Literature in Language Education
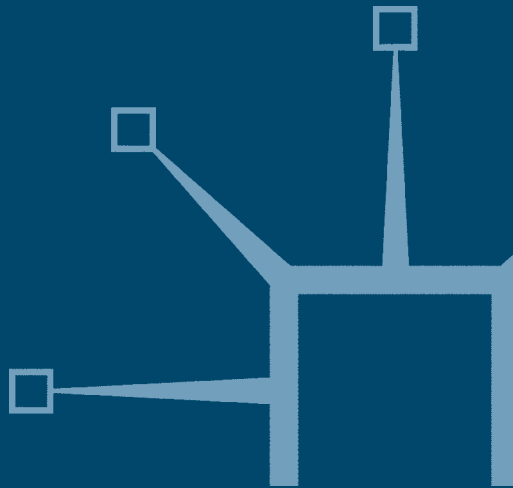
Geoff Hall

Literature in Language Education

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Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics

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Literature in Language Education

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Centre for Applied Language Studies
University of Wales Swansea

In memoriam D.H.C.H., Q.M.H.

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General Editors' Preface

Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics is an international book series from Palgrave Macmillan which brings together leading researchers and teachers in Applied Linguistics to provide readers with the knowledge and tools they need to undertake their own practice-related research. Books in the series are designed for students and researchers in Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Language Education and related subject areas, and for language professionals keen to extend their research experience.

Every book in this innovative series is designed to be user-friendly, with clear illustrations and accessible style. The quotations and definitions of key concepts that punctuate the main text are intended to ensure that many, often competing, voices are heard. Each book presents a concise historical and conceptual overview of its chosen field, identifying many lines of enquiry and findings, but also gaps and disagreements. It provides readers with an overall framework for further examination of how research and practice inform each other, and how practitioners can develop their own problem-based research.

The focus throughout is on exploring the relationship between research and practice in Applied Linguistics. How far can research provide answers to the questions and issues that arise in practice? Can research questions that arise and are examined in very specific circumstances be informed by, and inform, the global body of research and practice? What different kinds of information can be obtained from different research methodologies? How should we make a selection between the options available, and how far are different methods compatible with each other? How can the results of research be turned into practical action?

The books in this series identify some of the key researchable areas in the field and provide workable examples of research projects, backed up by details of appropriate research tools and resources. Case studies and exemplars of research and practice are drawn on throughout the books. References to key institutions, individual research lists, journals and professional organizations provide starting points for gathering information and embarking on research. The books also include annotated lists of key works in the field for further study.

The overall objective of the series is to illustrate the message that in Applied Linguistics there can be no good professional practice that isn't based on good research, and there can be no good research that isn't informed by practice.

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Acknowledgements

Introduction: Literature as Discourse

'Literature is dead. Long live writing.'
            (Colin MacCabe, Inaugural Professorial Lecture, 1983)

'There is nothing outside the text' [Il n'y a pas de hors-texte].
                                                  (Derrrida 1976)

This book offers an account of existing research and practice, and aims to stimulate further research and informed pedagogic innovation in the field of literature and language teaching, with special but not exclusive reference to foreign language studies. Colin MacCabe's pronouncement was no doubt somewhat premature, and more specific: I have pruned 'English' and 'in English' from either end of the quotation. Jacques Derrida deliberately overstates the case too. Nevertheless, this book in its present form has been made possible by the historical dominance and later removal of English Literature from its privileged central educational position in favour of a more open and relativistic, linguistically inspired image of writing(s), a 'plurality of writings' (MacCabe 1984), a movement in which MacCabe himself featured notoriously in 1983, before – prefiguring one argument of this book – moving from literature into cultural studies as Director of the British Film Institute. Such a move was prepared by Derrida and others, taking various linguistic perspectives on text, 'literary' or otherwise, the educational implications of which are still being elaborated here and elsewhere. The key development was to see literary text as best studied against the background of other texts, and all texts as socially situated. Thus 'Literature into cultural studies' arguments are central to reviews of the field offered by Easthope 1991 (viewed more positively) and Bergonzi 1990 (more negatively). Eagleton (1983/1996), the best-selling introduction to literary studies ever, argues similarly for the necessary transmutation of literary studies into 'rhetoric'. A key feature of this linguistically inspired shift has been the notion of *discourse* which is central to Chapter 1, and therefore to the whole book. A salient feature of literature has always been that its

material existence is linguistic. More recently, commentators and educators have come to see the value of a more functional, less abstract view of language as situated social action, language in use, or *discourse*, in reading, understanding and writing creatively. Discourse is '*how* it is said' and 'how it is *read*', and the contexts in which language is used and processed, both immediate, linguistic, and in wider social and cultural terms, explain how meanings arise between language users. These contexts, so far as literature is concerned, are very often educational. Frye representatively argues for the need to see texts as in dialogue with each other and with their readers' developing experience:

