LITERATURE AS A RESOURCE IN THE SRI LANKAN ELT CLASSROOM

The use of literature as a resource in language teaching has had more than its fair share of debate and discussion during the last two decades, not without, however, varying degrees of controversy and ambivalence on the part of both teachers and curriculum planners. Stern (1991) makes an observation that holds true even today--that teachers are discouraged by a lack of sufficient resources to aid them in presenting literature in the language classroom, a lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching in ESL and the absence of clear-cut objectives defining the role of literature in ESL/EFL. This is particularly the case in the Sri Lankan context, in which an examination of ELT programs which include a literature component will reveal a wide spectrum of methodologies, resulting from a paucity of well-defined guidelines and techniques of introducing literature into the Sri Lankan ELT environment. This paper is an attempt to suggest an appropriate methodology with its attendant objectives and content, as well as criteria, for the selection of suitable literary texts.

A prerequisite of attempting to define the role of literature in ELT is an understanding of what constitutes literature itself, since one could argue that realia often used in the language classroom, such as notices, reports, announcements, newspaper advertisements etc. can also be considered to be literary texts, if literature is assumed to be creativity expressed through language. In the literature of language teaching, such definitions are sparse. Brumfit and Carter's (1986) collection of essays on literature and language teaching yields the following. Carter (1986) states that the question of what is specifically literary about certain texts is complex and problematic, and that in terms of actual words there is certainly no qualitative distinction between literary and non-literary texts, the difference lying in language use; Vincent (1986) defines works of literature as "works of art, distinguished by their sophistication, subtlety and complexity" (p. 208); and McKay (1986) observes that literature is characterised by its structural complexity and unique use of language.

All these definitions acknowledge the complexity of literature and two mention its distinctive use of language. None, however, provide us with a concrete, workable definition which may be used to identify a text as literature, preferring instead, to revert to abstract descriptions. Since literature itself seems to defy definition, a point of focus can perhaps be found in the language of literature, often termed literary language, from which to proceed. Brumfit and Carter (1986) believe that there is no such thing as literary language, asserting that they find it impossible to isolate any single or special property of language which is exclusive to a literary work. However, they do not deny that language

is used in ways which can be distinguished as literary, and go on to state that the language of literature is that which has undergone a certain measure of artistic distortion. Littlewood (1986) claims that, at the simplest level, literature is the productive use of a limited number of linguistic structures in order to achieve communication, and that the main core of the linguistic system is the same, whether it is used for "spoken gossip" (p. 208) or written literature. This implies once again that there is no qualitative difference between the language of spoken discourse and that of literature at this level. However, at the second or stylistic level, Littlewood asserts that differences do appear, literature drawing on all available styles to present a representation of life.

A more recent definition from Lazar (1993) claims that while there is no literary language that we can isolate, one of the hallmarks of literature is that it feeds creatively on every possible style and register, and that it has become the one form of discourse in which any use of language is permissible. She goes on to isolate several features of literary language, such as similes, metaphors, assonance, alliteration, repetition of words or phrases, unusual syntactic patterns, etc. which she states occur in a higher incidence in literature when compared with ordinary discourse.

The consensus appears to be that language can be identified as "literary" according to the degree exhibited of certain characteristics, whether these are artistic distortion, stylistic devices or figures of speech. Since the language of the realia mentioned previously usually lacks these features, such texts will be considered to be non-literary from a purely linguistic aspect for the purposes of the present discussion. From the point of view of the applied linguist and the language teacher, this shift of focus from a definition of literature itself to what constitutes the language of literature is fortunate, since the comprehension and use of language is the primary concern of ELT pedagogy.

An examination of the arguments put forward in support of the inclusion of literary texts in the language classroom reveals a dual perspective. The content based arguments are that all literature deals with fundamental human issues and is therefore both enduring and very close to the students' own thoughts and feelings (Collie and Slater 1987), a view that fails to address the issue of a student in an EFL environment to whom the target language culture is alien, and to whom therefore the target language literature would present problems of identification; that literature deepens the students' understanding of the country where the target language is spoken (Collie and Slater 1987; Lazar 1993), a view that is refuted by Brumfit and Carter (1986); that literature enables the reader to examine "universal" human experience within the context

of a specific setting and the consciousness of a particular people, learning about prejudices, taboos etc. (Stern 1991), an objective that appears more appropriate to sociology or anthropology, or even sociolinguistics, rather than ELT; and that literature is highly valued by students, who experience a sense of achievement through studying it (Lazar 1993).

