

Integrating Literary Studies into English Language Teaching: Enhancing Critical Thinking and Communicative Competence

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of literary studies into English Language Teaching (ELT) as a pedagogical approach to improve EFL learners' critical thinking and communicative skills. This research used a qualitative descriptive methodology to investigate the role of literature—encompassing genres such as poetry, plays, short stories, and novels—as a conduit for linguistic enhancement, cultural awareness, and cognitive engagement. We got the data via watching classes, looking at documents, and doing semi-structured interviews with five EFL teachers and seven students from Indonesian universities. The results show that teaching through literature encourages introspective learning, interpretation abilities, and interaction in discourse. The study finds that including literary texts in English language teaching (ELT) curricula encourages comprehensive language learning, combining language skills, intellectual development, and cultural awareness. There are several things to think about when designing a curriculum and training teachers. This study concludes that integrating literary studies into English Language Teaching fosters not only communicative competence but also critical and intercultural awareness, empowering learners to use English meaningfully and reflectively in diverse global contexts

Keywords:

English Language Teaching, Literary Studies, Critical Thinking, Communicative Competence

INTRODUCTION

Literary studies have historically been crucial to the advancement of English language education. In the age of communicative and technology-driven teaching, though, literature often gets pushed to the side since there is too much focus on functional language, measurable competency, and standardized test scores (Mohammed & Jasim, 2024). This marginalization has diminished the aesthetic, moral, and philosophical aspects of language learning that literature inherently offers. But literature is more than just a collection of words; it contains human experiences, beliefs, feelings, and worldviews that have people thinking, feeling, and interacting with each other (Kaowiwattanakul, 2021). Integrating literary studies into English Language Teaching (ELT) offers a transformative pathway for developing critical thinking and communicative competence, equipping learners to become linguistically proficient, culturally aware, and morally grounded individuals.

In the context of 21st-century education, language instruction has gone beyond mere grammar proficiency and vocabulary enhancement. It necessitates the cultivation of advanced cognitive skills, multicultural awareness, and the ability for reflection and interpretation (Liu & Pásztor, 2022). Literature offers this same kind of experience with many layers. When students read poems, plays, or prose stories, they are asked to think about what they mean, what hidden meanings they might have, and what moral or social implications they might have. These interpretive activities foster cognitive processes fundamental to critical thinking—analysis, assessment, and synthesis. Furthermore, engaging with literature fosters genuine conversation, enabling learners to negotiate meaning, express viewpoints, and substantiate interpretations—essential elements of communicative competence (Kamariddinovna, 2024).

In modern English Language Teaching (ELT), constructivist pedagogy has reinforced the communicative and humanistic possibilities of literature. From a constructivist viewpoint (Vygotsky, 1978 in Alanazi, 2016), learning transpires through social interaction and the collaborative building of meaning. Literature-based activities, including group discussions, role plays, and interpretive debates, create an environment conducive to such interactions. Students work together to deepen their understanding (Hasnani et al., 2023), with the teacher acting as a mediator in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this way, literature becomes not simply a way to learn new words, but also a way to build up ideas and conversations (Churcher et al., 2014).

Additionally, literature cultivates intercultural communication skills by immersing learners in varied cultural contexts, voices, and views (Abida, 2016). When students read and think about literature from throughout the world, they learn about social conventions, historical events, and cultural identities that are

different from their own. Being aware of other cultures makes you more empathetic and tolerant, which are important traits in a world where communication is becoming more international.

Even if it could be useful, the use of literature in English language teaching (ELT) is still not consistent in many EFL settings, such as Indonesia. There are a few problems that make this happen: teachers do not know much about teaching literature, the curriculum is not aligned, and students think literature is hard to understand or use language (Rahmonova, 2024). These limitations frequently result in a dependence on conventional grammar-translation techniques rather than participatory, interpretive, and dialogic methodologies. Consequently, the potential of literature to promote critical inquiry and communicative participation remains insufficiently exploited.

Nonetheless, recent studies indicate that literature-based training can reconcile linguistic and cognitive growth. Literature offers genuine contexts for communicative activity and fosters interpretive liberty (Kamolova, 2024). In the Indonesian higher education system, literature courses can foster reflective literacy, which encompasses linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and critical consciousness, in accordance with national educational objectives that advocate for character development and global citizenship.

