their language acquisition journey so fruitfully, examining and absorbing a wealth of clearly contextualized vocabulary, pragmatics and sociolinguistics in action, and grammatical structures and variety of linguistic registers, as in literature. The first part of this paper discusses why literature is the best material in the ESL/EFL classroom, and the second part discusses literature as the rich source of lexical chunks and variety of grammatical structures, and how they *recycle* themselves repeatedly throughout a literary work, noticing which is central to storing the target language in long term memory.

Why literature can be the best teaching material

Literature can be used in language classroom for developing all the language skills. In spite of several research articles on the use of literature in the language classroom, there is still some hesitation among curriculum designers at universities to use literature in the language classroom.

Though the classroom observation and evaluation of students' performance in literature course tests clearly show that literature contributes hugely to enhance the language skills and the level of learners' language proficiency , Maley (2001), points out that this attitude toward literature is due to a paucity of empirical research, confirming the significance of literary input for language classroom. Arguing that literature can be very good material in ESL/EFL classroom Van (2009) enumerates the following benefits of using literature in the FL classroom:

1- It provides meaningful contexts;
2- It involves a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues and prose;
3- It appeals to imagination and enhances creativity;
4- It develops cultural awareness;
5- It encourages critical thinking;
6- It is in line with CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) principles.

He elaborates the last point by specifying the ways in which literary exploration in the language classroom can go hand in hand with the main tenets of CLT:

- Meaning is the outcome of the interaction between the reader's experience on the one hand, and the text's language, the reading context and the ideological assumptions underlying the text on the other. Accordingly, literature can enhance meaning.
- Learning is facilitated through involvement and joy, which can be created by literary style. Moreover, reading literature makes for more active and critical thinking and learning.
- Learning is facilitated through authentic communication and active involvement. As such, literature can be particularly useful as it provides opportunities for student-centered activities and collaborative group work.
- The role of learners as active and autonomous participants is emphasized in CLT, and as literature reading creates individual meanings, this goal is achieved.

The role of teachers as facilitators, guides and active planners is embodied in the process of literary work and analysis. It can be realized that those features for which literature in the EFL classroom has been criticized, i.e. its cultural load, structural complexity and non-normative use of language, are exactly what can be employed to enrich language teaching and learning experiences.

Collie and Slater (1990:3), argue that there are four main reasons for using literature in the language classroom. They are:1. Valuable authentic material 2.Cultural enrichment

3. Language Enrichment and 4. Personal Involvement

1Analysis of the ideas

1.Language environment

It has been a long established fact that if a language is spoken in the immediate surroundings of the learner and the learner begins to interact with that language, he/she can acquire the language easily. Usually, for an EFL /ESL learner this *environment is not available*. The only limited language speaking environment available is in the classroom instructional setting. Studying the well selected literary works—novels/short stories, dramas—will provide the SL environment lacking in the surroundings. A reader emotionally inhabits the literary world created by the writer, interacting with the language, analyzing and interpreting the issues silently, albeit passively. This is a significant contribution of literature for an EFL/ESL learner.

1.2. Valuable Authentic Material

Literature is authentic material. Though the world created by the writer is imaginary, the situations and incidents and the language used in it are picked up from the real world. Literary works are not created artificially, for the purpose of teaching. But they are authentic as they are very close to the real world. In a classroom, therefore, the students are exposed to the authentic material. Berado (2006), argues that there are four factors worth considering when choosing authentic material for the classroom. They are: suitability of content, exploitability, readability and presentation. He believes that the main advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom include:

1- Having a positive effect on student motivation;

2- Giving authentic cultural information;

3- Exposing students to real language;

4- Relating more closely to students' needs;

5- Supporting a more creative approach to teaching.

1.3. Cultural Enrichment

Today when the whole world is described as a 'global village' and multiculturalism is a universal factor, it is impossible that an EFL / ESL learner learns the English language without getting exposed to its cultural setting. Then what is culture? A broad definition is that a "society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves" (Wardhaugh, 1990, p.211). Cruz (2010) quotes from Kramsch (1998) that it is important to be aware that culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill; it is present within writing, reading, listening and speaking. For the target language learners, literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc. facilitate understanding how communication takes place in that country. Though the world of a novel, play, or short story is an imaginary one, it presents a full and colorful setting in which characters from many social / regional backgrounds can be described. A reader can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside (i.e. their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in,

fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings). Literature is, perhaps, best regarded as a complement to other materials used to develop the foreign learner's understanding into the country whose language is being learned.

