

Literature in EEL: A Gateway to a Successful Teaching-Learning Experience by Stimulating Human Psyche

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Abstract

This article examines some key outcomes of researches on the human brain related to language learning in particular; and, then it highlights the role using literary texts can play, while employed as stimuli, for achieving success in the field of EFL. To narrow down further, the aim of this paper is to propose: by implementing literature-based course materials in different teaching methods like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and Cooperative learning (CL), EFL teachers can actually help their learners to learn the language more effectively, as it is more compatible with their brain functions.

Keywords: CA, CL, CLT, EFL, ESL, grounded cognition, interdisciplinary approach, literature-based classroom activity, neuroplasticity, neuroscience, TBLT

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Introduction

Communicative language teaching (CLT) or Communicative Approach (CA) gives importance to communication as both the medium and the crucial objective of the study (Brown, 1994), where the target language is taught by utilizing “authentic texts” (Nuttall, 1996). Cooperative Learning (CL) activities are compatible with the communicative approach; in particular, they also promote authentic use of the language and encourage student-student interaction providing learners more opportunities to practice using the target language (Oxford, 1997). Literature can function as a resource house of authentic pedagogical materials, and this possibility has yet to be unearthed fully by the EFL educators. Learning together with peers and others allows learners to have access to more data or stimuli – that would create a positive response in them as human beings. Kagan has argued that, to a remarkable degree, proper application of cooperative learning principles promote effective learning, where learning becomes brain-friendly learning (Kagan, Robertson, & Kagan, 1995). Instead of getting the sole input from the teacher, if learners can interact with each other in an EFL setting, they can learn the language more meaningfully; and it can be facilitated more when the educators can successfully motivate them with a literature-based course plan, which is pertinent to the target age-group. This motivation to interact and cooperate is a crucial factor in language learning.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) or task-based instruction (TBI), another branch of communicative language teaching (CLT), mainly utilizes practical tasks using the target language (Skehan, 1991). As the name suggests, “task” is the primary tool to execute this teaching method. A “task” is an activity, in which communication is required, that facilitates language-learning. Whereas language teaching approaches tend to be language-centered, learner-centered, or language learning-centered, tasks can be said to be learner-centered or language learning-centered (Kazeroni, 1995). Literary texts, when considered as “tasks” in the context of TBLT, which are meaningful to the students, can reasonably be brain-friendly. This claim can be made as recently significant outcomes of the researches on how human brain functions have been examined, and many of those findings prove that when teaching materials are appealing to the learners, they learn the language more effectively.

In this paper, we, firstly, would look into the challenge that is usually faced by the researchers when an interdisciplinary study like this one is undertaken. Then the researchers will justify the reason why they have chosen to use the term EFL instead of ESL to define their approach towards the target language based on their teaching background. As the researchers are engaged in teaching EFL in a Saudi Arabian university, they are more aware of the EFL scenario there, and most of their research attitudes are grounded on it.

Next, the traditional approaches towards literature will be considered, and the correlation between literature and teaching EFL will be evaluated. After that, we would present the outcomes of some researches that are pertinent to the EFL/ESL pedagogy suggesting that EFL/ESL teachers and program providers should consider the outcome of the researches related to brain functions and its related fields when they teach or design their pedagogical undertakings. Then, we would unearth the potentials literary texts can offer when they are adjusted to the concerned pedagogical strategies. Later in this paper, the researchers are going to show how literary texts, when used as

a resource in a cooperative language learning environment, can stimulate and activate certain brain functions responsible for language learning.

Lastly, this paper concludes by proposing that by incorporating teaching materials based on English literature with CLT, TBLT, and CL approaches, we EFL teachers can generate more effective learning conditions, as this learning process gears towards the brain function.

Why is this study a challenge?

In this paper, we choose to consider several studies on the cognitive processes that go on inside the human brain based on several brain imaging techniques such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Positron Emission Tomography (PET), and Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI). These techniques are purely scientific in nature. On the other hand, the analysis of activities based on literature in different EFL teaching approaches is from humanities background. So, to fulfill the task we have undertaken, we need to take an interdisciplinary approach.

The question appears why a relatively small amount of work has been done in the direction that is proposed here. Whereas, within the sciences or the humanities such studies are problematic, between the sciences and the humanities it gets far more complex. Quality interdisciplinary research is challenging because of the fundamental differences in the nature of study that exist between science and arts. There are such substantial differences in how we learn to think and reason, that it would not be surprising if we fear of being misunderstood or judged by the other community. Most of the time, we, the researchers, do not manage to overcome such copious obstacles to collaboration. The uncertainty with which the humanities often encounter the sciences may also be a factor here:

Given their far greater command of funding and other resources, and the greater ease with which their research can be explained (at a basic level) and justified to government and the public, it might not be difficult to forget that the humanities offer things of value that are not simply overshadowed by all that the sciences can achieve – and furthermore offer them specifically back to the sciences (Burke & Troscianko, 2013, p. 145)

ESL or EFL?