Although numerous studies have highlighted the potential of literature in enhancing language skills, critical thinking, and cultural awareness, significant gaps remain regarding how literature integration is concretely implemented in modern communication- and technology-based ELT contexts, particularly in EFL countries like Indonesia. Most previous studies have emphasized theoretical potential or conceptual perspectives, but there has been little empirical research describing implementation practices, pedagogical challenges, lecturer and student perceptions, and effective and contextual learning models. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies that systematically evaluate how literature integration can align with the demands of contemporary curricula oriented toward evaluation, digital learning, and 21st-century competencies. Consequently, the scope for literature utilization in ELT remains limited and suboptimal.

This study aims to elucidate and examine how the incorporation of literary studies augments the critical and communication skills of EFL learners within Indonesian higher education contexts. Employing a qualitative descriptive methodology, it examines the potential of literature-based schooling to function as a conduit between linguistic proficiency and cognitive transformation. Specifically, it examines (1) the methods by which lecturers incorporate literary works into language instruction, (2) how students interact with these texts to foster critical thought and communicative engagement, and (3) the obstacles and

tactics that arise during this process. The study eventually seeks to reassert the role of literature in English Language Teaching as a pedagogical instrument for cultivating thoughtful, eloquent, and culturally responsive English speakers.

METHOD

Design of the Research

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive design to offer a thorough and contextualized comprehension of the integration of literary studies into English Language Teaching (ELT) and its impact on learners' cognitive and communicative development. Qualitative descriptive approach as an effort to create detailed, clear accounts of events as they happen in their natural environments, without imposing any preconceived theoretical frameworks (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This methodology was deemed suitable as the objective of the current study was not to evaluate a hypothesis but to elucidate and interpret pedagogical reality, classroom dynamics, and the lived experiences of participants.

Qualitative description is especially appropriate for educational studies aimed at elucidating the views of teachers and learners, their pedagogical methods, and the obstacles posed by the situation (Leavy, 2017). It allows the researcher to depict the actual dynamics in the classroom when literature is utilized as a pedagogical instrument and to discern patterns of meaning that arise from genuine interactions. Qualitative descriptive inquiry appreciates both emic perspectives (insiders' views) and etic interpretations (researcher's reflections), facilitating a comprehensive and integrated comprehension of educational activities. In this study, qualitative description functioned as a conduit between interpretive and applied inquiry: the interpretive perspective was employed to examine the meanings underlying pedagogical decisions, whereas the applied aspect focused on the practical ramifications for curriculum development and teacher professional advancement.

Participants

There were five English teachers and seven undergraduate students from two Indonesian institutions that offer literary courses as part of their English education programs. The selection of participants was intentional, based on the criterion of information richness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). We chose the lecturers based on their knowledge and experience teaching literature-based classes like Prose Analysis, Poetry Appreciation, Drama Performance, and Literature in Language Teaching. Each had taught for more than five years and had shown an interest in using literature to develop communication and critical thinking skills.

The student participants were enrolled in the aforementioned courses and exhibited varied academic backgrounds and English proficiency levels, so

guarantee a representative cross-section of learner experiences. Before taking part, everyone was told what the research goals were, and both universities' institutional review boards gave their permission for the study. Written informed consent was obtained to guarantee voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. To keep their identities safe, participants were given codes (e.g., L1–L5 for lecturers and S1–S30 for students).

Collecting Data

To obtain a comprehensive picture of the integration of literary studies in ELT, the researcher employed three complementary data collection methods: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. This triangulated approach guaranteed data reliability and yielded both behavioral and perceptual insights.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted over one academic semester to record real-time instructional processes, teaching strategies, and student interactions. An observation checklist and field notes were used to document pedagogical behaviors, classroom discourse, and engagement patterns. Observations focused on how literature was introduced, the nature of classroom discussions, and the degree of student participation during interpretive and communicative tasks. The researcher acted as a non-participant observer, minimizing intrusion to preserve the natural classroom environment (Creswell, 2014).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both lecturers and students to explore their reflections, attitudes, and perceptions regarding literature-based instruction. Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and was conducted in English or Bahasa Indonesia, depending on participants' comfort levels. Guiding questions revolved around themes such as the perceived benefits of literature in language learning, strategies for enhancing critical thinking and communication, and challenges faced in implementation. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Follow-up interviews were conducted where clarification was necessary.