Quote. I.1   Frye on literature as discourse

Our literary universe has expanded into a verbal universe . . . Every teacher of literature should realize that literary experience is only the visible tip of the verbal iceberg: below it is a subliminal area of rhetorical response, addressed by advertising, social assumptions, and casual conversation, that literature as such, on however popular a level of movie or television or comic book, can hardly reach. What confronts the teacher of literature is the student's whole verbal experience, including this subliterary nine-tenths of it.

(Frye, quoted in Todorov 1990: 11, 12)

That such ideas have been able to develop and appeal to educational practitioners was a result of the changing nature of education, society and the world at the end of the twentieth century as much as any autonomously generated advances within the literature discipline itself. Literature – particularly English literature – traditionally held a central and privileged place in language teaching, now often viewed as a kind of 'Inner Circle' attempt by England and the USA to dominate norms and values (compare Kachru 1992; Kramsch and Kramsch 2000; Chapter 2 below). In some quarters this has resulted in a permanent suspicion towards literature as communicative language teaching syllabuses were elaborated, with stress on practical oral communication rather than reading and grammar translation. Now, however, a more democratic and pluralist agenda is being elaborated on many educational sites, including the study of postcolonial literatures, literatures of diaspora and literatures in English (as opposed to English Literature) and generally a wider variety of text types, complemented by more critical reviews of canonical 'Eng. Lit.'. At the same time, foreign language teaching is coming to see more clearly the need for learners to engage meaningfully with demanding and relevant extended texts, and the inseparability of language and cultural issues. I will argue (notably in Chapter 1) that literary texts are linguistically less distinctive and unrepresentative of the wider language than has traditionally been claimed. Thus

there are linguistic arguments for the study of literature, and wider humanistic and critical educational arguments too.

Quote I.2   Literature in language education

The study of literature and language could be an opportunity to understand and encourage an even more open and multicultural society.
(Eaglestone 2000: 110)

Why can't we approach literature, culture, and language as naturally intertwined? If we do not integrate civilization, literature and language in a concerted way, we will get only a veneer of language, literary or cultural appreciation.
(Barnett 1991)

Such a reformulated 'Literature' can and should continue to hold a central place in language teaching, to the mutual inter-illumination of literature, language and cultural understandings. This ambitious programme is to be achieved by a generous expansion of the notions of both literature and language which can take the production, distribution and workings of all types of texts and discourses as its remit (not artificially restricted, either, to the *written* word). In sum, specialised and limited literary study can be taken to more comprehensive levels:

> Poetics will give way to the theory of discourse, and the analysis of its genres.
> (Todorov 1990: 12)

This book, then, attempts an integration of literary and linguistic studies in a full awareness of the historical tensions between what have often been perceived as two distinct fields, 'language' and 'literature', each seeming to have little to say to the other. Historically, this could be labelled as swings between more analytic-stylistic 'philological' and more intuitive 'literary critical' approaches to literary text in classrooms, or as text-centred (Chapter 1) and then reader-centred (Chapter 3) approaches. To the unreflecting linguist, literary writing or communication is a minor and peripheral area of élite writing practices (with writing in any case secondary to speech) inexplicably or inexcusably prominent in many state educational curricula. The linguist habitually cringes at the uninformed asides on language and language use of the literary critic. On the other hand, for the teacher or scholar of literature, linguistics evokes an image of futile philological endeavour, characteristically demonstrating insensitive incomprehension of the cultural significance of texts, or at best using hopelessly top heavy explicatory systems and jargon to demonstrate what 'any sensitive' reader could already have seen for themselves, though admitting

that students often cannot. Language is a problem and a site of research for the linguist. Traditionally, it is barely perceived except impressionistically and selectively, where convenient for argument, by the literary critic. Literature teachers have seen little need for research on the teaching of literature, while language teachers have researched language teaching but hardly considered literature in language teaching perspectives. But both literature and linguistics have needed to move on.