The principal language based arguments are more relevant to the context of ELT. Brumfit and Carter (1986) point out that the study of literature introduces students to the creative use of language. In the Sri Lankan ELT classroom this could be exploited to assist students in inferring meaning from realia encountered in the linguistic environment outside the classroom, and prove to be a valuable aid in the teaching of life skills. Stern (1991) points out that a single literary text can become the central focus of an ELT unit incorporating all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, a point that will be discussed in more detail later in this paper. Brumfit and Carter (1986) observe that literature encourages students to infer meaning from the text by interacting with it, and Lazar (1993) states that literature helps in developing students' interpretative and critical abilities, by inferring meaning at multiple levels, in stimulating the imagination and in increasing emotional awareness, resulting in greater confidence in exploring their own ideas and emotions in English, two arguments of substantial significance in the areas of reading and writing. Collie and Slater (1987) assert that students can gain familiarity with the many features of written English through literature, and a similar view is expressed by Brumfit and Carter (1986) when they state that literary texts provide examples of language resources being used to the full. Bearing in mind that the primary concerns of ELT are linguistic, it is the arguments based on the language of literature that should form the basis of text selection and methodology.

It has already been stated that literary texts contain multiple levels of meaning. Inferring each of these requires the reader to engage in a process of decoding ideas encoded by a writer into the system of communication we call language. This process of comprehension is primarily psycholinguistic, involving the reader in an interactive dialogue with the text. Since the quality and parameters of this dialogue differ according to the individual reader, there can be no 'final' reading of any text. However, inappropriate responses are possible, arising from misunderstandings of the code (Brumfit and Carter 1986), and obviously these are to be avoided.

Difficulty in inferring meaning from a literary text can be due to a variety of reasons where the learner of English as a second language is concerned. Principal among these are grammatical and syntactic difficulty, word-

stock or vocabulary, stylistic difficulty and specific cultural assumptions. Grammatical and syntactic difficulty results from the linguistic liberties taken by creative writers--the feature referred to as artistic distortion earlier in this paper. Instances of such distortion are changes in the word order, omission of words, sentence fragmentation, lack of punctuation etc. The importance of the comprehensibility of the linguistic structures of a text to a second language learner is asserted by Littlewood (1986) when he says, "The linguistic structures are, of course, the gateway or barrier to other levels [of meaning], and it is fruitless to expect pupils to appreciate literary works for which they are not linguistically ready" (p. 181). Difficulty in word-stock or vocabulary could be twofold. First, the vocabulary of the text could be too advanced for the student, and secondly, there could be items that are unfamiliar due to cultural specificity. This is especially true in the case of literature written outside the ELT environment by native speakers of the target language, but also true of some of the literature written in English in Sri Lanka, a point which should be kept in mind when selecting a text. Stylistic variety can be encountered in the formal written register of a literary text, as well as in the variety of styles often found within a single text, such as an informative or descriptive style for narration, a conversational style for dialogue, a regional dialect for authenticity, or a poetic style for heightened effect (Littlewood 1986). If a student is not familiar with any of these styles in the first language, difficulty in comprehension in the target language could be the result.

The presence of cultural references and assumptions in any work of literature is an indisputable fact. The importance of these assumptions in the ELT classroom lies in the barrier they form between the student and the meaning of the text. McKay (1986) states, "An interaction with a literary text depends on a reader's familiarity with the cultural assumptions in it." (p. 181). Vincent (1986) agrees when she says that a reader must bring to the text linguistic, conceptual and cultural understanding of a high order. These assertions can be clarified further from the perspective of schema theory in language pedagogy. Research in this area has shown that comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text itself, indicating the importance of knowledge that goes beyond mere linguistic knowledge in a psycholinguistic model of reading (Carrell and Eisterhold 1987). One of the fundamental tenets of schema theory then is that any text, either written or spoken, does not by itself carry meaning, and that the process of interpretation is guided by the principle that every input is mapped by the reader against some existing schemata, i.e., previously acquired background knowledge (Carrell and Eisterhold 1987).

