CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Benefits of Literature in English Teaching

In English classroom, literature can be used as a source for supporting the learners' English learning in which it has benefits in several language areas. In addition to its use for developing reading skills and comprehension, literature can be used to enrich vocabulary, to provide a model of correct grammar and to develop cultural awareness. It can also be extended to develop listening and speaking skills (including pronunciation) and used as a prompt for writing (Griffiths, 2012, p. 1138). For example, the students develop a song lyric into an essay or a story. Moreover, Povey as cited in Khatib & Rahimi (2012) also says, "Reading literature familiarizes students or learners with subtle vocabulary usage and new and complex syntax and through this contribute to the extension of language usage and linguistic knowledge" (p. 33). It means, literary works can be used in English classroom to increase the learners' language skills, to expand their vocabulary, to increase their grammar knowledge, and to improve their pronunciation.

Other benefits of using literature in English classroom are stated by Oster as cited in Khatib & Rahimi (2012), "Literature enlarges students' vision and fosters critical thinking" (p. 34). Critical thinking is the ability to identify, analyse, and evaluate ideas; to formulate convincing reasons in support of conclusions; and to make reasonable decisions about what to believe and what to do (Bassham, et al., 2011, p. 1). For example, when the students are asked to criticize a song, they should identify, analyse, and evaluate the ideas or messages in the song. Then, they should formulate convincing reasons that support their conclusion of the

song. Lastly, they should make reasonable decisions about what to believe and what to do based on the ideas or messages they understand from the song.

For other benefits of literature in English classroom, Lazar (2009) argues,

Literary texts have a powerful function in raising moral and ethical concerns in the classroom. Literature provides wonderful source material for eliciting strong emotional responses from our students. Using literature in the classroom is a fruitful way of involving the learner as a whole person, and provides excellent opportunities for the learners to express their personal opinions, reactions and feelings. (p. 3).

In addition, Carter and Long as cited in Llach (2007) explain, "Literature supplies many linguistic opportunities to the language learner and allows the teacher to design activities that are based on material capable of stimulating greater interest and involvement than many other non-literary, informative texts" (p. 7). It means, literature is useful to develop the learners' ability to criticize, to encourage their emotional responses, and to stimulate their interest in English learning.

Furthermore, Arthur as cited in Khatib & Rahimi (2012, pp. 33-34) mentions three ways in which literature can promote language learning. The first one is the large repertoire of vocabulary that is used in literature compared to speech. The second one is unique syntactic patterns which are only found in written English especially literature. For example, the use of passive voice, frequent occurrence of subordinate clauses, subordination within subordination and stylistic order inversion. The third benefit is that the literature aids students to understand the other societies and cultures. The characters' acts and events occur according to the norms of a specific culture or society.

There are some reasons why language teachers use literary materials in English learning. They are motivating material, access to cultural background, encouraging language acquisition, developing students' interpretive abilities, and educating the whole person (Lazar, 2009, pp. 15-19).

1. Motivating material

    Literature is very motivating. This happens because it may elicit a powerful emotional response from students, and if the materials are carefully chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives (Lazar, 2009, p. 15). Literature deals with topics which are intrinsically interesting because the topics are part of the human experience (Hismanoglu, 2005, p. 56).

2. Access to cultural background

    Literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying (Lazar, 2009, p. 16). Literature is perhaps best regarded as a complement to other materials used to develop the foreign learner's understanding into the country whose language is being learned (Hismanoglu, 2005, pp. 54-55).

3. Encouraging language acquisition

    Literature provides a particularly appropriate way of stimulating language acquisition, as it provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language (Lazar, 2009, p. 17). Literature provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Students become familiar with many features of the written language, such as the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas, which can develop and enrich their own writing skills (Hismanoglu, 2005, p. 55).

4. Developing students' interpretive abilities

Literature is a particularly good source for developing students' abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretations. This is because literary texts are often rich in multiple levels of meaning and demand that the reader/learner is actively involved in teasing out the unstated implications and assumptions of the text. In a poem, for example, a word may have a powerful figurative meaning beyond its fixed dictionary definition. Trying to ascertain this significance provides an excellent opportunity for students to discuss their own interpretations, based on the evidence in the text (Lazar, 2009, p. 19). Thus, by encouraging the students to grapple with the multiple ambiguities of the literary text, the teachers are helping to develop the students' overall capacity to infer meaning. Then, this very useful skill can be transferred to other situations where the students need to make an interpretation based on implicit or unstated evidence.

5. Educating the whole person

Literature can help to stimulate the imagination of the students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness (Lazar, 2009, p. 19). If students are asked to respond personally to the texts given to them, they will become increasingly confident about expressing their own ideas and emotions in English because they will be free to interpret it based on their own opinions or understanding, and they can also relate it to the values and traditions of their own society.