Quotes I.3   Studying literary discourse

Modern linguistics constituted itself by ignoring questions of history and value . . . where it is a question of the relation of written texts to speech and to other written texts, modern linguistics has little to say . . . linguistics does not address our questions . . . [but] the study of language and that of literature are inextricably intertwined . . .

   [What is needed] rhetoric, discourse studies . . . intention and the context of utterance in the analysis of language.
(MacCabe 1984)

A sentence is a unit belonging to language, and to the linguist. A sentence is a combination of possible words, not a concrete utterance . . . Discourse is not made up of sentences, but of uttered sentences, or, more succinctly, of utterances. Now the interpretation of an utterance is determined, on the one hand, by the sentence that is uttered, and on the other hand by the process of enunciation of that sentence. That enunciation process includes a speaker who utters, an addressee to whom the utterance is directed, a time and a place, a discourse that precedes and one that follows, in short, an enunciatory context.
(Todorov 1990: 16)

Linguistics, like literature, spent much of the twentieth century searching for its own independent academic respectability and identity. Linguistics in particular, as the less popular and successful of the two, often opted for positivism, modest empirically verifiable claims and an inward looking stance, though we should note affordances for co-operation suggested by functionalism (Prague School, Hallliday), sketched below, long before the dramatic burgeoning of various forms of discourse analysis. Both disciplines, linguistics and literature, are now in a condition, for their own reasons, to make larger, more symbiotic, and more interesting claims on more people's attention. This book, with its practical and pedagogical agenda, is part of such a movement to larger and better integrated claims.

   The key terms of this larger claim, as the following chapters argue, are Language, Literature, Readers and Culture, to be explored through the prism of Discourse. The study of pragmatics, intertextuality, representation and the like, which MacCabe called for nearly twenty years ago, are now thriving. Sociolinguistics, corpus studies and discourse analysis have added significantly to our understanding of actual language use. More

specifically still, Todorov and others have made available to us the works of Bakhtin and the Bakhtin circle on language and literary pragmatics ('Dialogics', section 1.4 below). In just such a spirit, this book aims to contribute to and extend an ongoing dialogue of literature, language, educators and students.

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Part 1
Language, Literature and Education

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1
Literary Language and Ordinary Language

Does literature have a language of its own, perhaps rather unrepresentative of, or rather different from, ordinary language (e.g. old-fashioned, obscure, pretentious, generally 'difficult')? The simple answer to this old question is no, there is nothing uniquely different about the language of literature. But a fuller answer will reveal why the language to be found in literary texts is often particularly interesting for language learners. Of the three broad areas surveyed in Part 1, culture and curriculum (Chapter 2), reading of literature (Chapter 3) and the language of literature (this chapter), research to date has told us most about the language of literature. This is a well-researched area, and some issues and conclusions are already relatively well defined, though ongoing research, particularly in corpus linguistics, is also opening up fascinating new dimensions of the topic.

- there is no clear and obvious literary/non-literary divide to be defined on strictly linguistic principles;
- literary language cuts across dichotomies like spoken/ written (oral/ literate) and formal/ informal;
- creativity may be a larger category than the literary, and with more explanatory power across both literary and more everyday discourses;
- it is now recognised that discourse types such as *metaphor* or *narrative* are central to all language use, whether literary, professional or more everyday spoken interactions;
- literature, especially modern literature, is a kind of writing unusually, perhaps distinctively, tolerant of linguistic variety, including incorporation of many features of spoken language.

This chapter reports five influential areas of research into literary language:

- 'literariness' in Russian, Czech and other 'Formalist' writings;
- oracy and literacy, and variety, including corpus linguistic findings;
- linguistic creativity: metaphor, idiom and formulaicity;

- the study of narrative;
- dialogics: literature as discourse (language in use).