EFL stands for *English as a foreign language*; ESL is *English as a second language*. There is no difference between ESL and EFL where the language itself is concerned, but the difference lies in syllabus content, why and where the language is learned. The term ESL was coined to refer to the teaching of English to speakers of other languages who live in a country where English is an official or essential language, English being notionally their second language. On the other hand, the term EFL refers to the teaching of English to students, who live in a non-English-speaking country and whose first language is not English (Brown, 1994). Cultural content is more critical in an EFL classroom than in the typical ESL classroom (Mitchell, 2016), and this scope for using “cultural content” opens the gateway for using literature in such classes.

EFL in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, for example, English has been perceived by the majority as the most important foreign language. EFL is taught as a preliminary year major for almost all the science, arts, and business subjects. The universities also have English Departments where primary stress is put on

mastering EFL. In the upper levels of the bachelor program, several literature and linguistics courses are offered, the aim of which is to solidify the English language teaching-learning experience. Like many other countries, in Saudi Arabia, EFL/ESL as a discipline emerged after World War II (Smith, 2012). As much attention is given to EFL in Saudi educational institutions like schools and universities, materials based on English literature can enhance the chances of success.

Why Literature?

Literature, being authentic material, is a source of an unmodified language in the classroom and can be proved to be very useful because the skills the learners acquire in dealing with a somewhat tricky or unknown language, can be used outside the class. As literature is motivating and holds high status in many cultures and countries, students can sense a real sense of accomplishment at comprehending a piece of highly respected piece of literature. Also, literary texts are often more stimulating and thereby more engaging than the texts found in coursebooks (Clandfield & Duncan, 2004).

Different Models of Using Literature in EFL Classrooms

There have been various models that suggested using literature as course materials to ESL/EFL students (Carter & Long, 1991) (Lazar, 1993). How the teacher will use the literary texts depend on the model they choose:

- The cultural model considers literary texts as an artifact and basis of information about the target culture. When used as university literature courses, this traditional approach examines the social, political, and historical background, pertinent literary movements, and genres of a text. In this very teacher-centered approach, no specific language work is done on a text.
- A more learner-centered approach, the language model includes Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-based language teaching (TBLT), and Cooperative Learning (CL). The manner of using the language is brought to the attention through a literary text which increases their general awareness of English. Here, the primary focus is on general grammar and vocabulary or stylistic analysis, which involves the close study of the linguistic features of the text.
- Another learner-centered approach, the personal growth model, is process-based, which encourages learners to give their own opinions, feelings, and personal experiences. To make the language more memorable, the immense power of literature is used, and the interaction between the text and the EFL students is encouraged so that they can “make the text their own.”

Why do we, the EFL teachers, consider Brain Function researches?

The answer is: all teachers use strategies; the difference here is that we are proposing to use strategies based on real science, not rumor or mythology (Jensen, 2008), with particular consideration to the use of literary texts as classroom material to add a more humane qualities to this field.

Within this framework, we will consider the brain, more specifically the human brain that houses the cognitive systems, along with the circulation of blood, the systems of vision, motor planning, etc. Along with their role in behavior, the “cognitive organs” enter into activities traditionally regarded as mental: thought, planning, language learning, interpretation, evaluation, and so on (Chomsky, 1968). To assist this study, at first, we will resort to Neurolinguistics, which is a science related to the human brain mechanisms underlying the comprehension, production, and abstract knowledge of the language, be it spoken, signed, or written (neurolinguistics, 2019). Then, as an interdisciplinary approach, this field deals with findings from linguistics, cognitive science, and neurobiology, among others. The researches in brain functions, falling under the purview of neurolinguistics, is simply research on the human brain – how it develops and operates; it is often conducted with several brain imaging techniques such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Positron Emission Tomography (PET), and Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI). The imaging technology has made it possible for us to observe neural activities in the brain (Jensen, 2005). In this paper, the term ‘brain function research’ is conceptualized in a broader sense, encompassing other brain-based disciplines such as biopsychology, neuroscience: which is a study of the nervous system, cognitive neuroscience, psychobiology, and behavioral neuroscience, to name just a few. They all study the human brain; how it relates to apparent behavior and interacts with the environment.

Learning, like any other human activity (e.g., Learning to cook, play piano, etc.), is integrated with our brain activities, and some people are quick in learning EFL and people who are not. A number of researches have been conducted to unearth the reason. For example, some of us think that they are not good at learning another language is because of their poor memory and other reason they are too old to learn another language. Recently, there are efforts to include theories and findings from human brain activity researches to explain the mechanisms of language learning, why there are differences in learning pace; furthermore, these researches give us valuable clues to enhance the process of learning EFL. Using this clue, in this paper, we are going to suggest the connection between using literature in EFL classrooms and successful language learning and thereby see that there are many practical and biological reasons for using literature in the classrooms.

