

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2026-2-17>

WORLD LITERATURE TEXTS AS A PANACEA FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN MODERN AZERBAIJANI UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract. This article addresses an interesting and relevant topic. It's no secret that numerous works have been published on English language teaching methods in schools and universities worldwide, including Azerbaijan, at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. However, to avoid being unfounded and following the principle of "one cannot embrace the infinite", the author of this work has deliberately narrowed the scope of the study to a brief overview of the role and significance of literary text in this area.

First, we would like to point out that this article contains several points that attract particular attention. First, we believe it will be of interest to people of various professions. Clearly, it is primarily addressed to university teachers. However, the informational material is distributed in such a way that it may also be of interest to psychologists, cultural studies scholars, historians, philologists, and linguists. Furthermore, as one reads the article, one can see that the author has thoroughly studied specialized pedagogical literature. Thus, in addition to sources taken from the internet, there are individual references to works published in the media. Moreover, as we see it, the cited works are always appropriate. Moreover, it is striking how logically continues various ideas of critics, drawing their own conclusions and generalizations. The work clearly demonstrates the significant contribution of educators to the problem under study. It is also significant that the data presented in the article and any generalizations made by the author correspond to specific facts, which, of course, enriches the presented article. It is written in a scholarly language that is at the same time quite accessible to ordinary readers.

Key words: Research Methodology, Universities of Azerbaijan, Literary Text, Authentic Text, English Language, Sentence, Context, Communication, Competence, Boomerang Method, Reading.

Introduction. Before beginning to study the fundamentals of grammar, syntax, and stylistics of modern English, an experienced university teacher sets a preliminary goal: what should be sought from Azerbaijani students first and foremost? Having established this goal for themselves, they will gain a clear and precise understanding of the language's teaching. It seems that the primary goal of teaching this subject in the republic's universities today is to define the correct approach to communication as a whole. This goal also encompasses various types of competencies, as well as levels of English language learning such as personal, cognitive, historical, factual, cultural, and so on.

We believe that setting such a goal dictates the solution of several related tasks. Among these, a significant one is the reliance on literary texts. This is understandable: literary texts, firstly, facilitate students' better understanding of authentic literature. Secondly, it serves as a "didactic unit", which in turn contains a set of features necessary for expanding the English vocabulary. Thirdly, this approach to teaching provides a minimum of informative material that encompasses the basic facts of speech production. Fourthly, it forms the basis for Azerbaijani students' verbal utterances. Finally, fifthly, it opens up broader scope for setting and resolving didactic-moralistic tasks. Clearly, their range is limited by the foreign language teacher's search for active learning methods. The five points we've listed are, of course, not strictly constant. They can be expanded if desired and necessary. However, they should be accepted as a working hypothesis and firmly established that, in modern English language teaching methods at Azerbaijani universities, reliance on literary texts of varying lengths has significant educational and practical value.

The main goal is to reveal the potential of the texts of world fiction in the teaching of English with Azerbaijani students.

Judging by all the materials, and especially the conclusion, it is clear that the goal of this work has been achieved. The enormous importance of using literary texts in teaching English is clearly perceived. Firstly, it helps to remember the rules more clearly; Secondly, it facilitates the process of understanding the main sections of linguistics; thirdly, literary texts help focus attention on key issues of foreign linguistics; fourthly, reading helps develop the skill of verbal expression. Almost all of these aspects (within the scope of this article, of course) are thoroughly covered.

Methods. In the article, the author necessarily relied on methods of encoding and decoding literary English-language texts, respectively and then summarizes the data in relation to the general educational process in Azerbaijani universities.

Results and Discussion. Summarizing the data of renowned educators from different periods regarding the topic of our article, we were able to establish at least three compelling reasons for the use of English-language literary texts in Azerbaijani universities today. A). Literature is, first and foremost, an authentic, valuable resource that serves a specific purpose set by the educator; B). The university educator is, first and foremost, the initiator of a critical approach to this type of text; C). Freedom to choose authentic information depending on the age of students.

