

The Role of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Literary Texts in ESL Classrooms: A Qualitative Inquiry in the field of English Linguistics

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Abstract

Literature plays a pivotal role in the context of English language teaching and learning, serving as a dynamic and multifaceted resource that extends beyond the traditional realms of linguistic instruction. In the landscape of English as a Second Language (ESL) education, the integration of literary texts holds the potential to enrich language acquisition by providing learners with a holistic and culturally embedded approach to language learning. This study delves into the intricate interplay between ESL education and literary texts, with a specific focus on Indigenous and Non-Indigenous materials. The rationale for undertaking this research is grounded in the recognition that literature, as a pedagogical tool, can significantly influence the language learning experiences of ESL students.

Introduction

The initial segment of this research report commences by providing an overview of the profound significance attributed to utilizing indigenous and non-indigenous literary texts within ESL classrooms. Furthermore, it accentuates the pivotal role of educators in integrating these literary texts effectively, thereby creating a contextual framework for the study. The study unveils intriguing insights into how teachers perceive the role of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts. Notably, teachers observe that students feel a sense of linguistic commonality when engaging with Indigenous texts, fostering a shared language experience. In contrast, Non-Indigenous texts present challenges, as students grapple with unfamiliar vocabulary and sentence structures. This dichotomy sheds light on the intricate relationship between language familiarity, cultural alignment, and pedagogical approaches.

Research Question

1. How do ESL teachers perceive the role of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in enhancing language learning at the higher education level in Pakistan?

Objective of the Study

1. To investigate ESL teachers' perceptions of the role of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in enhancing language learning at the higher education level in Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literary Texts

Literary texts, also known as literary works or literary pieces, are a distinct and treasured kind of written or spoken material, according to Potter (2005). The literary texts are different from scientific and journalistic writings. According to Ryan (2007), they are distinguished by their principal worth, which lies in their artistic, creative, intellectual, or cultural aspects. Literary works, as opposed to just informative literature, are intended to attract readers or listeners on a profound emotional, aesthetic, or intellectual level. Words take on a transcendent dimension in the realm of literature, serving as more than merely linguistic symbols. Instead, they evolve into vessels through which human experiences, emotions, and ideas find expression, transcending the boundaries of time and place, a concept beautifully elucidated by Paulson (2019). These literary works have an unparalleled ability to bridge cultural, linguistic, and temporal divides. They have a timeless character, encapsulating the core of human existence in a way that connects with people from all walks of life and periods, making them an enduring treasure of human creativity and communication. Ramzan et al. (2024) have confirmed there are not any significant statistical differences among ESL motivational gender levels. Chen and Ramzan (2024) have further stated that face book posts about learning English as a second language (L2) provide primary motivation for learners and promote their performance.

The potential of literary writings to elicit emotions and engage readers on a very personal level is one of their distinguishing features (Gopal & Singh, 2020). Literary texts, unlike technical manuals, scientific studies, or news stories, are not only concerned with the delivery of information. Instead, they aim to build a strong bond between the author and the audience, frequently by drawing on universal human

experiences. Literary works can make readers feel joy, sorrow, empathy, or even wrath through skillfully chosen words, vivid images, and engaging storytelling (Gabrielsen et al., 2019).

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Literature

Literary texts can be broadly categorized into two main types: Indigenous Literary Texts and Non-Indigenous Literary Texts. These categories represent diverse traditions, voices, and cultural narratives, each contributing to the rich tapestry of human expression.

Indigenous Literary Texts

Indigenous literary texts refer to written or oral works that originate from or are deeply rooted in, the cultural traditions, histories, and experiences of indigenous or native communities (Allen, 2012). These texts serve as powerful tools for the preservation and sharing of unique cultural traditions, histories, and experiences (Hanson, 2017; Van Toorn, 2000).

Non-Indigenous Literary Texts

Non-indigenous literary texts represent a vast body of creative works that originate from authors and communities outside indigenous or native cultures (Miley, 2006). These texts are not bound by indigenous traditions or experiences and may encompass an array of genres, including fiction, poetry, drama, essays, and more. They predominantly emerge from the perspective of non-indigenous authors, reflecting the values, concerns, and worldviews of the dominant culture or society they are rooted in.