Brain Function Researches – EFL Classrooms – Literature

1.1 Effect of Reading on Broca’s Area, Wernicke Area, and Occipital Lobe

The first person who undertook the study on the relationship between brain activity and speech was Paul Broca (1824-1880), a French physician, anatomist, and anthropologist. He discovered that the area of the brain responsible for speech production is the frontal lobes. The part is now named after him as Broca’s area (Carter, 1999). Karl Wernicke, a German scientist, discovered that there is a specific area of the brain; any damage in this part may cause language impairments. This area is also named after him as the Wernicke area (Carter, 1999). His findings confirm that our ability to learn languages depends on activities in specific areas of the brain. It is believed among language specialists and medical practitioners that the Broca’s area of the brain helps us produce coherent speech; whereas, the Wernicke area helps us process language stimuli and understanding the language (Thadphothon, 2019). The coordinated functions of these two areas result in active language learning.

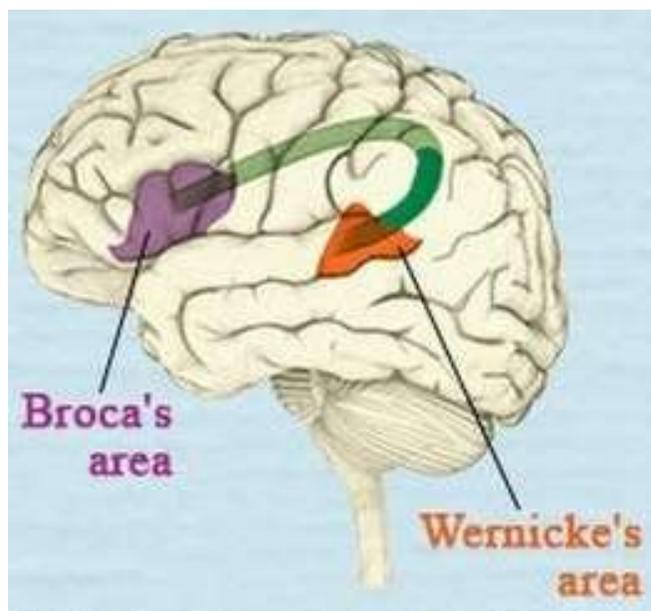


Figure 1: Broca's Area Vs. Wernicke's Area

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/310537336792352096/?lp=true>

The brain is believed to be hard-wired, but plastic and malleable (Genesee, 2000). There are connections made by billions of neurons that send electrical signals to the brain when they are stimulated. In their study, Marcin Szwed and others used fMRI scans on the participants of their research program to weigh and equate their brain function. This scan was done when they responded to visual tasks, oral language, and written language. The occipital lobe of the readers, the visual processing center of their brain, and parietal lobes, which turn letters into words and words into thoughts, were strengthened and developed (Carter, 1999).

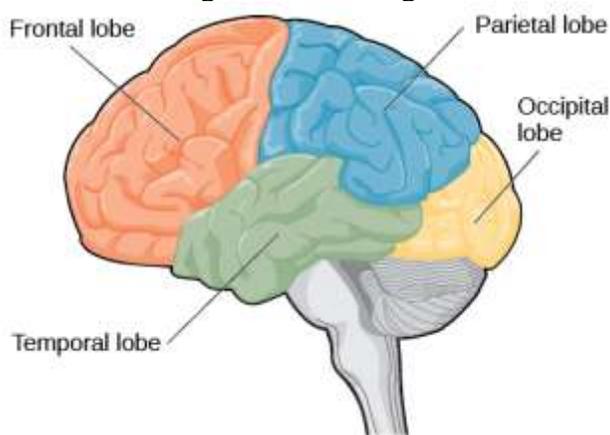


Figure 2: Parietal Lobe and Occipital Lobe

Source: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/waymaker-psychology/chapter/reading-parts-of-the-brain/>

The finding of the research indicates that the readers would have more efficient visual information processing ability, enhanced imagination and creativity, better ability to visualize the future for decision-making and planning. Historically it is seen that the term “Reader” refers to the readers

of literature, as it engages the readers fully, in every possible way, for a more extended period. Students with frequent reading activities improve every aspect of a person's communication skills. The article, "How Reading Increases Your Emotional Intelligence & Brain Function: The Findings of Recent Scientific Studies," explains: "*Neuroscientists theorize that reading 'rewires' areas of the brain responsible for both vision and spoken language.*" Also, in 2009, scientists Timothy Keller and Marcel Just asserted that intense reading rewires the brain and creates new white matter, especially in young children. According to researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, intensive reading exercises can alter brain tissue in positive ways (Keller & Just, 2009).