The background knowledge that second language readers bring to a text is often culture specific (Carrell and Eisterhold 1987) i.e., accumulated through their own life experiences, and through whatever reading they have done in the past. In the case of most students in Sri Lanka's education system at present this reading is likely to have been done in their first language, i.e., Sinhala or Tamil. Therefore their knowledge or schemata of the target language (English) culture is negligible. Carrell and Eisterhold (1987) cite studies that showed that a reader's failure to activate an appropriate schema against which a text can be given a consistent interpretation, resulting in non-comprehension, is due to either the writer not providing sufficient clues to activate the readers' schemata, or the readers themselves not possessing the appropriate schema anticipated by the writer. Further, a study conducted at the University of Wisconsin showed that reading comprehension is a function of cultural background knowledge and that if readers possess schemata assumed by the writer, they understand the text better (Lazar 1993).

This is borne out further by what was experienced in the University of Colombo's Intensive Course in English conducted for new entrants to the Faculties of Arts and Management and Finance in January / February 1996. Extracts from literature by two Sri Lankan authors, Chandani Lokuge and Romesh Gunesekera, were prepared as reading passages, with pre-reading activities and predictive questions, followed by the text, which was in turn followed by post-reading activities of comprehension questions and vocabulary work. The students following this course were divided into three levels of proficiency, with Level 1 being the lowest level and Level 3 the highest. When these literary passages were done as a reading unit in a Level 3 class, a marked difference in the students' response was perceived. Lokuge's story, titled "A Woman in the Night,"[1] elicited interested discussion, as well as identification from the students, while Gunesekera's story, titled "A House in the Country,"[2] left them unmoved, and in some cases even puzzled and bemused.[3]

There are many possible reasons for this difference of response. Lokuge's story is about a woman, constantly abused by her alcoholic husband,

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[1]   C. Lokuge, *Moth and Other Stories*, Sydney: Dangeroo Press, 1994, pp. 72-74.

[2]   Romesh Gunasekera, *Monkfish Moon*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992, pp. 11-25.

[3]   O.M. Samarakkody. Personal Interview, 3 March 1997.

and finally thrown out of her house, who stands at a bus halt at night, alone and penniless, with nowhere to go, and now completely vulnerable. The narrative style is fairly straightforward, shifting between descriptions of the environment and the situation and the woman's thoughts. Perhaps the only complexity is the additional presence of the narrator, who is first presented in the story through the third person and is then shifted to the first person in a somewhat dramatic twist. Metaphorical concepts and lexical items such as "slim feet in indifferent slippers", "rainbow hues vanishing to a black and white world of brutal truth", "slurred" "obscene", "humiliation", "soothing", "phantom", nauseating", "distorted", etc. that would probably be unfamiliar to most second language students are to be found in the text, but none of these are so abstract or so distanced from the students' own experience that they would be unable to comprehend them either by guessing or with the instructor's guidance and explanations. Perhaps most importantly, the battered, abused wife of an alcoholic, struggling to care for her children against impossible odds, jobless and helpless in a society which shows only indifference to her plight, and whose life finally ends in tragedy is a concept that is unfortunately very close to the Sri Lankan social experience, and can therefore be identified with easily--perhaps even too easily by the student.

Gunesekera's story, however, is somewhat different in these aspects. First, it begins in England, the narrator being a single Sri Lankan male resident in London, who decides to resign his job, sell his flat and return to Sri Lanka to take up residence in a house left to him by his uncle. On arrival in Colombo, he meets Siri, a carpenter, and the story proceeds to depict his growing and changing relationship with this man against a backdrop of civil unrest. The Instructor responsible for teaching this reading passage stated that she felt that one of the principal difficulties the students had was in identifying with the narrator and his situation.[4] She observed that to the students, the concept of giving up a house and a job in England in order to settle in Sri Lanka was a reversal of expected behaviour which they found difficult to relate to; the difficulty experienced by the narrator in trying to redefine the power relations of his relationship with Siri was alien to them, probably because they had no similar circumstances against which this dilemma could be mapped; and many of the larger issues, such as the insurrection, the shifting social fabric and the sense of alienation the narrator feels in his own country were perhaps too understated or too abstract for the students to grasp. The issues in Lokuge's story are not by any means more limiting, but they are stated overtly, and thus

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[4]   I am indebted to Minoli Samarakkody for her perceptive observations and comments on the response of her students to these two texts.

the student is able to respond to them more directly. We could conclude, therefore, that the type of analysis required by a reader in fully appreciating the subtle nuances of Gunesekera's story is unfortunately quite rare in most Sri Lankan ELT classrooms.