Document Analysis

To supplement the primary data, relevant instructional documents—including course syllabi, lesson plans, learning materials, and students' reflective essays—were collected and analyzed. Document analysis provided insight into how literature was systematically embedded in the curriculum and how students' reflective writings expressed their cognitive and communicative growth. Document analysis is an effective means of corroborating and contextualizing data from observations and interviews, enhancing both validity and depth.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed thematically using the framework, which involves six recursive phases: Familiarization with the data – the researcher read transcripts and field notes repeatedly to gain an overall sense of the content; Generating initial codes – meaningful phrases and segments were coded manually; Searching for themes – related codes were grouped into broader conceptual categories; Reviewing themes – themes were refined by comparing them across data sources; Defining and naming themes – final thematic labels were constructed to capture the essence of the findings; and Producing the report – the findings were synthesized narratively, supported by representative quotations.

Throughout the process, triangulation was employed across the three data sources (observation, interview, and document analysis) to ensure credibility. Member checking was also performed by sharing preliminary interpretations with several participants to confirm accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Audit trails and reflective memos were maintained to enhance dependability and transparency. The researcher adopted reflexivity to remain aware of potential biases as both an observer and interpreter within an academic context familiar to the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four significant topics emerged from the thematic analysis of interview data with five lecturers and seven students on the incorporation of literary studies into English Language Teaching (ELT): We will discuss the following topics: (1) Literature as a medium for linguistic enrichment; (2) Literature as a catalyst for critical thinking; (3) Literature as a bridge for communicative and intercultural competence; and (4) Obstacles and pedagogical techniques in the process of integrating literature into language education. Each topic is discussed in greater detail below.

1. Literature as a Medium for the Enrichment of Linguistic Opportunities

The majority of participants, including both lecturers and students, stated that literature offers a wealth of linguistic input that improves students' vocabulary, awareness of grammar, and comprehension of conversation. The lecturers underlined the fact that literary materials, including as poems and short tales, provide students with the opportunity to experience actual language use, idiomatic expressions, and stylistic variance that goes beyond what is in the textbook.

As one lecturer (L2) pointed out:

"Students can see how language functions in context through the use of literary works. They gain an understanding of how expressions, tone, and rhythm can be altered based on the character, the mood, and the surroundings."

Students shared a similar sentiment, stating that reading and discussing works of literature helped them enhance their ability to utilize words in new ways. A pupil from the fifth grade, for example, stated:

When we read poems or stories, we are not simply reading words, but we are also reading expressions of emotion. I find that it inspires me to use the English language in a manner that is more naturally expressive.

The learners developed a stronger sensitivity to nuance, metaphorical meaning, and pragmatic appropriateness as a result of their exposure to literary language. The instructors emphasized that reading literature inspires students to move beyond literal knowledge and toward interpretive competence, which is a crucial component of communicative success.

In addition, literature was considered to be a significant material for the acquisition of contextual grammar. Students were able to discern patterns and functions that were incorporated into the narrative or lyrical style, as opposed to learning grammatical structures in isolation. As expounded by one of the lecturers (L1):

The use of grammar in writing is quite active. By reading a novel, students are able to observe how tenses, modals, and connectors are utilized to construct the emotions and perspectives of the characters. When compared to exercises, it is considerably more memorable.

This finding lends credence to the idea that linguistic input through literature is not only intellectually engaging but also affectively motivating, which in turn promotes a more profound and long-lasting acquisition of language.

2. A Catalyst for Critical Thinking: Literature as a Source of Inspiration

The significance that literature plays in the development of critical and introspective cognition is yet another significant element that emerges from the data analyses. The lecturers were in agreement that literary analysis assists in the development of skills that are essential to critical thinking, such as reasoning, interpretation, and evaluative judgment.

To quote one of the lecturers (L4):

Students are genuinely using their thinking skills when they study characters or situations because they are doing so. They acquire the ability to infer intentions, make connections between occurrences, and challenge preconceptions. The development of critical thinking takes place here.

Students provided evidence in support of this viewpoint by expressing how literary conversations enabled them to clarify their thoughts, examine different points of view, and evaluate the ramifications pertaining to morality and culture. A student in the tenth grade shared:

"The act of discussing books prompted me to engage in profound thought. Taking drama as an example, we examine the reasons behind a character's choice and consider what we would do differently in the same situation. It is not just about learning a language; it is also about learning how to think.

Students were able to build intellectual autonomy and the ability to effectively analyze diverse points of view through the process of interpretive engagement. A significant number of participants stressed that literature offers ambiguity, meaning that there is no one response that is definitively accurate, which encourages introspection and reasoning.