1.4 Critical thinking

'Dictionary of reference' defines critical thinking as 'the process of independently analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information as a guide to behavior and beliefs'. Facione (2011),provides a more comprehensive definition : "We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based. [Since this includes almost all types of logical reasoning,] CT is essential as a tool of inquiry.

Today's students will be tomorrow's adults confronting variety of issues in life. They need to have critical thinking skills to analyze, interpret and evaluate the issues to resolve them. Therefore, developing the critical thinking skills is an important aspect of formal education. Literature is the rich resource material to develop these skills. Welker (1999) affirms : Students often lack the critical thinking skills necessary to pass judgment on what they read. Critical Reading Instruction that Improves Comprehension Skills (CRITICS) helps students to develop into thinkers, not just readers (p.188). As literary works like novels, dramas and short stories deal with various issues confronting life, and are rich in multiple levels of meaning, they are excellent materials for developing critical thinking. Students learn to read closely, analyze, interpret and judge plot development, theme and characters presented in these works. Exposure to these works help students to grow intellectually. Langer (1997) argues that "literature permits students to reflect on their lives, learning, and the language used. Literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore" (p.607). Today critical thinking is the cornerstone of education particularly at advanced levels of education, and literature offers a natural medium through which students can be introduced to main points and supporting details; comparing and contrasting; looking for cause-effect relationships; evaluating evidence, and becoming familiar with the type of language needed to express the thinking (Ghosn, 2002). As critical thinking skills are transferable skills they will help the readers to apply these skills in real life situations too.

1.5 Language skills enrichment and improved proficiency

With the advancement of applied linguistics and the communicative approach of classroom instruction, development of language skills-reading, writing, listening and speaking- have been accorded utmost importance in the ESL/EFL language classroom. Besides exposing the students to a plethora of well contextualized vocabulary, learners are exposed to a variety of syntactic structures, discourse functions of sentences, and the different ways of connecting ideas, which

develop and enrich their own writing skills. While reading helps them develop reading skills, it also provides them with models for writing. A story or a novel or a drama studied in the classroom, can be fruitfully used for speaking practice, as the learners are already acquainted with the issues raised in the work and the required vocabulary. Cruz (2010) argues that a literary text provides students with a much clearer idea about the syntactic structure of a written text and to what extent written language differs from spoken language. He further continues : by getting used to the formation and function of sentences, to the structure of a paragraph, a section or a chapter, their writing skills will improve and their speech skills can gain eloquence.

1.6 *Personal Involvement*

A very important aspect of using literature in the ESL/EFL classroom is the learners' emotional involvement with the work. As the readers gets absorbed with the happenings in the story or a novel, they want to know what happens next. With this curiosity the reader becomes more involved with the text until it reaches its climax. This can have beneficial effect on the learning process. A point to remember at this juncture is that, the text selected should be of the learners' level, both in terms of the range of vocabulary and syntax, and the issues raised in the work

1.7 *Sociolinguistic awareness*

Apart from the above mentioned reasons for using literature in the foreign language class, one of the main functions of literature, as Maley (1989), argues is its sociolinguistic richness. The use of language changes from one social group to another. Likewise, it changes from one geographical location to another. A person speaks differently in different social contexts like school, hospital, police station and theatre (i.e. formal, informal, casual, frozen, intimate styles speech). The language used changes from one profession to another (i.e. doctors, engineers, economists use different terminology). To put it differently, since literature provides students with a wide range of language varieties like sociolects, regional dialects, jargon, idiolects, etc., it develops their sociolinguistic competence in the target language. Hence, incorporating literature into a foreign language teaching program as a powerful source for reflecting the sociolinguistic aspects of the target language gains importance