To state the obvious, the literature that would best match a reader's schemata would be the literature of the reader's own culture. However, literature in English is not always available in an ESL/EFL environment. Thus, in countries such as Japan, Korea or China, the language teacher is forced to look elsewhere for literary material, and has no choice but to use American or British texts which are often far removed from the students' own culture and experience. However, in Sri Lanka we have a literary tradition spanning several decades which has produced a literature in English in a variety of styles and genres by Sri Lankan writers which can be introduced as a valuable resource into the ELT classroom. At this point I wish to state that the argument for using Sri Lankan literature in English is based on purely linguistic and cultural factors, and not on a qualitative judgement. In other words, for those who maintain that Sri Lankan writing in English lacks technique, versatility or is thematically limited, I would say that these factors are perhaps valid in a classroom where it is taught, discussed or disseminated as literature. In the ELT classroom, the criteria for selection are, once again, those discussed above--grammatical and syntactic suitability, appropriateness of vocabulary and style, and most importantly, ingrained cultural assumptions. In other words, the content of a literary work is important insofar as it aids one of the four skills of reading, writing, listening or speech.

In selecting a literary text for the purposes of ELT, the students' linguistic proficiency must be carefully assessed by the teacher in order to make sure that the grammar and the syntax of the text is not beyond the students' reach. The grammatical structures the students are familiar with as well their target proficiency should be taken into consideration here. Reinforcement of structures could be effected by drawing the students' attention to the way in which a writer has used a particular structure in a text. Structures not yet taught will invariably appear in unsimplified texts. These could be explained briefly in order not to obstruct comprehension, and could also be used by the teacher as comprehensible input.

The appropriateness of style and genre is a consideration if the teacher is unable to identify the particular style or styles of a literary work, for without such an identification, methodology becomes meaningless. In general, a descriptive narrative style is safer to adhere to, rather than a heavily poetic one,

as a work which abounds in metaphors, idioms etc. could once again be fairly strongly linked to the target language culture. In the case of a specific genre, it is useful to seek a link with the students' first language. For instance, in order to activate the appropriate schemata, English ballads and balladeers can be likened to *viridu* singers and their compositions in the Sinhala oral tradition.

Research to identify second language reading difficulties and self-reports of second language students identify vocabulary as the main reading problem for second/foreign language learners (Stern 1991). The vocabulary of a literary work could be problematic in two ways. The students could be unfamiliar with a particular lexical item, which can be overcome by strategies such as guessing the meaning from the context, doing a morphological analysis of the word in question, or using a dictionary; or the students could be unfamiliar with a concept due to the cultural assumptions discussed earlier. It must be kept in mind that problems in inferring meaning from individual lexical items may not be as pervasive as problems related to the absence of appropriate generalised information assumed by the writer, and possessed by the reader sharing the writer's own cultural background (Carrell and Eisterhold 1987); so here again an understanding of the limitations of the students' schemata is important.

Historically the teaching of English literature in ESL/EFL environments has been dominated by two traditions, the British and the Continental (Stern 1991). The British tradition assumes literature to have a special educational function as a logical development of literacy, while in the Continental tradition literature is studied as evidence of a distinctly foreign civilisation or culture, which is integrally related to civilisation studies; moreover, both traditions are dominated by academic, teacher-oriented instruction (Stern 1991). Maximising the potential of literature in language teaching, i.e., as an aid to help students master both grammar and vocabulary as well as the four language skills of reading, writing, speech and listening entails an integrated approach to literature. Stern (1991) describes this approach as one which is integrated also in the sense that a single literary work can combine all the language skills with one another, along with awareness of the target language culture (if desired) as well as increased literary understanding and appreciation. Activities focusing on each area can build upon and complement one another, contextualising all aspects of language learning. Since works of literature suitable to be included in an ELT curriculum are not always easy to find, the obvious economy of such an integrated approach using just one literary selection to teach a variety of skills

is a further advantage for the second language teacher.[5]