Paradoxically, the study of literary language has indirectly provoked a better understanding of language and language use as a whole, just as diverse areas of descriptive linguistics, cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis have unexpectedly shown us the pervasively poetic and creative nature of everyday language use. Far from a peripheral concern, in sum, language used in literature is in many ways central to understanding language and language use in more general terms. Literature is made of, from and with ordinary language, which is itself already surprisingly literary. In so far as literature exists as an identifiable *linguistic* phenomenon, independent of readers and contexts of reading (Chapters 2 and 3), 'literariness' is a matter of degree rather than kind:

Quote 1.1   Literary language

Features of language use more normally associated with literary contexts are found in what are conventionally thought of as non-literary contexts. It is for this reason that the term literariness is preferred to any term which suggests an absolute division between literary and non-literary. It is, in our view, more accurate to speak of degrees of literariness in language use.
(Carter and Nash 1990: 18; also quoted and discussed in Verdonk 2002)

Common sense nevertheless traditionally opposes a stereotype of 'literary' language to ordinary language. Literary language in this view is flowery (or, more positively, 'elevated'), unusually figurative, often old-fashioned and difficult to understand, and indirect (for example, 'symbolic'); all in all totally unlike the language we use and encounter in everyday life. Our prototype of literary language is perhaps obscure modernist poetry. Where everyday language is used to exchange information, we tend to think, literary language has designs on our souls and deals with metaphysical ideas or ethical dilemmas. Readers and teachers of literature will recognise a limited validity to these kinds of charges. Those who resist the introduction of literary texts into language learning classrooms have often relied on such character-isations of literary language, as have those who wish to preserve their own literary turf. Those who advocate literature in language classrooms need to be able to offer an informed response to these charges of linguistic irrelevance and inappropriate difficulty.

In practice, as we shall see, research has found it difficult to identify any clear boundaries between literary and non-literary uses of language, or to catalogue any definitive list of distinguishing features. Although some tendencies undoubtedly emerge from linguistic investigations into the language of literary texts, even these do not quite conform to the stereotype with which

we began. Indeed a provocative formulation of the research reviewed in this chapter could be the surprising degree of literariness of the ordinary, and the equally pervasive ordinariness of the literary, particularly in the modern period. (Compare conclusions of Mukařovsky 1964; Carter 1999.) Most crucially for the language teacher, it could be that the language of literature is noticeably different in that it is typically more interesting and varied and *representative* than the language of dreamed-up dialogues in chemists' shops or reprinted AIDS leaflets, as found in many of best intentioned classrooms today. But these are matters for empirical investigation.

Quote 1.2   Literary language as discourse

...by raising these questions about the notion of literature, I have been taking for granted the existence of another coherent notion, that of 'nonliterature'. Perhaps we need to begin by questioning this notion.'
(Todorov 1990: 9)

A definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world.
(Williams 1977)

1.1   The language of literature: Formalist approaches

Traditional views of the language of literature in the Anglo-American context derive from Romanticism via New Criticism, and typically characterise literature as 'the best that is known and thought in the world', in Arnold's well-known formula, and therefore an appropriate model for students to revere, if not aspire to. Such a rationale lies behind the traditional modern foreign languages curriculum which culminates in the study of literature, with the implication that the literary classics represent in some sense 'the best' uses of the language to date.

Key figure 1

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) Poet, from the 1870s a man of letters, perhaps the first important 'literary critic', much concerned to establish standards and values for literary reading, as opposed to 'Philistinism'. Arnold was also Senior Inspector of Schools (1870), later Chief Inspector of Schools (1884), and what he saw in his professional visits convinced him of the importance of literature, particularly in an age when conventional Christianity was losing its hold on the urban masses of the Victorian cities. Poetry, for Arnold, would represent alternative and better values than those that surround most of us most of the time, 'a criticism of life'. His key work is *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).
  Some of these ideas are pursued in Chapter 2.

Concept 1.1   New Criticism

New Criticism: a generic label given (after Ransom's 1941 book of that name) to the dominant critical and pedagogical approaches to literature for most of the twentieth century and beyond. Reacting against the reduction of the meaning of literary texts to the biography and intentions of the author, or to historical contexts, or to the responses of readers, New Critics like Eliot (1951), Richards (1929), Brooks (1947) or Wimsatt and Beardsley (1954) insisted on 'close reading' of the words of the poem itself. Value was assigned to the literary text to the degree that ambiguities, paradoxes and ironies were structurally posed and resolved in the language of the poem itself. The language of poetry was opposed to the referential language of science or of logic. A poem, in this view, represents a unique experience, and is not translatable or generalisable into other terms (Brooks, 'The Heresy of Paraphrase'). 'A poem should not mean but be', in MacLeish's famously self-contradictory poetic pronouncement.

See Abrams (1998); Drabble (2000); *New Princeton Encyclopedia*. Robey (1986) is one of the best discussions.

