

Teaching Drama

University of Djelfa

Level: L1

Department of Foreign Languages

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Module: Introduction to Literature

Lecture 03: Drama

Introduction:

This lecture introduces students to the teaching of drama. It explores the different features that make dramatic text very different from other discourses of writing. As such, the lecture begins by defining drama and dramatic text then focuses on what makes drama or the play very distinctive as compared to prose or poetry. The lecture further highlights the importance of drama to learners and tries to examine some of the problems students might encounter when dealing with drama. The lecture ends with some recommended activities and tasks.

What is drama?

- 1- Drama is intended specifically for performance on stage in front of an audience.
- 2- Actors take the roles of the characters / perform the indicated action /utter the written dialogue.
- 3- Consists of two types of writing: the dialogue that the characters speak stage directions
- 4- Can be presented in two ways: as literature i.e. the text of the play and as performed in theatre.
- 5- Dramatization / Visualization of the text.

What is distinctive about plays?

Discuss the following quotes and try to find features of dramatic text

- 1- “.....Drama is not made of words alone, but also of sights and sounds, stillness and motion, noise and silence, relationships and responses...” (J.L. Styan, “Drama, Stage and Audience”)

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- 2- “Drama provides an excellent platform for exploring theoretical and practical aspect of the English language” (Whiteson, 1995)
- 3- “A play took on many more meanings in performance” (Gillian Lazar)

Why use plays in the language learning classroom?

- 1- Exciting ways of focusing on conversational language.
- 2- Know how conversations are ordered and sequenced in English.
- 3- Meaningful context for acquiring and memorizing new language.
- 4- Creating cohesion and cooperation in group.
- 5- Engage students intellectually and emotionally.
- 6- Exposure to non-verbal features.

Anticipating students Problems

1- The Background of the Text:

- Will you give the students a summary of the text, or can the context be easily inferred?
- Is there any cultural / historical information?
- Is it useful to know anything about the author life?
- Do students need to know what genre the play is?

2- The Language of the Text

- Unfamiliar words or phrases
- Unfamiliar grammatical structures
- Are there any discoursal features?
- Unusual/ non-standard about language
- Are there any rhetorical/ literary devices which may be different for students

3- Motivating and Involving Students

- Theme or topic relevant to students experiences

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- In what skill do students need the most practice? / How the text be used to help them with that skill
- Activities that suit the learning style of the students.

Some Recommended Activities

Pre-Reading Activities:

- 1- Outline the social, political and historical background of the text.
- 2- Explain what genre is of the play.

Activities for increasing Language awareness:

- 1- Students compare the text in their own language with two different translations.
- 2- Pinpoint differences in grammar and vocabulary, and the effects conveyed by these.

Activities for discussion:

- 1- Mark out the text for word stress and sentence stress.
- 2- How the line should be said
- 3- Discuss the characters
- 4- Act out an extract from the play

Follow up and extension activities:

Students discuss the values and world-view which are either implicitly or explicitly expressed in the text. Do that agree with them?