For this reason, in the field of education in many countries of the modern civilization, including Azerbaijan, most researchers recognize the colossal role of fiction as a kind of catalyst for foreign language learning. "For foreign language learners to read, they have to be prepared to use various abilities and strategies they already possess from their reading experiences in their native language. They will need the knowledge they possess to help orient themselves in the many dimensions of language implicated in any text. Researchers have established that the act of reading is a non-linear process that is recursive and context-dependent. Readers tend to jump ahead or go back to different segments of the text, depending on what they are reading to find out" (Foreign Language Teaching Methods, 2026). Clearly, the word "foreign" in this case directly refers to English as an international language. This, incidentally, is evidenced by the literature we cited in English.

For example, Professor Aida Shahbazova made a significant contribution to the topic under study. Her monograph (Shahbazova, 1994) undoubtedly gave a very serious impetus to the use of literary texts. After the publication of this monograph in the national press, new and, it should be noted, active methods related to the sought-after problem emerged, began to develop and improve. For example, already in the 21st century, works of varying volumes appeared by S.R. Gaibova, A.O. Osmanzade, A.J. Pashayeva, L.F. Gahramanova, and A.N. Zeynalova. It is easy to see from the above that leading Azerbaijani scholars, methodologists, and practicing teachers devoted significant attention to the use of literary texts in English classes.

This inevitably begs the question: if we assert that, in today's university environment, fiction texts are objectively a panacea and, at the same time, have been thoroughly studied, then where do we see even a grain of scientific novelty? To summarize: a critical analysis of existing specialized pedagogical and psychological literature leads us to the conclusion that many literary texts are presented there primarily in a generalized, schematic form. In other words, they significantly facilitate students' learning of the basics of English directly in literature classes. The essence of the matter is that knowledge is studied at the level of a critical approach to individual genres. In other words, university classes are built on the basis of reading short, highly adapted short stories and novellas. Thus, lectures and seminars are conducted using specific examples, which in literary theory are traditionally referred to as "minor genres". Meanwhile, it's quite clear that the teaching of modern English at Azerbaijani universities is by no means limited to this topic. These texts also have unique applications in several other fields, such as economics, office work, tourism, sociology, and politics. It turns out that many gaps remain in these areas, requiring further research.

When writing and discussing the role of these texts in mastering modern English, the following question arises: how should we approach reading? It would seem that in everyday teaching, students read selected passages from a literary work of any of the aforementioned genres. As a side note, reading, at the teacher's discretion and without detriment to the curriculum in the "Foreign Languages" discipline, can be accompanied by a frontal survey to engage the general audience.

However, this is not an idle question. In our opinion, this dynamic of conducting a lesson during reading does not reveal its true nature. In reality, in the practice of teaching a foreign language, everything is more complex and not so straightforward. Reading at universities should not be made mandatory, as this would simply become a chore, turning it into a daily learning routine. Consequently, its nature, focus, and impact should be modified accordingly. We are convinced that the reading of literary texts at universities in Azerbaijan should be strictly oriented toward the student's choice of future profession. In other words, it is a direct and targeted reading of English texts directly related to the chosen specialty. While many controlled processes are focal, some, like child first language learning or the learning of skills without any instruction, can be peripheral (Brown, 1994, p.261)

How does this approach contribute? With the help of the teacher, students select specialized English texts for reading (and subsequent homework) that are, firstly, of interest to them and, secondly, useful, as they are likely to be useful in their future careers. Combining purely scientific interest with applied and, moreover, cognitive elements has great pedagogical significance. If this type of reading is promoted throughout the semester, the knowledge acquired by students, as modern researchers have established, will boomerang – and in a positive way. With this approach to reading English-language literary texts, students experience a unified and comprehensive socialization. In turn, progressively thinking educators today are transforming the "boomerang method" into lasting knowledge. The positive impact is clear.