In addition, the utilization of literature resulted in the consciousness of metacognition. During the course of their reflection on themes, symbols, and moral conundrums, the students claimed that they became more aware of their own thought processes. As a student in the S15 class pointed out:

"There have been moments when I have reversed my opinion after hearing the interpretations of my friends. This experience opened my eyes to the adaptability of the human mind."

The instructors purposefully crafted learning activities, such as reflective essays, debates, and role-playing exercises, to foster inferential and evaluative thinking among the students. In order to demonstrate that there is a deliberate connection between the development of cognitive skills and literary teaching, two lecturers brought up the incorporation of Bloom's taxonomy into literary analysis.

Reading literature serves as an intellectual training field for reasoning, argumentation, and ethical reflection, which are essential components of higher-order thinking skills. This subject indicates that literature serves as an intellectual training ground.

3. Literature as a Bridge for Communicative and Intercultural Competence in Human Interactions

Through the provision of opportunities for genuine contact, the negotiation of meaning, and the comprehension of other cultures, literary texts cultivate communicative skill, as the third theme emphasizes.

Lecturers indicated that activities based on literature, such as group discussions, dramatization, and literary circles, had the effect of encouraging spontaneous communication in English. One lecturer (L3) related the following:

Students are able to make meaningful use of the English language whether they perform drama or retell a tale. When they negotiate, discuss, and work together, it transforms into genuine communication and is no longer merely an exercise in the classroom.

In addition, students felt that reading literature encouraged them to express their thoughts and feelings in English in a more effective manner. From the perspective of one student (S8):

Through poetry, I was able to learn how to express both hope and grief in the English language. It has a more personal feel to it than practicing communication skills.

Additionally, students were able to investigate a variety of cultures, values, and worldviews through the medium of literature, which assisted in the development of

intercultural awareness. Reading works written by authors from a variety of countries, for instance, offered students the opportunity to compare and contrast societal standards and to contemplate common human issues. Only one of the lecturers (L5) emphasized:

Reading works by authors like as Achebe and Hemingway exposes students to a variety of cultures and ethical standards. They start to comprehend the concept of diversity, which is essential for effective communication across cultural domains. This intercultural factor was especially pertinent in the setting of Indonesia's multicultural environment, where students are required to cultivate empathy and openness. The students agreed that having a better understanding of literary characters who came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds enabled them to communicate with people in a manner that was more courteous and confident. Literature was the primary source of linguistic and cultural resources that were necessary for the development of communicative competence. These resources included grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic components.

4. Obstacles and Methods of Instruction for the Incorporation of Literature into English Language Teaching

The participants noted a number of problems, including linguistic difficulty, limited time allocation, and a lack of training in literature-based education. Despite the fact that the incorporation of literary studies was regarded as quite advantageous, participants also highlighted a number of challenges.

When reading great literary works, students frequently have difficulty understanding the intricate vocabulary and metaphorical language that are present in these works. A student in the twelfth grade admitted that:

When it comes to Shakespearean drama or poetry, there are moments when I find myself unable to comprehend the older terminology. I require either additional explanation or writing that is easier to understand.

Additionally, lecturers acknowledged that striking a balance between language and literary analysis could be difficult, particularly in large classrooms or curricula that put an emphasis on examinations. Commentary from one of the lecturers (L2):

There is a lot of pressure around concentrating on test abilities and language. Literature requires more time and freedom, but there are instances when we do not have enough time to cover everything on the syllabus.

The lecturers utilized a variety of dynamic tactics in order to address these difficulties. The authors used graded or modernized texts in order to lessen the impact of linguistic hurdles, they encouraged collaborative interpretation through group discussion, and they incorporated multimodal media, such as film adaptations or digital storytelling, in order to make literature more approachable and interesting.

Before reading, the lecturers emphasized the need for scaffolding as a fundamental method, which includes offering background information, guiding questions, and vocabulary support. Just as L1 explained it:

Before we get into a discussion about a poem, I provide the students with background information on the author, the time period, and the theme. These individuals will be able to comprehend and reply with greater assurance once they have this background.

For the purpose of extending reflective communication outside the confines of the classroom, a number of participants brought up the possibilities of technology-enhanced literary learning, which includes online discussion forums, blogs, and literary debate based on ChatGPT. Not only did these tactics reduce the severity of the challenges, but they also displayed instructional inventiveness by matching the literature with the communicative and critical learning goals.