Theoretical framework

The current study follows Stephen Krashen's (1981) Theory of Second Language Acquisition, due to its relevance with second language learning and teaching of literary texts. This theory often referred to as the "Krashen's Monitor Model," is a widely recognized and influential framework in the field of second language learning and teaching. The theory consists of several interrelated hypotheses that collectively provide insights into how individuals acquire a second language. Krashen's work has had a profound impact on language education and pedagogy. Here is an in-depth explanation of his theory:

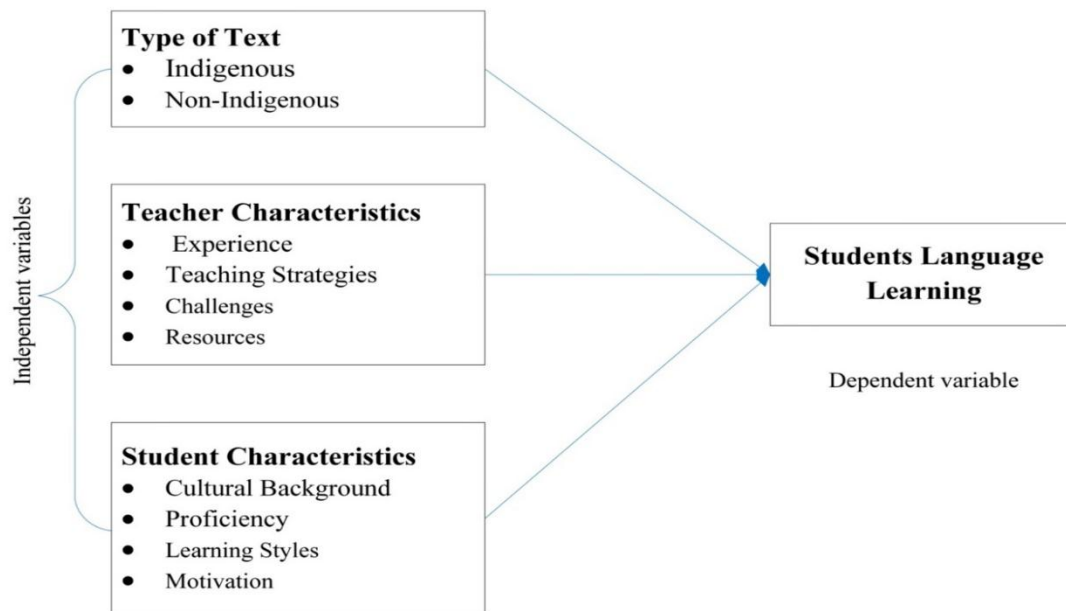
The Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis, proposed by Stephen Krashen (1981), is a fundamental component of his Theory of Second Language Acquisition. This hypothesis focuses on the pivotal role of comprehensible input in the language learning process. Comprehensible input is described as language input that is just slightly beyond the learner's current level of linguistic competence. In other words, it is challenging but still understandable for the learner.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis posits that language learners acquire a second language most effectively when they are exposed to this type of input. When learners engage with meaningful, relevant, and contextually appropriate language input that is slightly above their current proficiency level, they are more likely to make language gains (Gass & Mackey, 2014). This process of acquiring language through comprehensible input is considered more natural and effective than explicit instruction and rote learning.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study aims to explore the dynamics of ESL students' language learning through the lens of ESL teachers utilizing Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in the context of Pakistani higher education. Grounded in the theory of second language acquisition (SLA) by Krashen (1981), the framework aims to unravel the multifaceted variables influencing language learning outcomes. The framework is comprised of following two main variables:



Research Methodology

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study employs a qualitative research design approach, which is well-suited for exploring the complex and nuanced aspects of teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the teaching of both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in their classrooms. This approach has been substantiated by a plethora of studies that endorse the efficacy of qualitative methods in investigating

educational practices. For instance, Tenny et al. (2017) argued that qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of teachers' lived experiences, thereby producing a richer, more contextual portrayal of educational settings. Similarly, a study by Peterson (2019) confirmed that qualitative approaches are particularly beneficial for exploring sensitive topics like character education, where teacher beliefs can deeply influence pedagogical choices. Qualitative research also offers the flexibility to delve deep into participants' experiences, perceptions, and motivations, providing valuable insights that quantitative methods might not capture (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Research Instrument

To ensure rigorous and consistent data collection, this study employed semi-structured interviews, to unravel the intricate web of ESL teachers' perceptions and role, strategies, in navigating these diverse literary landscapes at the higher education level.

Data Analysis Techniques

Following the qualitative method, the data was analyzed using the thematic analysis technique with the help of coding. Coding is a practice that aids in identifying the segments of data to be used as an example of a more overall picture, illustration, theme, or section (Elliot, 2018).