When designing ELT materials there are four principal literary genres -- the novel, the short story, the play and the poem -- to choose from. For shorter Intensive or ESP/EAP courses the novel is not very appropriate because of the particular time constraints of these courses, and also because sustained interest and regular attendance is necessary on the part of the students for the successful completion of a long literary work; in many ELT courses in this country, the last two factors cannot always be guaranteed. The play, unless it consists of a single act, poses similar problems. This is not to say that these two genres cannot be considered as resources in language teaching -- in fact Lazar (1993) lists and describes several excellent activities that can be designed around a novel (pp. 77-86) and a play (pp. 152-161) -- but rather, to point out that the short story and the poem are more practical in terms of brevity and conciseness. However, extracts from both novels and plays and even from short stories if they are of more than average length can be used successfully in the ELT classroom. The stories by Lokuge and Gunesekera, for instance, were adapted to suit the requirements of an Intensive Course in English, as mentioned earlier, and would not have required more than two or three hours of classroom work.

The final sections of this paper will describe and illustrate how a piece of literature can be used in a language class to further the four language skills, based on the integrated method. Although the literary work selected for this purpose is a poem, similar activities can be designed to suit the novel, short story and play as well. The integrated method can be used at all levels of ELT. Adaptation to the different levels would simply require a different choice of activity, a different approach to a particular activity, or more classroom work in a particular skill area. For example, with elementary or lower intermediate groups, more time should be spent on the pre-reading stage, with a fairly extensive pre-reading vocabulary list provided. When assessing comprehension, literal questions are preferable to inference questions at this level. Writing activities could be controlled or guided, with models provided by the teacher. Speech activities could consist of dialogue preparation leading up to role-plays, rather than debates or panel discussions which would probably be beyond the students' linguistic ability. Most importantly, the teacher should make sure that the text itself is suited to the students' proficiency. The poem used in this paper is best done with advanced students who are already familiar with the principal tenses in English, the construction of the passive and the infinitive form of the

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[5]   For activities in each of the four language skills, see Stern (1991) pp. 332-343.

English verb.

In the poem *Menika*[6] by Yasmine Gooneratne given below, the main character is a woman from a rural village, employed as a domestic, presumably in a house in the city. Menika has been abused by her husband since the earliest days of her marriage, but she continues to live with him for the sake of her daughters. Since this character will not be an unfamiliar figure to most Sri Lankan second language students her situation in life does not have to be explained in detail at the pre-reading stage. However, a brief discussion, as described below, could be done. The theme of the poem can be used as the springboard of interesting classroom discussions and activities on social issues, values and beliefs in Sri Lanka, all of which would be invaluable in creating an interactive language learning atmosphere.

The activities described below are tied to the skills of reading, writing and speech. The reading activities are grouped into three stages -- pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. The goal of the first, or pre-reading stage is to activate schemata and to motivate students to read the text (Dubin and Bycina 1991). Asking students to read only the title and guess who/what the poem is about targets an important step in the reading process at this stage--that of prediction. The pre-reading stage should also provide whatever language preparation the teacher feels is necessary to enable the students to read and understand the text without being hampered by unfamiliar vocabulary or syntactic structures. Vocabulary work should be done as a discussion with the teacher providing guidance in strategies such as using the context of the word or analysing its morphology in order to guess its meaning.

The while-reading stage is aimed at helping students to understand the content and rhetorical structure or context of the text (Dubin and Bycina 1991). Questions given here could be a combination of literal questions which address the explicit level of understanding, inference questions which address the implicit level of understanding, and applied questions which necessitate relating new ideas to previous knowledge or experiences (Dubin and Bycina 1991). If the teacher feels that it is necessary to do so, these questions can be explained to the students so that they know what to look for when reading the text. An oral class discussion should follow as a comprehension check; alternatively, the questions

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[6]   Yasmine Gooneratne, "Menika" *An Anthology of Modern Writing from Sri Lanka*, ed. R. Obeysekera and C. Fernando. Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1981, pp. 100-101.

could be used as a writing exercise with the teacher providing feedback and correction. Another effective exercise which can be used at this stage is to have students enter information from the text into a graph, flow-chart or other diagram. Apart from supporting reading comprehension, this activity helps to improve the transfer of information across skill areas.