As a result of the findings of the study, it is evident that including literary studies into English language instruction provides a rich and complex chance to improve both the communicative ability of learners and their critical thinking skills. Literature is not only a supplementary resource for language practice; rather, it operates as a multifaceted medium that engages linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and affective dimensions of learning, thus supporting the idea that literature is not merely a resource for language practice. There is a direct correlation between the incorporation of literary texts into the English language curriculum and the development of a bridge between language learning and a more profound humanistic and reflective education.

In the first place, literature offers linguistic input that is more substantial. Literary texts not only foster grammatical or lexical competency, but also metalinguistic awareness and discourse intuition, as evidenced by the increased sensitivity of learners to idiomatic expression, metaphor, tone, and pragmatic nuance by literary texts, which states that exposure to language that is meaningful and mildly demanding is beneficial to the acquisition of forms and functions. A further indication of a shift away from structural competence and toward discourse and pragmatic competence is the fact that students started to perceive how the choices they make in language impact meaning (Rahmonova, 2024). Not only does literature assist communication competence in a limited sense, but it also supports the complete spectrum of communicative competence, which includes grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. This kind of awareness is especially important in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Indonesia, where students frequently encounter instruction that is driven by textbooks and places more emphasis on form than substance (Taye, 2025). In this way, the act of embedding literature provides a more profound manner of experiencing language.

With regard to the second point, the data about critical thinking demonstrates that literary tasks produce an environment that is conducive to engagement in the areas of reflection, interpretation, evaluation, and metacognition (Omar &

Safinas Mohd. Ariff Albakri, 2016). The processes of higher-order thinking, which include analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, are mirrored in the activities that students engage in through the analysis of characters, moral issues, latent meanings, and cultural values. This aligns with the findings of research that suggests literature might serve as a medium for critical literacy in English as a Foreign Language schools. Teaching literary texts with tasks based on critical literacy, for instance, was found to promote learners' awareness, reflection, and problem-solving in real-world challenges. The teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) consider critical thinking to be connected to communicative competence, autonomy, metacognition, and argumentation (Atamanova et al., 2015). As a result, literature serves not just as a source of language input but also as a stimulus for cognitive development. Learners become interpreters of meaning rather than merely responding to texts when they engage with literature in this manner.

The third point is that, in contrast to mechanical drills, literature has a significant potential to improve communicative ability in the broader sense of meaningful and authentic engagement. As a result of engaging in activities such as debate, dramatization, role-playing, and collaborative interpretation of literary texts, students were able to engage in meaning negotiation, communicate positions, take into consideration cultural perspectives, and use English to convey their emotions and personal identities (Heggernes, 2021). According to the framework of communicative competence, which places a focus not only on grammatical accuracy but also on sociolinguistic appropriateness, discourse coherence, and strategic skill, this is consistent with the previous statement. For instance, a study that was carried out on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in an English Interaction Room discovered that participants exhibited strategic competence when using English in conversation contexts, despite the fact that their grammatical competence remained inferior (Faradilla & Rukmini, 2019) Journal Unnes. The data that have been presented thus far indicate that literature-based tasks have the potential to assist in the areas of communicative competence that are lacking by contextualizing them in real speech and personal meaning.

Furthermore, the intercultural aspect that was highlighted in the research that was conducted is significant. Learners were able to significantly improve their capacity for empathy, perspective awareness, and intercultural communication by being exposed to literary works that originated from a variety of cultural backgrounds. With genre-based approaches that establish a connection between critical thinking activities and the establishment of intercultural communicative skills. The ability for literary works to encourage international understanding and verbal contact is especially essential in a world that is becoming increasingly globalized, and in particular in a sociocultural country such as Indonesia. If this is the case, then it indicates that students are not merely employing English as a transactional code but rather as a medium for the creation of meaning across cultural boundaries.

Despite these positive aspects, the data nevertheless bring to light specific difficulties that require pedagogical answers that reflect careful consideration. Certain literary writings are known to have archaic terminology, sophisticated grammar, and figurative and abstract language, which learners have reported having difficulty with. Insufficient teacher preparation in literature-based pedagogy, restricted instructional time, test-oriented curricula, and large class numbers were some of the obstacles that were identified by teachers. In Chilean in-service teachers, for instance, expressed difficulties in applying critical reading and thinking approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situations. As a result, the incorporation of literature is a potential instructional strategy; yet, in order to achieve effective implementation, scaffolding, material adaptation, teacher development, and institutional support are necessary.