Results and Analysis

In this section, an in-depth exploration of the study's findings is presented, offering comprehensive insights derived from both interviews and observations. The rich data obtained through semi-structured interviews with ESL teachers, coupled with the nuanced perspectives gained from classroom observations, collectively contribute to a thorough examination of the role of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in enhancing language learning at the higher education level in Pakistan. Through detailed analysis and thematic categorization, the session unfolds the teachers' perceptions, employed teaching strategies, and encountered challenges, providing a holistic view of the intricate dynamics within ESL classrooms.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

By applying thematic technique of interview data analysis, the revealed results uncovered useful insights regarding the nuanced aspects of teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the teaching of both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in their classrooms which is described as follows:

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS LITERARY TEXTS IN STUDENTS LEARNING

A thorough study was done to investigate instructors' viewpoints on the importance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous literary works in students' learning, and the emergent themes were synthesized for clarity and understanding. A visual illustration of the complex tapestry of perspectives that instructors have regarding the influence of literary texts on the language acquisition and educational experiences of their pupils is provided in Table, which summarizes these themes and provides a visual image of the rich tapestry. The following results dig into the subtle insights gleaned from teachers' replies, offering light on the diverse character of their perspectives and the consequences of language acquisition practices in ESL classrooms.

TABLE 1.1 ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF LITERARY TEXTS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

| | Themes | Sub-Themes |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Language Familiarity and Difficulty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of comfort • Easily connected • Cultural heritage • Difficult vocabulary • Different sentence structure • Different linguistic landscape |
| 2 | Cultural Alignment and Differences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with cultural norms • Cultural heritage familiarity • Cultural identity • Unfamiliar with culture • Cultural differences • Cultural diversity |
| 3 | Performance and Proficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good performance • Self-assurance • Deep connection • Motivation for students • Language skills |
| 4 | Emotional Connection and Gender Differences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional connections • Personalized learning experience • Gender role • Gender disparities • Female emotions |
| 5 | Motivation and Interest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of interest • Engagement • Low interest • Low motivation |
| 6 | Comprehension Levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding • Cognitive processing • Language complexity |

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------|
| | | • Low understanding |
|--|--|---------------------|

a) Language Familiarity and Difficulty

Teachers fervently highlighted the profound impact of literary texts on language familiarity, underscoring the contrasting experiences students encounter when engaging with Indigenous and non-Indigenous materials. One teacher expressed,

"In the Indigenous literary realm, there's this shared language that students seem to connect with effortlessly. It's like they find a common ground that resonates with their own linguistic experiences."

The consensus among teachers was that Indigenous texts create a unique sense of comfort and connection among students. One teacher passionately shared,

"When we dive into Indigenous literary texts, there's this beautiful sense of shared language. It's like they discover a linguistic home where expressions resonate with their own experiences."

This sentiment captures the profound impact that Indigenous literature has on fostering a shared linguistic identity within the classroom.

b) Cultural Alignment and Differences

Teachers observed a profound alignment between Indigenous literary texts and the students' cultural norms. One teacher expressed,

"In the Indigenous literary landscape, there's a comforting familiarity. Students often find that the cultural norms and values embedded in these texts mirror their own, creating a profound sense of resonance. It's like revisiting the familiar grounds of their cultural heritage through literature, fostering a deep connection."

Conversely, teachers noted a discernible divergence when students engage with non-Indigenous literary texts.

c) Performance and Proficiency

When it comes to interacting with Indigenous literary texts, teachers praised the students for demonstrating a great level of performance. According to the reflections of one teacher,

"Students frequently exhibit exceptional performance when they are immersed in Indigenous literary texts. The fact that they exhibit a certain level of pride and self-assurance demonstrates how closely they are connected to the subject matter. Nevertheless, it is of the utmost importance to recognize that individual students may have varying levels of language competence, resulting in a variety of skills."

The discourse on language competency and cultural familiarity unfolded further in the teachers' dialogues.

Despite the fact that Indigenous texts encourage a deep connection and a sense of pride, this fascinating discovery implies that language competency in non-Indigenous contexts may be pushed by the hurdles that are presented. Adding layers to students' overall success in English courses is the interaction between students' cultural familiarity and their linguistic growth. The findings suggest that while Indigenous texts foster a sense of pride, non-Indigenous texts may serve as a unique catalyst for linguistic growth, presenting a dynamic interplay between cultural connection and language proficiency.

d) Emotional Connection and Gender Differences

The various methods in which learners might develop emotional connections within the context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous literary texts were stressed by the teachers. In delving into the emotional dynamics, a teacher emphasized the diverse ways in which learners connect emotionally with literary texts.