B. Selecting Suitable Literary Texts for Teaching English

Selecting a literary text for English classroom requires a number of considerations. Many things, such as students' age, language proficiency and interests, should be taken into consideration before selecting a literary text. Alemi (2011) assumes, "If the students are not

linguistically ready to deal with such texts, they can become frustrated" (p. 178). Therefore, teachers should select literary texts that are quite easy, simple and suitable with the linguistic level of the students, so they will want to read more literary texts and find those texts more relevant to their experience. Moreover, McKay and Rivers as cited in Alemi (2011) argue, "Students read and enjoy a text if the subject-matter of the text is relevant to their life experience and interests" (p. 178). However, individual students in a class may be different in their language proficiency and interests. Obviously, when selecting literary materials for English classroom, teachers should try to find texts that are suitable for the majority of students in the class.

Other criteria that can be considered by teachers for selecting a literary text for English classroom are students' cultural background and literary background (Lazar, 2009, pp. 53-54). When selecting a literary text, teachers should think about how far the students' cultural and literary background will help or hinder their understanding of a text. Teachers should also consider how much background they will need to provide for students to have at least a basic understanding of the text. In addition, many students may have a strong sense of curiosity about another culture and enjoy studying its literature because they believe it reveals key insights about that society (Lazar, 2009, p. 53). Students may have studied literature in their own language. If it is a language in which similar conventions to those in English operate for reading and interpreting literature, then they may already have a level of literary competence which will help them to make sense of a literary text (Lazar, 2009, p. 54). Therefore, when choosing a literary text, teachers should look at its specific literary qualities and whether students can make sense of the literary meanings behind the text.

Other factors to consider when selecting a literary text are availability of text, length of text, exploitability, and fit with syllabus (Lazar, 2009, pp. 54-55). The literary texts selected for English learning should be available to students, either in printed or non-printed form. Also, teachers should have enough time available to work on the text in class. Then, teachers should plan the kinds of tasks and activities to exploit the text. In addition, the texts should be fit with the syllabus such as in terms of topic, vocabulary, and grammar.

Furthermore, teachers should develop a material, in this case a literary text, to adapt it to the needs and desires of their students in order to promote the effective English learning and to make the students motivated more in learning English. In developing a material for language teaching, Tomlinson (2011, pp. 8-23) suggested some of the basic principles, as follows:

1. Materials should achieve impact

   Impact is achieved when materials have a noticeable effect on learners, that is when the learners' curiosity, interest and attention are attracted. Therefore, teachers should know as much as possible about what topics the learners are likely to like.

2. Materials should help learners to feel at ease

   Feeling at ease can be achieved through a material that relates the world of the book to the world of the learners and through the absence of activities that could threaten self-esteem and cause humiliation.

3. Materials should help learners to develop confidence

   Confidence can be built through activities which try to push learners slightly beyond their existing proficiency by engaging them in tasks which are stimulating, problematic, but achievable too. Confidence can also be built through the activities that encourage learners

to use and to develop their existing extra-linguistic skills, such as those which involve being imaginative, being creative or being analytical.

4. What is being taught should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful

Perception of relevance and utility can be achieved by knowing what the learners are interested in and what they really want to learn English for. The perception of relevance and utility can also be achieved by relating a material to interesting and challenging classroom tasks and by presenting it in ways which could facilitate the achievement of the task outcomes desired by the learners. Therefore, providing the learners with a choice of topic and task is important if teachers are trying to achieve perception of relevance and utility in a general English textbook.

5. Materials should require and facilitate learner self-investment

Materials can help learners to achieve their self-investment by providing them with choices of focus and activity, by giving them topic control and by engaging them in learner-centred discovery activities. One of the most profitable ways of doing this is to get learners interested in a written or spoken text, to get them to respond to it globally and affectively and then to help them to analyse a particular linguistic feature of it in order to make discoveries for themselves. Other ways of achieving learner investment are involving the learners in mini-projects, involving them in finding supplementary materials for particular units in a book and giving them responsibility for making decisions about which texts to use and how to use them.

6. Learners must be ready to acquire the points being taught

Readiness can be achieved by materials which create situations requiring the use of variational features not previously taught, by materials which ensure that the learners

have gained sufficient mastery over the developmental features of the previous stage before teaching a new one, and by materials which roughly tune the input so that it contains some features which are slightly above each learner's current state of proficiency. It can also be achieved by materials which get learners to focus attention on features of the target language which they have not yet acquired so that they might be more attentive to these features in future input.

7. Materials should expose the learners to language in authentic use

    Materials can provide exposure to authentic input through the advice the learners give, the instructions for their activities and the spoken and written texts they include. They can also stimulate exposure to authentic input through the activities they suggest (e.g. interviewing the teacher, listening to the radio, etc.). In order to facilitate acquisition, the input must be comprehensible (i.e. understandable enough to achieve the purpose for responding to it).

