University of Djelfa   Level: Master 1

Department of Foreign Languages   Lecturer: Dr. Ahmed Bouchemal

Module: Teaching Literary Texts

Lecture 01: Teaching Prose

Introduction:

As a common genre, prose seems to be the best choice to introduce literature. The familiarity of students with the language of the text as well as the whole thematic concerns of the introduced text makes prose a good choice for our students. Yet, teachers of literature should be aware of certain elements that are a must for approaching the meaning of the text. This lecture aims at introducing students to prose fiction by stressing the importance of the five elements of fiction in understanding prose. By the end of the lecture, teachers should be able to identify these elements and help their students properly analyze the given text.

The Five Elements of Fiction

   1- Plot:

Plot is defined as the sequence of events or how the author arranges events to build the whole narrative of the text. The task of the teacher should be to signal the importance of the plot in understanding the text. As the plot has different five essential parts, the role of the teacher is to guide his students or make them understand these parts and their role in forming the text. First, the teacher should signal *the exposition* as the first part of the plot. Usually the exposition is found by the beginning of the text where the author gives the background of the character and their socio-economic conditions. Another essential part of the plot is *the rising action*. What is notable about this part is that the teacher is asked to highlight or help his students know the conflict. Usually the conflict can be internal or external i.e the struggle of the main character with himself or with the surroundings. As the teacher could make his students understand the conflict, understanding the climax becomes easier. The climax is the

turning point of events or where things started to be more complicated. A last part of the plot is the falling action or the resolution. This is where we find the final outcomes of the story or a proposed solution to the conflict. Approaching these five elements would make things easier for the teacher to explain the other elements.

2- The Setting

Another important element of prose fiction is the setting. The setting can appear in five different forms: the time, the place, weather conditions, social conditions and lastly the mood or the atmosphere. The task of the teacher is to ask his students find these forms of the setting as the get deeper to understand the meaning of the text. What should be noted here is that these forms show more than time and place, but also could be as means to reveal certain thematic concerns of the text.

3- Characters

Characterization is an essential part in understanding prose fiction. The character in any given text is supposed to be a person in a narrative or the qualities of that person which distinguish it from others. Students should be familiar with different types of characters as to make students identify these characters and their role in the story. A character could be round, flat, dynamic or static….ect. The teacher must guide his students by finding the characters physical appearance, his feelings and actions and lastly what others say about him/her.

4- Point of View

The point of view is another important element of prose fiction. It shows from where the story is told or the underlying ideas or thoughts behind the given text. It should be noted that a point of view is not only an individual concern or what the author believes in, but also a majority concern.

5- Theme

The theme is the central message of the text. It is the last stage or elements that should be found during the process of introducing prose fiction. A text could hold a main theme and other subthemes and the analysis of themes should be free and each student could give his/her own interpretation of the text. The task of the teacher is only to organize ideas and backup with concrete evidence from the text.