"The emotional resonance that students experience with literary texts is fascinating. It's like every individual in the class contributes their own distinct emotional perspective, turning the words into a canvas for their feelings. This allows for a more meaningful and personalized experience."

One of the teachers made the observation:

"The emotional resonance that students experience with literary texts is fascinating." Everyone in the class contributes their own distinct emotional perspective, and they discover their own personal meaning in the story. It's almost as if the words are transformed into a canvas for their feelings, which enables them to have a more meaningful and personalized experience."

The teachers accepted the possibility that gender may have a role in the emotional attachment or detachment of students. In comparison to males, females may have a tendency to place a greater emphasis on emotional components, according to the opinions of certain teachers.

e) Motivation and Interest

In the realm of motivational dynamics, teachers highlighted the multifaceted impact of literary texts on student engagement. One teacher shared,

"There's something captivating about the native Indigenous literary texts. They seem to evoke a high level of interest and motivation among students."

This observation underscores the unique allure of Indigenous texts, suggesting that cultural familiarity and resonance contribute to heightened enthusiasm among learners.

The exceptional capacity of original Indigenous literary works to inspire high levels of interest and motivation among pupils was emphasized by a number of instructors. As one educator put it,

"There is an allure to Indigenous literary texts that cannot be denied." Students give off the impression that they are really enthralled with the depth of their own cultural narratives. A sense of pride and the drive to study deeper into these writings are both bred by the familiarity and connection that these works provide."

According to another teacher:

"The captivating aspect of using native Indigenous literary texts lies in the heightened interest they generate among students. It's like a cultural exploration that keeps them engaged and eager to delve deeper into the material."

On the other hand, there was a notion among teachers suggesting that non-Indigenous literary writings would not evoke the same degree of interest and drive as Indigenous literary texts.

This dichotomy in motivational response points to the intricate relationship between cultural context and students' intrinsic motivation to engage with literary content.

According to these findings, cultural familiarity plays a vital function in generating motivation and interest among students. This observation provides light on the significance of this role. Indigenous literature, which are based on the cultural narratives of the students themselves, have an intrinsic motivating aspect that may not be as evident in environments that are not Indigenous.

f) Comprehension Levels

When it came to students' comprehension levels in the context of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous literary texts, teachers found a fascinating pattern. Students who were exposed to non-Indigenous texts generally demonstrated a higher level of understanding than their peers who were exposed to Indigenous literary works. A teacher stated:

"Students often demonstrate a higher level of comprehension during lectures on Indigenous literary texts."

Another teacher made the following observation:

"It is fascinating to see how the levels of comprehension differ between these two contexts. There is a discernible improvement in the pupils' comprehension whenever we delve into literary pieces that are not written by Indigenous people. It appears that the difficulties presented by these texts help them to concentrate more intently, which ultimately leads to improved understanding."

Discussion

The discussion part delves further into the topics that emerged from the findings, perceptions, practices, and difficulties that ESL teachers encountered when instructing students in both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts. This section of the research highlights the complexity of ESL instruction by providing a detailed examination of the themes that surfaced under each subheading.

Teachers Perceptions of the role of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in students learning

Language Familiarity and Difficulty

The exploration of language dynamics in literary learning, particularly concerning Indigenous and non-Indigenous texts, aligns with existing research that underscores the pivotal role of language familiarity in shaping students' experiences (Pastushenkov et al., 2021). The dichotomy between the sense of commonality in Indigenous texts and the perceived difficulty in non-Indigenous texts reflects a nuanced interplay of linguistic elements.

Cultural Alignment and Differences

The exploration of cultural alignments and differences in the context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous literary texts resonates with existing research that underscores the pivotal role of cultural resonance in shaping students' perceptions (Tran & Dang, 2014). The juxtaposition of familiarity in Indigenous texts and the perceived divergence in non-Indigenous texts illuminates the intricate relationship between cultural elements and the learning experience (Islam & Park, 2015).

Performance and Proficiency

The examination of students' performance and language proficiency during the study of Indigenous and non-Indigenous literary texts aligns with existing research, shedding light on the complex interplay between engagement, performance, and linguistic competence. The observed performance variations underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing language proficiency in diverse literary contexts.