8. The learners' attention should be drawn to linguistic features of the input

    Helping learners to pay attention to linguistic features of authentic input can help them to eventually acquire some of those features. The learners become aware of a gap between a particular feature of their interlanguage (i.e. how they currently understand or use it) and the equivalent feature in the target language. Such noticing of the gap between output and input can act as an acquisition facilitator. It does not do so by immediately changing the learners' grammar but by alerting the learner to subsequent instances of the same feature in future input. Therefore, there is no immediate change in

the learners' proficiency. There is, however, an increased likelihood of eventual acquisition if the learners receive future relevant input.

9. Materials should provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes

Interaction can be achieved through, for example:

a. information gap activities which require learners to communicate with each other or the teacher in order to close the gap (e.g. finding out what food and drink people would like at the class party);

b. post-listening and post-reading activities which require the learners to use information from the text to achieve a communicative purpose (e.g. deciding what television programmes to watch, discussing who to vote for, writing a review of a book or film);

c. creative writing and creative speaking activities, such as writing a story or improvising a drama.

10. Materials should take into account that the positive effects of instruction are usually delayed

The acquisition of language is a gradual process. Teachers might be familiar with the situation in which learners get a new feature correct in the lesson in which it is taught but then get it wrong the following week. This is partly because they have not yet had enough time, instruction and exposure for learning to have taken place. The inevitable delayed effect of instruction suggests that no textbook can really succeed if it teaches features of the language one at a time and expects the learners to be able to use them straightaway. In order to facilitate the gradual process of acquisition, it is important for materials to recycle instruction and to

provide frequent and ample exposure to the instructed language features in communicative use.

11. Materials should take into account that learners differ in learning styles

Different learners have different preferred learning styles. For example, those learners with a preference for studial learning are much more likely to gain from explicit grammar teaching than those who prefer experiential learning. Moreover, those who prefer experiential learning are more likely to gain from reading a story with a predominant grammatical feature (e.g. reported speech) than they are from being taught that feature explicitly. This means that activities should be variable and should ideally cater for all learning styles.

12. Materials should take into account that learners differ in affective attitudes

Each class of learners using the same materials will differ from each other in terms of attitudes towards the language, the teacher and the materials. One obvious implication for the materials developer is to diversify language instruction as much as possible based upon the variety of cognitive styles and the variety of affective attitudes likely to be found amongst a typical class of learners. Ways of doing this include: providing choices of different types of text, providing choices of different types of activities, including activities which involve the learners in discussing their attitudes and feelings about the course and the materials, researching and catering for the diverse interests of the identified target learners.

13. Materials should permit a silent period at the beginning of instruction

It has been shown that it can be extremely valuable to delay L2 speaking for beginners of a language until they have gained sufficient exposure to the target language and sufficient

confidence in understanding it. This silent period can facilitate the development of an effective internalised grammar that can help learners to achieve proficiency when they eventually start to speak in the L2. The important point is that the materials should not force premature speaking in the target language. Ways of giving learners the possibility of not speaking until they are ready include:

a. starting the course with a Total Physical Response (TPR) approach in which the learners respond physically to oral instructions from a teacher;

b. starting with a listening comprehension approach in which the learners listen to stories in the target language;

c. permitting the learners to respond to target language questions by using their first language or through gestures.

14. Materials should provide opportunities for outcome feedback

Feedback which is focused first on the effectiveness of the outcome rather than just on the accuracy of the output can lead to output becoming a profitable source of input. In other words, if the language that the learner produces is evaluated in relation to the purpose for which it is used, that language can become a powerful and informative source of information about language use. Thus, a learner who fails to achieve a particular communicative purpose (e.g. borrowing something, instructing someone how to play a game, persuading someone to do something) is more likely to gain from feedback on the effectiveness of their use of language than a learner whose language is corrected without reference to any non-linguistic outcome. Therefore, it is very important for materials developers to make sure that language production activities have intended outcomes other than just practising language.

C. Studies of the Relevant Research

       The present study is relevant to the studies conducted by Boothe and West (2015) entitled, "English Language Learning through Music and Song Lyrics – the Performance of a Lifetime" and Israel (2013) entitled, "Language Learning Enhanced by Music and Song." Boothe and West (2015) found that using songs in the classroom had both linguistic and cognitive value for strengthening English language acquisition. It helped to develop cross-cultural and interactive communication skills. Song lyrics stimulated phonetics, vocabulary and improve grammar. Moreover, Israel (2013) found that the application of song and music as a teaching and learning classroom motivation was affirmed, resulting in creative and enhanced language performance.