Finally, the post-reading questions should follow once the teacher is certain that the main points of the text have been understood. This third stage is concerned with reviewing the content, working on bottom-up skills such as grammar, vocabulary and discourse features, and whenever possible, to consolidate reading by relating new information to the learner's knowledge, interests and opinions (Dubin and Bycina 1991). Many of the devices introduced at the second stage can be used here as well. Questions requiring the students' personal opinion on the content of the text, the writer's attitude, the characters' behaviour etc. can be included here, on the assumption that at the post-reading stage, the students would have grasped the essence of the text. Dubin and Bycina (1991) recommend pair work or group work at this stage, prior to involving the entire class in a discussion; it must be pointed out, however, that all the activities described below have a certain degree of flexibility that is very advantageous, in that they can be done singly, in pairs, or as group work at the teacher's discretion.

<u>Proposed Lesson Unit</u>

Skill : <u>Reading</u>

Pre-Reading

Help students guess the meanings of the following words from the context by activating schemata of stoning rice, preparing curry paste, pounding flour etc. (vocabulary work)

deft-handed	swirling	reclaiming	cummin
kneading	pestle	mortar	

While-Reading

1. What is the setting of this poem? (literal / inference question)

2. Who is Menika? (inference question)

3. What does Menika look like? (literal question, scanning)

Menika

Deft-handed, swirling rice-grains in clear water,
pouring the white stream from pot to pot
She said:
I would like to go back to the village next week
There is a court case
I am reclaiming my children, two daughters, from their father
He has another woman
Neat-handed, kneading coriander and cummin
on the smooth stone
She said:
My father made the marriage
There were good fields and much fine property
My father inspected the fields, my brother went with him
They all agreed it was a good match
two weeks after the marriage he brought her back to the house
The pestle rising, falling in her practised hands
the grain in the mortar crumbling to powder
She said:
We lived eighteen years in that house
My children with me in one room, she with him in the other
One day a relation of his came in, asking for a measure of rice
I did not think to refuse it
That night he came home drunk, and said I was giving away
            the household goods.
Spreading the grain in the sun to dry
She said:
When he beat me before the neighbours I sent for my father
He came and took me away
When we signed the register at the Police Station
The Sergeant said: What a man is this!
To make such a shameful to-do over a measure of rice!
She looks after my children well, they tell me
But they are daughters, can I allow them to become women
            and far away from me?
On the day of the court case, her skin smoothly powdered,
a crimson sari knotted at her neat waist, her hair
combed into shining coils on her slender neck
She said:
he is a good man
There is no fault in him.

Post-Reading

1.   Can you guess the author's attitude towards Menika? Why/why not? (focus on objectivity in writing)

2.   Discuss the characters of Menika, her father and her husband. (inference)

3.   Would Menika have wanted her children back if they were sons? Why/why not? (inference / personal opinion)

4.   Why do you think Menika calls her husband "a good man" at the end of the poem? (personal opinion)

5.   Do you agree with what Menika says and does in this situation? (personal opinion)

6.   Can you think of a different ending for this story? If you were Menika, what would you do? (personal opinion)

Skill : <u>Grammar</u>

1.   Underline all the Past Tense verbs and the Present Continuous Tense verbs in the first verse of this poem. Discuss with your teacher why the poet changes from the Present Continuous Tense to the Past Tense in the same verse. Now do the same for the second, third, and fourth verses as well.

2.   How many Future Tense verbs can you find? Underline them and discuss them with your teacher.

3.   Write down all the adjectives you can find in this poem.

4.   Now write down all the adverbs that are derived from these adjectives. Note that not every adjective can be changed like this. Discuss the ones that cannot be changed with your teacher.

Skill : Writing

     1.   Write brief character sketches of Menika, her father, and her husband. (reinforcement of post reading activity)

     2.   Write a letter from Menika's father to another relative describing this situation. You should imagine Menika's father's point of view. (guided or free writing activity)

Skill : Speech

     1.   Organise a classroom panel discussion with the following characters :

             Menika, her father, her husband, her husband's mistress, and the Police Sergeant.

     2.   Have a class debate on the topic "Marriages Arranged by Third Parties / Husbands and Brothers Are not Successful."

Although the precise procedures for conducting the activities listed above have not been described, the skeleton given should be sufficient to convey the idea of how an integrated skills lesson unit can be designed around a piece of literature. It is by no means suggested that these are the only activities that can be used with this particular poem. Creativity is an important factor in second language teaching, and it is hoped that the activities given above can be used as a starting point to develop others that are equally effective.

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