Selecting graded or culturally relevant texts, scaffolding pre-reading tasks, utilizing multimodal supports (films, digital storytelling) (Sujarwo et al., 2023), promoting collaborative peer discussions and integrating technology are some of the strategies that were identified in the study. These strategies offer a blueprint for accomplishing the goal of bridging the gap between intention and reality. A literate pedagogy that is responsive to learner levels, context, and needs is an example of what these methods express. In addition, the combination of literature-based activities with digital literacy and blended learning is a reflection of the most recent developments in new educational practices. In the field of research on communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language, for instance, the combination of artificial intelligence technologies (such as chatbots) with communicative tasks has started to emerge. Despite the fact that technology is not the primary focus of this investigation, the fact that it is mentioned indicates the possibility of expanding literature-based approaches.

The findings provide further evidence that is consistent with the theory that literature-based pedagogy and communicative language teaching (CLT) do not necessarily have to conflict with one another. Literary texts, on the other hand, are the ones that supply the relevant communication framework that CLT suggests. When students engage in discussions and interpretations of literature, the findings show that they are not engaging in contrived drills but rather in communication that is deliberate. The constructivist and socio-cultural viewpoints are aligned with this integrated approach: learners generate meaning via interaction (Vygotsky), and they engage actively and socially in the use of language. As a result, literature transforms into a medium that facilitates the formation of meaning, the negotiation of identities, and the development of communities inside the classroom.

In terms of the curriculum, the study lends credence to the viewpoint that literature ought to be incorporated into language programs rather than being marginalized. Literary studies can serve as a key component of language acquisition that integrates linguistic, cognitive, and cultural goals. This is in contrast to the traditional approach of adding literary studies as a "add-on" to the

teaching curriculum. Within the framework of Indonesian higher education, this integration is congruent with the objectives of national policy, which are to promote character education, digital literacy, and national citizenship. Therefore, literature has the potential to act as a vehicle for the achievement of broad educational goals, such as critical literacy, intercultural awareness, and language competency.

Taking a more pragmatic approach, the development of teachers emerges as a vital lever for bringing about sustained change. Workshops on literature-based pedagogy, critical literacy training, and digital literacies are required to support the revision of the curriculum (Wahid et al., 2025). In order to properly scaffold learning, assess students beyond grammar, select appropriate texts, devise interpretive and communicative tasks, and foster reflective and collaborative learning, teachers need to be given the authority to make these decisions. Evaluation of literature-based activities should not only focus on grammatical accuracy; rather, it should also take into account interpretive depth, communicative interaction, and cultural awareness. Furthermore, assessment procedures need to keep evolving.

This study theoretically supports the notion that literature is an effective medium for fostering critical thinking, communicative competence, and intercultural awareness in English Language Teaching, reinforcing communicative and constructivist learning principles that prioritize meaning-making, collaboration, and learner autonomy. The findings indicate that educators should implement literature-based pedagogies that incorporate interpretive, interactive, and reflective tasks, bolstered by professional development and curriculum policies that regard literature as a fundamental learning resource rather than an ancillary one. This indicates that institutions must offer accessible and pertinent literary resources, promote innovative pedagogical approaches like multimodal interpretation and discussion-based learning, and guarantee that assessment frameworks reflect both linguistic and cognitive advancements, enabling students to engage with literature to master English and develop as thoughtful, globally aware communicators.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To summarize, the study of literature has the potential to bring about significant changes in the teaching of the English language. It gives students the ability to become articulate communicators, reflective thinkers, and citizens who are able to interact with people from different cultures. As a result, the incorporation of literary studies into English Language Teaching (ELT) is in line with the goals of global education, which are to produce individuals who are fluent in language, ethically grounded, and critically aware. The promotion of professional development in literature-based pedagogy and the provision of institutional frameworks that prioritize critical, communicative, and humanistic aspects of language acquisition should be a priority for universities and teacher preparation

programs in the future. English classrooms transform into dynamic theaters of thinking, creativity, and discussion when literature and language education meet, as this study reveals. This not only prepares students to use English effectively, but also to gain a deeper understanding of the world through the medium of English. English language teachers and curriculum designers should contextualize, discuss, and reflect on literary studies in ELT programs. Under institutional policies that allow enough time and resources, teacher preparation should prioritize literature-based teaching that links language skills to critical and intercultural ability. Digital and multimodal tools can boost student engagement, making literature a dynamic medium for fostering communicative competency and critical awareness in 21st-century EFL classrooms.

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