As noted in modern pedagogical and psychological literature, the lack of a strictly focused approach to reading foreign-language texts "discourages the general student audience from acquiring solid knowledge due to its excessively suggestive (or, in other terminology, suggestive) impact on the learner's personality" (Secrets of the boomerang law: why our actions come back, 2026, p.8). It turns out that the so-called "boomerang method" in reading can have both positive and negative connotations. Much in this process depends on the purposefulness of this type of pedagogical action. Naturally, it also depends on the teacher's attitude, professionalism, and, more simply, their knowledge of the foreign language.

The second theoretical proposition (that is, the negative) always manifests itself in cases where the teacher's questionable attitude toward English language knowledge is much stronger than the linguistic information conveyed. Perhaps, during the chaotic reading of individual passages of a foreign-language literary text, the teacher's commentary on it is insufficiently clear and well-reasoned. Or perhaps the text is simply oversaturated with emotion, and its impact on the audience is short-lived.

The second approach is the opposite of the first. Purposeful reading is beneficial and informative because the selection of English-language fiction texts compiled by Azerbaijani students (either independently or with a teacher) allows them to memorize words, expressions, and even entire phrases/sentences, syntagmas, and semantic structures that they will use later. This type of reading also has another important nuance: dividing the text into separate fragments while maintaining the logical transitions from one paragraph to the next expands their subject matter. "Each novel, short story or play can spark off a wealth of different activities. Tasks and exercises based on a literary text can provide valuable practice in listening, speaking or writing, as well as improving reading skills. Literary works of all kinds are now becoming increasingly available in spoken form on cassettes. These can be especially useful in providing extensive listening practice. (Collie, Slater, 1987, p. 36).

A crucial characteristic of fiction from different eras is also the fluidity of its boundaries. The internal content (what writers call the plot) is never static. The organic integration of both linguistic

and extralinguistic realities into literary texts allows students to interpret and perceive both linguistic and extralinguistic worldviews in diverse ways. In other words, such a text inherently transcends spatiotemporal boundaries. Moreover, in the existential sense of the word, it is not constrained by cultural boundaries. It is important to remember that English-language literary works convey a variety of information. To a certain extent, this information can be controversial, problematic, and even contradictory. However, in foreign language teaching, this is not so much a drawback as an advantage, as it arouses students' lively interest, adding variety to the classroom. For example, a literary text can occasionally illustrate a particular meaning of a lexeme or expression, or a phrase as a whole. It can introduce irony and humor, support conversation among students, become a means of describing things and objects in real life, and stimulate students' reflection on a specific topic proposed by the teacher. Finally, literary text serves as an important tool for project creation. This is especially relevant at Azerbaijani universities, as most of them eliminated theses as of the fall of 2024. Of the independent projects in various disciplines, including English, only research projects remain. Furthermore, the volume and quality of the work depends on the profile of the Azerbaijani university (technical or humanities). We also note that integrating literary text is entirely acceptable at any stage of a university class, as well as as an independent study assignment.

It's time in our article to move from the theoretical principles outlined above to the practical side of the issue. We offer students at technical universities the following excerpt: "If you don't care about money, Sevda-dear, call it by its other names" – "Scrub? Or not? Try one true love?" – "Freedom, security, retribution". Students then take turns reading the text, then translating it (depending on their department) into Azerbaijani. Next, educators are encouraged to ask this question: "What do you associate money with?"

This question isn't asked solely to clarify its meaning in their native language. The accompanying methodological activity is more important. Specifically, we ask our students to name one lexeme at a time, using a frontal questioning system, without repeating them. What specifically does this assignment accomplish? First, it focuses students' attributive attention on each lexeme individually. Second, it helps expand their vocabulary. Third, it fosters students' ability to correctly construct an associative sequence of words, simultaneously extracting the desired relevant unit from them.