2. Criteria for selecting literary works

What criteria should one apply while selecting literary works in an ESL/EFL classroom? Collie and Slater (1990:6-7), have this to say : when selecting the literary texts to be used in language classes, the language teacher should take into account needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students. However, one major factor to take into account is whether a particular work is able to reveal the kind of personal involvement by arousing the learners' interest and eliciting strong, positive reactions from them. Reading a literary text is more likely to have a long-term and valuable effect upon the learners' linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge when it is meaningful and amusing. Choosing books relevant to the real-life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner is of great importance. Language

difficulty has to be considered as well. If the language of the literary work is simple, this may facilitate the comprehensibility of the literary text but is not in itself the most crucial criterion. Interest, appeal, and relevance are also prominent. Enjoyment; a fresh insight into issues felt to be related to the heart of people's concerns; the pleasure of encountering one's own thoughts or situations exemplified clearly in a work of art; the other, equal pleasure of noticing those same thoughts, feelings, emotions, or situations presented by a completely new perspective: all these are motives helping learners to cope with the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material

3. Approaches to literature

Usually a good work of literature can be studied at different levels. And it can be approached in different ways, depending upon what one is looking for. Many researchers have suggested variety of ways to approach literature. Presented below is a comprehensive classification of approaches given by Van (2009), which supersedes the other classifications:

3.1. New criticism. Within this approach, literature is conceived of as a self-contained whole, independent of the author's intention, the reader's response, and the social, political and historical background of the text. Activities mainly involve the study of literary devices and formal elements of the piece with no regard for its beauty and value. Moreover, the literary texts to work on are generally selected from among the *traditional canon,* which are too long, difficult, unfamiliar and irrelevant to students' lives. As such, they might border on the banal for learners and create a negative attitude toward literature.

3.2. Structuralism. Leaving no room for subjective meaning and the reader's response, this model approaches a literary text scientifically by focusing on processes, themes, structures and mechanical formal relationships that are involved in the production of meaning and that place the work into a meaningful hierarchical system. It follows that because of its overemphasis on the linguistic code, it is less relevant than New Criticism for the teaching of literature.

3.3. Stylistics. This model approaches literature by analyzing the features of literary language, for example its unconventionality and non-grammaticality, to develop students' sensitivity to literature, and to have them make aesthetic judgments and interpretations of the text based upon their linguistic knowledge. An example of such an approach is the comparative technique in which learners compare literary and non-literary registers to work out the various ways language is used to accomplish things. However, though aesthetically relevant, the stylistics approach poses challenges to the learners' communicative competence and teachers' knowledge of literary language.

3.4. Reader-Response. This model predicates on a commitment to the transactional relationship between the reader's personal experiences, opinions and feelings on the one hand and the text on the other. As such, it goes hand-in-hand with theories of top-down reading and readers' schemata. In the EFL classroom, this approach has much to offer as it:

- makes literature more accessible by activating students' background knowledge;
- harnesses emotional reactions for classroom instruction;
- increases students' individual and group participation and motivation since it
- personalizes the learning experience;
- provides for a student-centered and process-oriented classroom;

However, there are some problems, too, as:

- students' responses may deviate from the work;
- considering the learners' language proficiency and culture, selecting appropriate

materials may be problematic;

3.5. Language-based. On top of emphasis on literary language, this approach facilitates student responses and experience with literature, through a variety of activities as cloze procedures, brainstorming, summarizing, jigsaw reading, etc. which enhance collaboration, independence, interaction, peer teaching, and motivation. Accordingly, it meets the students' needs in both reading literature, and learning a language as it results in four-skill English language development. The teacher's role is not to impose interpretation, but to clarify technical terms, offer appropriate classroom procedures and intervene to provide stimuli and prompts.

3.6. Critical Literacy. Stemming from such theories as critical language studies, feminism and educational sociology, this model focuses on the relationship between language use and social power. It is aimed at facilitating students' critical awareness about the role of language in establishing social relations, and encouraging learners to explore how social and political factors shape the language they are learning. These are the tenets of 'Transformative Pedagogy'. To employ such an approach, teachers must consider the degree of openness of their students' society and culture so as to create a safe atmosphere.

Of the above classified approaches, Van points to the general consensus that *Reader-Response* and *Language-based* seem to be best suited for EFL learners, while conceding that other approaches are not without their merits.