The observation that students generally perform well during the study of Indigenous literary texts echoes with the finding of Masino and Niño-Zarazúa (2016) highlighting the impact of cultural familiarity and shared language. The connection to cultural elements often translates into enhanced engagement, contributing to commendable performance outcomes. However, the noted disparity in language proficiency suggests a need for targeted language development strategies within Indigenous text studies (Rahman & Manaf, 2017).

Emotional Connection and Gender Differences

The exploration of emotional connections to literary texts and the potential influence of gender differences adds a nuanced layer to the understanding of how students engage with the emotional dimensions of literature. This finding aligns with existing research on the intricate interplay between emotions, literary experiences, and individual preferences.

The acknowledgment that students form diverse emotional connections to literary texts resonates with broader studies emphasizing the subjective nature of emotional responses to literature (Mohammadipour et al., 2018).

Conclusions

In the pursuit of unraveling the intricate tapestry of English as a Second Language (ESL) education in the higher education landscape of Pakistan, this study embarked on a journey to investigate and illuminate critical facets pertaining to the utilization of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts. The first research objective was dedicated to delving into the diverse perceptions of ESL teachers hailing from various universities across the Punjab province. The focus was on unraveling their nuanced perspectives on the role played by both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in enriching the language learning experience at the higher education level. By tapping into the insights of these educators, this study aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of how these texts are perceived within the dynamic and culturally diverse educational milieu of Pakistan.

The exploration into teachers' perceptions regarding the role of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts has unearthed a rich tapestry of insights that significantly contribute to our understanding of language learning dynamics in the ESL classrooms of Pakistani higher education institutions. The identified themes provide a nuanced view of how these texts impact various facets of the learning experience.

The exploration of cultural alignment and differences accentuates the intricate relationship between literary texts and cultural identity. Indigenous literary texts serve as mirrors, reflecting students' cultural norms and values, and fostering a sense of belonging.

The identified disparities in performance and proficiency shed light on the multifaceted nature of language acquisition. While Indigenous literary texts may evoke commendable performance, the challenge lies in addressing potential gaps in language proficiency. Non-Indigenous texts, on the other hand, act as catalysts for heightened proficiency during lectures, signaling the need for a balanced approach to ensure holistic language development.

The exploration of emotional connections to literary texts reveals the subjective and personal nature of the learning experience. The diverse ways in which students link their emotions to the texts emphasize the need for personalized and empathetic teaching approaches.

Gender differences in emotional responses underscore the importance of acknowledging and accommodating diverse emotional landscapes within the classroom.

The divergence in motivation and interest levels between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous texts accentuates the role of cultural relevance in sustaining student engagement. Native Indigenous texts emerge as potent sources of motivation, suggesting the need for curricular approaches that harness the intrinsic appeal of culturally resonant content. Addressing the perceived lower motivation for Non-Indigenous texts warrants innovative pedagogical strategies to infuse interest into these materials.

The identified difference in comprehension levels underscores the need for targeted instructional methods. While students demonstrate higher comprehension in non-Indigenous text classrooms, bridging this gap with Indigenous texts requires pedagogical interventions that enhance comprehension strategies specific to these materials. In essence, the findings provide a robust foundation for educators and policymakers to refine teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and support mechanisms, ensuring a more inclusive and effective ESL education in the higher education context of Pakistan.

Moving beyond mere perceptions, the second research objective set out to identify and analyze the intricate teaching strategies deployed by ESL teachers when navigating the terrain of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts in their classrooms. This objective sought to shed light on the pedagogical approaches and methodologies employed by educators to effectively convey linguistic nuances embedded in these texts. By scrutinizing the strategies chosen by teachers, the study aimed to unravel the dynamic interplay between instructional techniques and the diverse linguistic needs of students engaging with these literary works. The insights gleaned from teachers' responses regarding the employed teaching strategies for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous literary texts unveil a nuanced pedagogical landscape, offering valuable considerations for enhancing language learning in ESL classrooms.

The preference for the translation method in teaching non-Indigenous literary texts reflects teachers' recognition of the linguistic challenges embedded in these materials. The acknowledgment of complex vocabulary and sentence structures necessitates a strategic approach, emphasizing the importance of providing students with comprehensible input. The sequential process of reading, translating, and explaining caters to the diverse linguistic competencies within the classroom, fostering a scaffolded learning experience.

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