According to D.Tatzl, one possible way of employing literature in Teaching English for Specific Purposes is as input for small-talk activities. "For the simulation of a business dinner, for instance, literary quotations and short extracts related to food and drinks can be distributed on an accompanying handout to stimulate conversation and make students talk about literature in a playful way" (Tatzl, 2020).

Since the above sentence is related to the discipline of economics, we recommend interspersing the text with relevant technical business terms. For example, we use texts from English-language newspapers under the "Economic News" section or similar. For example: "Annual income ten pounds." Or: "annual expenditure eighteen pounds eighteen shillings and five pence." Or: "The town revenue arising from his university was big, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread". "He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it", and so on, based on data primarily covering the topic of financing and developing business plans.

We have provided one typical example, which, judging by the topic, in our opinion, is appropriate for use in technical universities in our republic. In turn, for universities specializing in the humanities, it is more logical to rely, firstly, on literary works created in various genres. Secondly, to identify specific rules of English grammar, lexicology, and stylistics, etc. The task is: in the following passage of speech, find and highlight foreign-language stylistic devices that represent the inner speech of literary characters. For example, in Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury", in the original we read:

"They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag

back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass" (W. Faulkner "The Sound and the Fury").

The excerpt we've provided represents the expressed inner speech of one of the central characters in Faulkner's novel. After reading and transcribing this excerpt, an experienced university teacher is obliged to correctly guide students' thinking. Specifically, in the novel, one image, equivalent to one sentence, replaces another, yet the description of the character's actions corresponds to their internal perception of events. By identifying the syntagmas that directly and immediately express the character's inner speech, we document their entry into their consciousness. Thus, the focus is on the character's deeply personal perception of certain events and their subsequent evaluation. The skill of a teacher, both a professional with a perfect command of literary English (with adjustments for the vocabulary of a century ago, that is, the early 20th century) and a competent methodologist, lies in learning to accurately define a rule and simultaneously distinguish it from others. However, we suggest that such an approach is most logically implemented in English language teaching methods in literature classes. At the same time, the principle of studying inner speech using literary texts can also be applied to general linguistics classes. In this case, the teacher's primary focus should be on the lexical and semantic nuances of spoken language. Naturally, the content of the excerpt we've quoted is consistent with the speech the author is aiming for. In other words, the speech of the narrator and his character is essentially the same.

In connection with the above, another, equally important question arises: to what extent does a literary text reflect the truth of events or the characters' motives? After all, the principle we demonstrated using W. Faulkner's novel as an example is far from always and universally applicable.

In our opinion, the cited text represents a remarkable discovery by the scholar. In this case, the advantage of literary text (in addition to the above) also lies in the fact that students become more familiar with the connotations of individual lexemes and sentences that have not only a purely linguistic basis but also cultural significance. It is appropriate here to return to the very beginning of the article, where the primary purpose of English-language literary texts was discussed not only for linguists and language educators but also for representatives of related professions, particularly cultural studies scholars. This is all the more timely and relevant given the fact that the images that arise in students' minds while reading and critically analyzing this type of text sometimes go beyond the definitions found in explanatory dictionaries. Thus, the role and significance of the artistic text, incomparable with some other types, is noticeably expanded, and its content is even deeper (Carter, 2015).

Conclusions. This article allows us to draw several conclusions and generalizations. First, the regular use of literary texts of varying lengths in Azerbaijani universities significantly facilitates the accelerated learning of literary English. Second, an important part of the methodological concept we are exploring is the reading (or classroom reading) of individual fragments of this type of text. Third, it has a distinct advantage, as this type of text can be the subject of special development and during students' homework. Fourth, literary English text is a tool for teaching basic skills and abilities, which symptomatically include spoken language and reading. Finally, fifth, the cited examples from the periodical press and the annals of English fiction make it clear that this type of text is a reliable and highly productive means of developing communicative competence.

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