1.2 Lateralization of brain structures

Roger Sperry's Split Brain Experiments (1959–1968) have assisted in developing awareness about language learning and lateralization. This experiment involved the cutting of the corpus callosum (a group of nerve fibers connecting the two brain hemispheres) and proved that the left and the right brain hemispheres have precise language functions. Therefore, both sides of the brain are required for comprehensive language understanding and use. As language learning process needs to be logical and creative, it involves utilizing the capacity of the whole brain (Lienhard, 2017).

Lateralization of Cerebral Functions

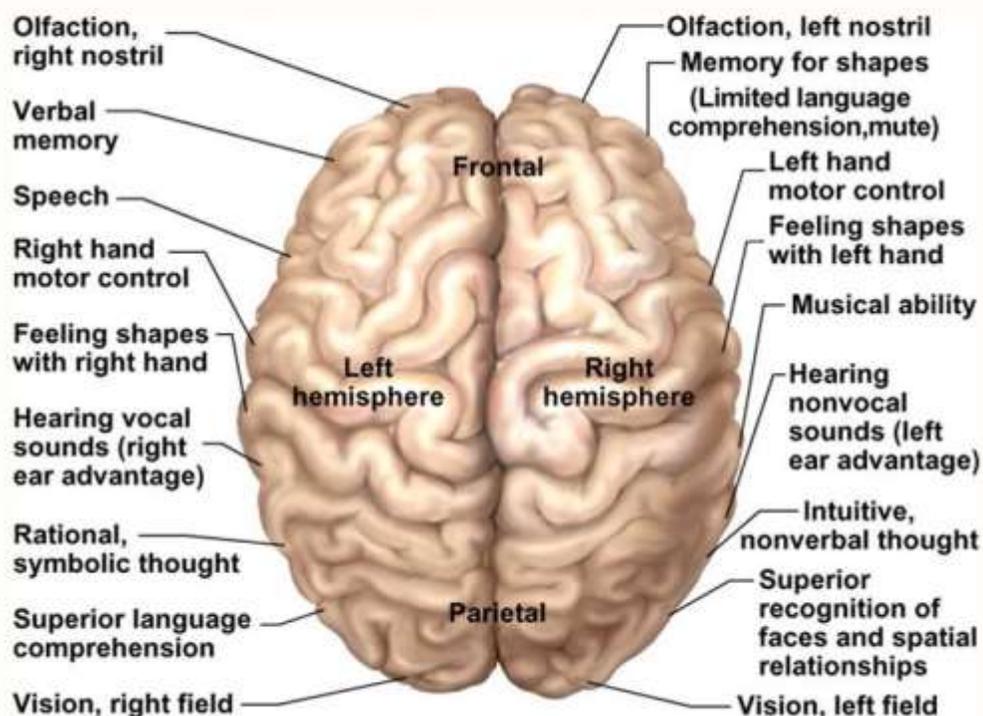


Figure 3: The Left and Right Cerebral Hemispheres

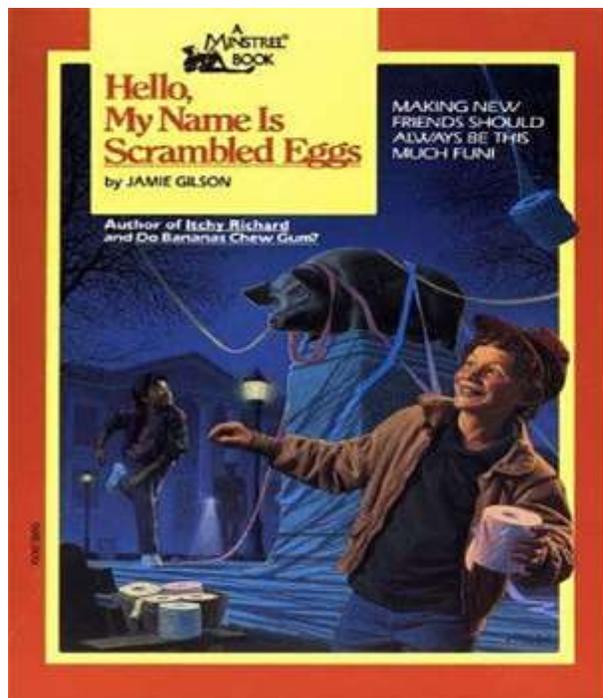
Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/sociopsychotejano/brain-hemispheric-dominance>

CL activities allow students to use both sides; thereby, CL activity is a whole-brain approach to learning; students develop their language skills as well as social skills. CL requires that teachers apply a wide range of classroom activities, which are designed to tap on the ability and potential from both hemispheres of the brain. This requirement is fulfilled in cooperative mind mapping which allows learners to exhibit their creativity as well as their critical thinking skills and it also covers a wide range of group activities and structures. The two hemispheres are inseparably interactive, irrespective of whether a person is dealing with words, mathematics, chemistry, crossword puzzles, music, or art (Caine & Caine, 1990). The brain perceives the world and process information using several parallel pathways. According to Parallel Distributed Processing Model, a sentence – which has phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic properties – is generated by a series of simultaneous interconnection of a multitude of brain cells (Sokolik, 1990).