4. The method : application in the classroom

The most common methods that can be used in the classroom are : summarizing chapters(if it is a novel) or a short story; asking comprehension questions on incidents, plot, theme and characters so as to familiarize the students with whole text, which subsequently lead them to discuss these components in detail. At a lower level, for e.g. lower intermediate level, cloze exercises, and if poetry, paraphrasing and summarizing the stanzas or the whole poem can be done. Though there are other techniques suggested, the present researcher feels that the a four-level sequence of activities for in-class work offered by Gajdusek (1988), is a very good approach. Though he exemplifies his approach with a story, he claims that it is equally applicable to all kinds of literary texts.

Following is a rough sketch of the four levels of the model along with his suggested activities for each stage.

I. **Pre-reading work**
- *Pre-reading vocabulary work*

1. Cloze exercises for words whose meaning can be derived from the context;

2. Providing information on words that bear clues to the cultural and emotional meaning of the text;

3. Training learners in identifying the category of and dismissing words that proficient readers merely categorize;

- *Additional pre-reading work*

1. Student logs

2. Write-Before-You-Read activities

II. Factual in-class work

- *Point of view*

1. Identifying the point of view and discussing its implications;

2. Rewriting the story from different points of view;

- *Character*

1. Listing the main characters;

2. Analyzing the main characters, their relationships, motivations and conflicts;

- *Setting*

1. Providing background information about the author in the pre-reading work;

2. Assigning students to groups to report on the general and specific time and place;

- *Action***:**

1. Asking questions and checking for comprehension;

2. Having learners work out the time line of the story;

III. **Analysis**

- *Structure-Plot, conflict, climax*

1. Investigating the plot in terms of conflict, climax, denouement;

2. Having learners identify the climax line and then compare their ideas;

- *Theme*

1. Eliciting several topics and having learners articulate the theme using those topics;

2. Having learners articulate the theme by analyzing paragraph foci;

- *Style*

1. Pursuing patterns and figurative language;

2. Having learners divide the text into significant sections and name them with a word or phrase that reveals the author's purpose;

IV. **Extending activities**

- *In-class work*

1. Straightforward debate of issues
2. Role-plays and dramatizations
   - ***Student writing***
1. Having low proficiency learners practice sentence level grammar in writing;
2. Assigning writing tasks from journals to critical essays.

5. Why literature is a rich source of lexical chunks and syntactic structures

In the section below an attempt will be made to show, how literature is a goldmine of "lexical chunks", and how the learners encounter variety of fully contextualized syntactic structures which recycle throughout a literary work, noticing which is at the heart of language acquisition.

5.1 What is lexical approach?

The groundbreaking ELT theory in the last one decade has been 'Lexical Approach', popularized by Michael Lewis's (1993). Ever since the publication of his book, many researches have testified to the importance of teaching and drawing the attention of the learners to the lexical chunks in the classroom instructional setting. Though Lewis coined the expression 'lexical chunks', its existence was already recognized before and had been referred to as 'prefabricated patterns', (Hakuta 1974), 'speech formulae'(Peter 1983), 'lexicalized items' (Pawley and Syder 1983), and "lexical phrases" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992), all cited by Richards and Rogers(2001). Lexical approach concentrates on developing learners' proficiency with lexis, or words and word combinations. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce *lexical phrases as unanalyzed wholes, or "chunks,"* and that these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language, traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993, p. 95). Instruction focuses on relatively fixed expressions that occur frequently in spoken language, such as, "I'm sorry," "I didn't mean to make you jump," or "That will never happen to me," rather than on originally created sentences (Lewis, 1997a, p. 212) as cited in Ericdigest(2002). Zimmerman (1997, p. 17) suggests that the work of Sinclair, Nattinger, DeCarrico, and Lewis represents a significant theoretical and pedagogical shift from the past. First, their claims have revived an interest in a central role for accurate language description. Second, they challenge a traditional view of word boundaries, emphasizing the language learner's need to perceive and use patterns of lexis and collocation. Most significant is the underlying claim that language production is not a syntactic rule-governed process but is instead the retrieval of larger phrasal units from memory.