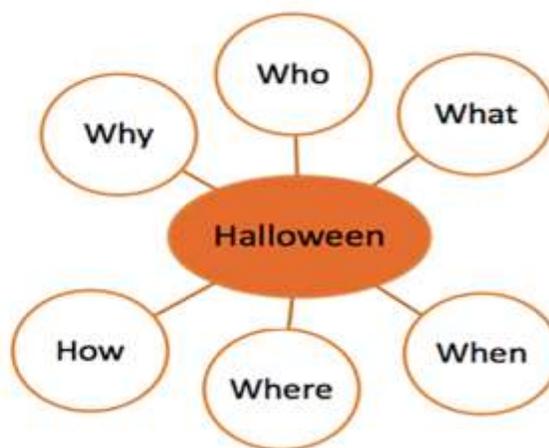
Literary texts traditionally offer the above-mentioned properties extensively and thereby expand language awareness. Asking learners to examine sophisticated or non-standard examples of language (which can usually occur in literary texts) makes them more aware of the norms of language use (Widdowson, 2014). After rigorous encounters with such literary texts, the brain can reasonably be stimulated to produce meaningful, practical sentences.

The following TBL activity in an EFL classroom can be an example to be used to achieve the goal as mentioned above:

Lesson: Using a single piece of literature



What you must know to plan a Halloween party?



Source: Exploiting Literature in Project/Task-Based Learning, by Janet Orr TEAL Services, Arlington, VA

Questions: After reading the book as homework, the students can be asked to complete the chart in the as a classwork activity. What do you must know to plan a Halloween party?

1.3 Brain Wiring Drives Social Interactions

Culture plays a vital role in forming an individual's worldview. Literature is a huge window through which we can have high exposure to different cultures, more specifically to the culture of the target language.

Though much is not known yet about the causal relationship (not just about the correlation) between environmental factors (such as culture or teaching) and patterns of brain adaptation in adulthood (Rastelli, 2018), based on the experiment done by implanting electrodes into the brains of animals Christopher Wanjek hypothesized, "brains likely don't operate in isolation"(Wanjek, 2017, para. 3), it can be argued that both language acquisition and learning are social processes, thereby, brains need social stimuli (Thadphoothon, 2019). Social stimuli influence brains, as Carter has shown that brains get more active in learning when it interacts with others than when alone, reading or listening to a lecture (Carter, 1999). This argument supports group work or CL activities. The existence of mirror neurons in our brain implies that group support and positive interdependence among group members help create a sense of togetherness, which is helpful for L2 learning.

Even in the institutions where the syllabus is externally imposed, and one of the most crucial examination requirements is to meet the deadlines, group-work can be the best solution to attain certain levels of proficiency by whole groups of learners, regardless of their individual aims and abilities. That is why, it can be argued that group-work or cooperative learning can at least allow flexibility in the manner of attainment and, if well organized, increase the speed and efficiency of the process (Long, 1977). Also, humans not only learn by doing something meaningful or from first-hand experience but also from indirect experience, i.e., by observing the natural and social phenomena. Learners as observers can acquire new cognitive skills and patterns of behavior by "observing the performance of other" (Bandura, 1986, p. 49). Social stimuli are abundant in group activities, such as cooperative learning, where teacher talk is reduced, and student-student interaction is increased.

According to Bandura, when learners pay attention to the modeled activities or events, they remember and transform them into their cognitive representational systems (Bandura, 1986). These "modeled activities" could be a performance of a play, recitation of poetry or reading aloud an excerpt from a novel selection, which is often rich in multiple layers of meaning, and can effectively be utilized for discussions and sharing feelings or opinions. By examining values in literary texts related to the world outside the classroom, teachers can encourage learners to develop attitudes towards them, thereby educating the whole person. In an EFL classroom, following activities based on drama can serve this purpose:

- Students can read out the dialogue keeping the characters' distinctive accents (very "foreign" or very "American" or "British"), as directed in the play. This works on

students' awareness of different aspects of pronunciation, i. e. individual sounds and sentence rhythm.

- Students can act out a part of the scene from a drama in groups.
- Resembling a radio program, students can record the scene individually. The teacher will listen to the different recordings in the class. Ask the students to comment on each other's recordings.
- Applying their productive skill, students can write stage directions, including how to deliver lines (e.g., angrily, breathlessly, etc.) next to each character's line of dialogue. Then they read it out loud.
- Students can re-write the scene. They can either modernize it (for example, setting Shakespeare's drama in the context of 2020 AD), or they can set it in a completely different location (for example, Shakespearean characters can be set in the desert of Arabia). Then they read aloud the new version.

Source: "Teaching materials: using literature in the EFL/ ESL classroom" By Lindsay Clandfield

1.4 Neuroplasticity

The term "Neuroplasticity" is used by neuroscientists, which refer to the brain's ability to change anytime during the aging process — negatively or positively (Pallier et al., 2003). In the article "How Experience Changes Brain Plasticity," it is shown that under the right conditions, brain's plasticity can assist minds in flourishing cognitively with remarkable progression (Cherry, 2018), and the right circumstance can be created by the application of literature-based CL activities in an EFL classroom. Often some students prefer learning to speak English than learning grammatical rules. However, they often ignore the fact that with literary content based CLT method, we can view EFL as a holistic approach instead of learning the skills separately. The following sample plan is based on an excerpt or a poem or a short story, which is a combination of the language approach and the personal growth approach. Doing these activities can enhance students' brain plasticity as reading exercise is accompanied by listening, writing, and speaking activities; which is somewhat a holistic approach:

Stage

one

As warmer, after the students are given the title of the literary piece, they can do a short discussion by guessing or brainstorming the vocabulary around that topic.

Stage two

- Pre-teaching complicated words.
- Providing students a number of words from the extract to predict the upcoming situation. For a play, a couple of lines of dialogue can help them to predict about the play.
- Testing comprehension. Ask the students to close the text, and the teacher can read the first bit of the extract at an average speed. At first, students can compare what they have understood in pairs, and after that, they will report back to the teacher. Then they can open the book and read it for themselves.

Using poems

- Students can read each other the poem aloud, checking for each other's pronunciation and rhythm.
- Students can write the probable story behind the poem, for example, who was the poem for? What might be the background story of this poem?
- Discussion can be held about how the issues raised in the poem can relate to the students' lives.

Using extracts from stories or short stories

- After the students read an excerpt from the story, ask them to guess and write what will happen next, or what happened just before.
- Students can personalize the text by talking about if anything similar has happened to them.
- Students can do role-play in pairs choosing two characters in the book.

Source: "Teaching materials: using literature in the EFL/ ESL classroom" (Clandfield & Duncan, 2004).

1.5 Grounded cognition and Reading Literary texts

The rigorous perceptual exercise, which includes reading acquisition, enhances primary visual capabilities and phonological processing abilities. This finding proves that the effect of literacy on the visual system is more extensive than initially thought (Szwed, Ventura, Querido, Cohen, & Dehaene, 2012). Neurobiological research using fMRI has begun to identify heightened connectivity in the left temporal cortex and the central sulcus, the primary sensory-motor region. This area of the brain is associated with the receptivity for language.