The lexical approach makes a distinction between vocabulary--traditionally understood as a stock of individual words with fixed meanings--and lexis, which includes not only the single words but also the word combinations that we store in our mental lexicons. Lewis highlights the following principles in this approach :

- Lexis is the basis of language.
- Lexis is misunderstood in language teaching because of the assumption that grammar is the basis of language and that mastery of the grammatical system is a prerequisite for effective communication.
- The key principle of a lexical approach is that "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar."
- One of the central organizing principles of any meaning-centered syllabus should be lexis.

The following are some examples of lexical chunks:
Of course,   in fact,   as far as possible,   where is it?,   I don't know,   What's it? In the evening, take into account, first time.

Lewis (1997b) suggests the following classification for lexical chunks:

- *words* (e.g., book, pen)
- *polywords* (e.g., by the way, upside down)
- *collocations*, or word partnerships (e.g., community service, absolutely convinced)
- *institutionalized utterances* (e.g., I'll get it; We'll see; That'll do; If I were you ...; Would you like a cup of coffee?)
- sentence frames and heads (e.g., That is not as ...as you think; The fact/suggestion/problem/danger was ...) and even text frames (e.g., In this paper we explore ...; Firstly ...; Secondly ...; Finally ...)

Within the lexical approach, special attention is directed to collocations and expressions that include institutionalized utterances and sentence frames and heads. As Lewis maintains, "instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and to present these in expressions. Rather than trying to break things into ever smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic, ways" (1997a, p. 204).

The following are some activities Lewis(ibid), introduces to develop learners knowledge and

awareness of lexical chunks:

1) Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language.

2) First and second language comparisons and translation--carried out chunk-for-chunk,

rather than word-for-word--aimed at raising language awareness.

3) Repetition and recycling of activities, such as summarizing a text orally one day and again

a few days later to keep words and expressions that have been learned active.

4) Guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context.

5) Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations.

6) Working with dictionaries and other reference tools.

7) Working with language corpuses created by the teacher for use in the classroom or

accessible on the Internet.

6. How to use literature in the EFL/ESL classroom to sensitize the learners on lexical chunks.

Students' attention needs to be drawn to the existence of lexical chunks for them to notice when they are reading a literary work. The important point is to *notice* the chunks. So if a novel of approximately 200 page is used for intensive study, the teacher should draw the attention of the students to the lexical chunks on the first page itself, after a brief explanation of what lexical chunks are. Once trained, a learner does become aware of the chunks as they read page after page, encountering many of the chunks repeatedly. Through the repeated encounters and recycling, the chunks make their way into the long term memory of the learner. For the purpose of training them to *notice*, a page from the novel can be used as material. It is illustrated here, using the following extract:

It is a truth well known to all the world that an unmarried man in possession of a large fortune must be in need of a wife. And when such a man moves into a neighbourhood, even if nothing is known about his feelings or opinions, this truth is clear to the surrounding families, that they think of him immediately as the future husband of one or the other of their daughters.

'My dear Mr Bennet', said Mrs Bennet to her husband one day, 'have you heard that someone is going to rent Netherfield Park at last?'

'No Mrs Bennet I haven't,' said her husband.

'Don't you want to know who is renting it?' cried Mrs Bennet impatiently.

'You want to tell me, and I don't mind listening.'

Mrs Bennet needed no further encouragement. 'Well, my dear, I hear that he is a very rich young man from the north of England. It seems he came to see Netherland on Monday and was so delighted with it that he arranged to rent it at once. Of course, it is the finest house in the area, with the largest gardens. His servants will be here by the end of the week, and he will be arriving soon afterwards!'

'What is his name?' asked Mr Bennet.

'Bingley'.

'Is he married or single?'

'Oh, single, my dear, of course! A single man of large fortune-he has an income of four or five thousand pounds a year. How wonderful for our girls!'

'Why? How can it affect them?'Mr Bennet asked.