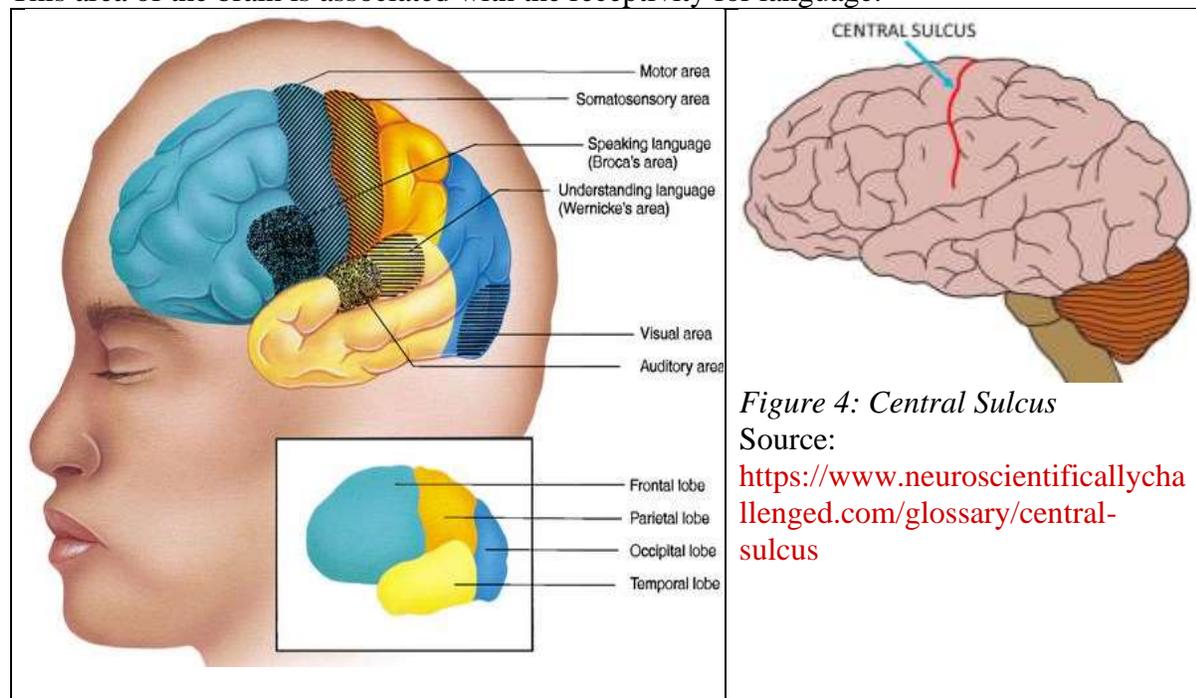


Figure 3: Left-temporal Cortex

Source: <https://open.buffer.com/reading-fiction/left-temporal-cortex/>.

The primary function of the left-temporal cortex is to **control sight and sound processing** and language usage. It also helps us to make sense of the words that we read and hear. When we read with profound attention, neurons here make representations of sensation in Central sulcus to create reflex form the body – this phenomenon is identified as grounded cognition (Barsalou, 2008). It resembles the phenomenon, for instance, just thinking about running, can activate the neurons associated with the physical act of running. Generally, several people can recall reading at least one cherished story that they say changed their life (Clark, 2013). Researchers at Emory University have detected the biological traces reflecting such reading experiences. Their finding is: reading a novel may cause changes in resting-state connectivity of the brain that persist. Neuroscientist Gregory Berns says, “Stories shape our lives and in some cases help define a person. We want to understand how stories get into your brain, and what they do to it” (Berns, Blaine, Prietula, & Pye, 2013). The study concluded that:

“becoming engrossed in a novel enhances the brain’s resting-state connectivity and overall function. Specifically, reading fiction improves the reader’s ability to put themselves in another’s shoes and flex imagination in a way similar to the visualization of a muscle memory in sports.(p. 590)

1.6 Increasing the capacity of the working memory

Reading, a neurobiologically challenging activity, is the best kind of neural workout for our brain as it improves memory. Several brain functions like visual and auditory processes, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension get involved while reading. According to a recent research at Haskins Laboratories for the Science of the Spoken and Written Word, reading gives the brain more time to stop, think, process, and imagine the narrative. It thereby helps keep our memory toned much in the way lifting weights keeps our muscles healthy. Reading literature and processing what is written, from the letters to the words to the sentences to the stories themselves, boosts brain activity. Also, we cannot ignore the importance of acquiring communicative abilities through EFL classrooms as this is one of the main goals of such classess. So “an emphasis on communicative competence as the goal of language learning as well as a focus on meaning and context seem to be the common denominators of most syllabi in language courses” (Passey, Rubio, & Campbell, 2004, p. 158). The above-mentioned goal can be achieved through literature-based tasks, which can stimulate brain function.

Scientists at the University of California, Berkeley combined functional MRI with eye-tracking. While being in an MRI scanner, volunteers read text on a screen, and the eye-tracking device detects which word they are paying attention to at that time. They call this new method fixation-related, or "FIRE" fMRI. This technology was applied to test ideas about how words are represented in the brain. From the experimentation, they hold the view that “words are represented by connections to the real world: What does it look like, how do I handle it, how does it make me feel, reflected in brain areas for vision, touch, emotion and so on” (Fell & Nikos, 2016). Reading literary texts can create mental pictures in a better way than reading non-fictional texts because traditionally, fictional texts can offer a context that involves the reader wholeheartedly, evoking readers’ imagination, which makes the brain more active.

Another group of scientists at the University of California, Berkeley, found that not being in the habit of reading can lower the levels of beta-amyloid, a brain protein, which keeps the mind cognitively stimulated. Reading improves overall mental flexibility, an essential component to developing and retaining memory (Yang, 2015). To stimulate this brain activity, we can do the following literature classroom activity:

- A short story / a section from a novel / a poem can be read aloud to the students with proper intonation so that they can get emotionally involved with the text. If the piece of literature or poetry is remarkably evocative, it will be able to attract the students' attention. Then the learners can read it to themselves. As one of the goals of exploiting literature in an EFL classroom is to create interest with pleasure towards learning the language, it is crucial to let the students approach a piece of literature without providing them any specified task. At this stage, they can simply read it. A task at every stage of a lesson can kill students' pleasure.
- After the first reading, the learners can be asked to explain specific keywords of the text. Then, in a group, students can discuss what they have understood. Teacher can ask more subjective questions (e.g.. Why do you think the main character said this?).

Source: "Teaching materials: using literature in the EFL/ ESL classroom" (Clandfield & Duncan, 2004)

1.7 Reader's attention span increase

Reading narrative stories not only improves memory but also enhances attention spans. As most of the books follow a sequential narrative style — a beginning, middle, and end — reading them stimulates the brain to think following the same sequence, and thus, the readers invest more time in forming a story rather than focusing on every detail.

According to neuroscientist Susan Greenfield, when we read a novel, we read in a linear motion and slow pace that enables us to think about the information that lies ahead (Greenfield, 2015). Brain's capacity for retaining longer attention spans can be enhanced through the process of taking time to process the novel's story, pondering over the intricate layers of the story, and putting together different parts of the story.

Tim Bowen and Jonathan Marks, in their book *Inside Teaching*, recommend the following ideas for EFL classrooms:

- Brief group discussions in the classroom can be held on what learners are reading.
- Learners can describe their favorite book in a persuasive manner to encourage other students to read it.
- A short novel or a selection from a novel can be selected, which has been recently used for a film or TV series adaptation with which the students are acquainted. The learners can be asked to describe the differences with minute details that they notice between the original novel and visual art form. This activity aims to give the learners an intensive exercise to hold their attention for a longer time (Bowen & Marks, 1994).

1.8 Vocabulary Expansion

There is a relationship between word-reading skill and vocabulary building. Academic or social opportunities of an individual can be affected by individual abilities in vocabulary development. The study proposed that “individual differences in word reading could affect the rate of vocabulary growth, mediated by the amount of reading experience, a process referred to as a *Matthew effect*” (Stanovich, 2009, p. 36). A scientific study proves the importance of reading to the process of vocabulary acquisition in children and adolescents (Duff, Tomblin, & Catts, 2015). From the above studies, the researchers could conclude: new words for the students get easier to retain when these words are put in context, and the effect of “context” can be enhanced when it is presented as literary texts as they offer stories involving emotions. The following TBLT classroom activities can stimulate multiple brain functions to facilitate the learning of different aspects of EFL, including new vocabulary:

Two Pieces of Literature: *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* by William Wordsworth. The first and last stanzas are chosen for this task and *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost.

- **Pre-task:** In pairs, read the selections that describe a particular season. Find words or sentences where the author uses the senses.
- **Main Task:** (Use the selected poems) First, think about that season using all of your senses. Write descriptive words in the chart. Second, think about any peculiar characteristics of this season that are different from other seasons. Write them down.

A Five Senses Chart by	
Sense	Example (Quote the author's words in the text)
Sight 	
Hearing 	
Touch 	
Taste 	
Smell 	

From McCloskey, ML., Stack, L., Orr, J., and Gleckov, G. (2012). American Themes. U.S. Department of State.

The following activities can enhance EFL students' understanding the language by enriching their knowledge of English vocabulary:

- The EFL instructor can focus on critical words in the text. Students' understanding of the unfamiliar words from context can be checked. Clues can be given to help.
- The instructor can attract students' attention to the author's some aspects of style, which includes non-standard forms of language. This activity can be an effective way to understand the standard form as a contrast will be created between the non-standard and standard forms of language.
- The instructor can attract students' attention towards the chunks of words that the author used in the literary text. Usually, literary texts are rich in collocative use of words.
- Students can be asked to find out the connotation of the author's word selection. For example, if the text says, "Bob is bullheaded sometimes, but he always gets the job done.," what does that say about the author's impression of the man? Would there be any difference if it was written as, "Bob is resilient and always gets the job done."?

Source: "Teaching materials: using literature in the EFL/ ESL classroom" (Clandfield & Duncan, 2004)

Conclusion

Human being's ability to learn languages is innate. However, when it comes to learning EFL, this learning can be facilitated by being aware of how our brain functions and applying these function friendly applications in the FEL classrooms. In this paper, we have claimed that many of our present teaching strategies and methods such as CL, CLT, or TBLT, in many aspects, are brain-compatible, and this effect can be maximized while they are adjusted with literature-based materials. We have also discussed why cooperative learning activities based on literature are brain-compatible. As brains are social organisms, they need social stimuli, and thus, literature-based CLT, CL, or TBLT course plan can enhance EFL learning and teaching experience to a great extent. Though research on brain functionality in the context of EFL is still in its rudimentary level, a growing number of researchers are taking an interest in it and will continue to do so, affecting the role of the educators.

Also, while using literature in an EFL classroom, educators must be aware of the age-group, cultural, and contextual compatibility of the literature selection used. Any major glitch in it may cause the entire plan to collapse.

Further research

Further research is highly recommended to fully discover the potential and power of literature when used as EFL classroom material. It is highly recommended that interested researchers might carry out empirical research on:

"A measurement of the efficacy of literature-based TBL classroom materials in an EFL classroom in King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia."

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