[Pride and Prejudice, page-1. Oxford Bookworms- 6]

6.1 Lexicalchunks from the passage

i. *polywords :* nothing is known, man moves into a neighbourhood, was so delighted, they think of him, someone is going to rent.

ii.   *collocations, or word partnership* : large fortune, the largest gardens, how wonderful, surrounding families, on Monday, finest house, one day , in possession of, in need of

iii. institutionalized utterances : At last , at once ,   I don't mind , of course, it seems,   well known,   even if ,   In possession of / in need of,   it seems ,   married or single? , future husband,   my dear Bennet,   said Mrs Bennet to her husband

What is his name?   cried Mrs Bennet,   Said her husband ,   Who is renting it? ,   don't you want to know?,   how can it affect them?

iv. sentence frames and heads : It is a truth well known

7. Literature for teaching grammar and recycling of syntactic structures

It has been an ongoing debate whether grammar should be taught explicitly or implicitly. Or whether it should be taught as a separate course or integrated with a language text. Opinions are equally divided. Whatever the method one follows, literary works, particularly novels and short stories are, in the opinion of the present researcher , the best place to encounter all the grammatical structures—present tense, past tense and future tense and their different forms-- one encounters in a language. It is here that a learner repeatedly encounters *well contextualized tense forms recycling throughout the text.* Usually when grammar is taught as a separate course, the only aim of the students is to pass the test, which they do successfully because of the structures stored in the short term memory. But soon after the test they are forgotten too, as they do not encounter the structures they have studied again, repeatedly. If a teacher chooses to follow the PPP model, after giving examples of the structures from the text that is being taught in the class, the teacher can draw the attention of the learners to the structures they have studied in the text.

As the students encounter different kinds of structures hundreds of time, it is bound to enter their long term memory.

The passage given above to illustrate lexical chunks, easily yields to reported speech.

Presented below are two more extracts from the same book, to illustrate the past forms:

Passage-A

When he was young, Mr Bennet had made the mistake of falling in love with a pretty, but foolish young woman. During the long years of their marriage, he had had time to regret his mistake. He soon realized that his wife had little intelligence or common sense and was only interested in talking, shopping and finding husbands for her daughters. His experience had made him rather bitter, and he could not stop himself mocking his wife, who never understood her husband's sense of humour(P3)

The passage above clearly illustrates the use of *past perfect* tense in the past narrative. When is the past perfect used? The teacher has an opportunity to explain why past perfect is used instead of simple past. The extract below clearly illustrates the *simple past* for the past narrative.

Passage-B

As politeness required, Mr Bingley came to visit Mr Bennet a few days later .he was not , however, not fortunate enough to see the Bennet girls, who were hiding behind the curtains in an upstairs room to in order to catch sight of the handsome stranger. Mr Bennet planned to invite him to dinner, but in fact they met him at another social event first. The Bennets lived in the small Hertfordshire village of Longbourn, and public dances were regularly held in the nearest town, Meryton (.P3)
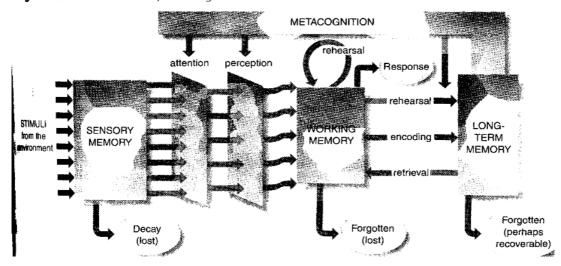
The teacher has now an opportunity to explain why the sentences in this passage are only in the simple past. Comparing the two passages explaining why the past perfect is used in the passage –A,and why only the simple past, in –B, will help the learners *notice* the well contextualized correct past forms. As the learners' repeatedly encounter such structures hundreds of times in different situations these structures get stored in the long term memory which can be retrieved whenever required.

The key principle of the lexical approach is that the "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar." This concept can be further expanded to include the grammatical structures too as larger lexical chunks which, once stored in the long term memory, can be retrieved at will when required. This is in conformity with the information processing model as

given by Eggen and Kauchak (2004)

Figure 7.2   An information processing model

Conclusion

As it has been shown in the discussion above, the use of literature in the ESL classroom has immense value as teaching material. It can be effectively and fruitfully exploited for acquiring wide range of vocabulary, pragmatic and sociolinguistic use of language, interpretation and analysis of variety of issues, critical thinking, providing models for writing and mastering the syntactic structures--all well contextualized for meaningful communication. Similarly, the value of literature for exposing the learners to thousands of repeated and recycled lexical chunks can, in no way, be underestimated. If the course curriculum developers in higher education in ESL can see the virtues of using literature as material, they should wholeheartedly welcome literary works in their institutions, and prescribe well selected literary works in the curriculum.

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