In established models, literature is viewed as complex, demanding, stretching the resources of the language to its limits. It is difficult to avoid clichés in representing this kind of perspective, though such an idea also anticipates the discussion of more rigorous Formalist ideas in what follows. 'In major literary works we have the fullest use of language'; Literature is 'the supreme creative act of language' (F. R. Leavis, Cambridge Professor of English and a key founder of literary studies in the UK quoted in the context of a useful discussion of formalist approaches by Birch 1989: 44, 51). Poetry, for such critics, is found in writings like those of the Victorian Hopkins. But is all literary language really this difficult? How typical is such poetry?

> I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin,
> dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
> Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
> High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
> In his ecstasy!
>
> (Hopkins 1990: 144. Poem 120. Simplified typography)

Jakobson (not coincidentally a great admirer of Hopkins' poetry) notoriously described poetry as 'organised violence committed on ordinary speech', at three distinct linguistic levels:

- sound-structure (alliteration, assonance, rhyme, metre);
- choice of words (metaphor, archaism, variety); and
- combination of words (unusual collocations, inverted word order, marked parallelisms, ellipsis, etc.).

(see discussion in Pope 2002: 89; see also Leech 1969)

I return to Jakobson's work later, but certainly the extract from Hopkins would seem to meet this description. Other modern 'formalists' or 'textualists' – as opposed to '*con*textualists' – include Bradford (1993, 1997) and Fabb (1997). Certainly, one feature of at least some literary writing is an unusually effective deployment of language, though it may not be the defining feature such commentators would wish for, and in any case, one would need to ask, 'effective' *for who*? noting the variety of response to any given utterance in art as in life. (Compare Chapter 3 below.) The query is, however, elided in arguing for the value of writers who use ordinary language in extraordinary ways. Taken to logical extremes, the Formalist position becomes untenably mystical. A critical discourse analyst would wish to probe who is exactly is doing the 'isolating' in my next quotation, and why:

Quote 1.3   Poetic language

The poem isolates itself, so to speak, from its context in ordinary experience to take on a separate, unique and indestructible existence of its own – independent not only of our ordinary experience, but also of its own separate constituents of sense and sound.
(Reeves 1956, quoted in Birch 1989: 76)

The attention to the 'words on the page', which was the slogan of New Criticism, was importantly prefigured in the first important historical attempts to identify and methodically describe the 'literariness' of literary language by the so-called 'Russian Formalists' in the early twentieth century. Generally these writers, too, accepted the idea of 'poetry', particularly modern or modernist poetry as the highest and so most typical form of literature.

Concept 1.2   Russian Formalism

Russian Formalism: an approximate label for publications deriving from members of the Moscow Linguistic Circle (started 1915) and Opojaz (The Society for the Study of Poetic Language). Prominent members included Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovsky, Boris Eikhenbaum, Tomashevsky and Tynyanov. Jakobson continued his work from the 1930s in Prague, then emigrating with other members of the Prague Circle such as Rene Wellek, to the USA, where they had a direct influence on New Critical thinking, including the idea of the importance of the 'structure' of a literary work (see Galan 1985; Thompson 1971).

We should pause here to note at the outset a certain circularity in the Formalist programme. 'Literature' (more typically 'Poetry') is defined as writing with dense manifestations of 'literary/poetic features'. The 'dominant' feature of a poem is that it draws the reader's attention to the language it uses, the forms (hence 'formalism'). Predictably, therefore, for example, Shklovsky had little or little good to say about realist novels, because they are less literary (less 'literariness' features), even though many readers would want to claim (say) *Middlemarch* as a great work of literature.

Consideration of any discussion of 'literary language' always needs to ask which particular body of that amorphous notion 'literature' is being privileged for analytical purposes, which writers, which works. I return in section 1.2 and elsewhere to this need for historical and cultural perspectives in considering 'the' language of 'literature'. It is the need for this kind of contextualisation that prompts me to describe literature under the rubric of 'discourse' in this section and book as a whole, and finally to mistrust, of whatever limited use it undoubtedly is, the kind of intrinsic (anti-contextualist) formalist approaches to literature described here.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of the Russian Revolution and of the new scientific twentieth century, the Formalists sought to put the study of literature on a firm foundation by establishing what literature actually was (there is still little agreement over this) and its distinguishing features, in other words, to identify in what the 'literariness' of the object of study 'literature' might consist. The answer was found to lie in a conjunction of psychological response and the use of language which prompted such acts of attention to particular language features. Here we find too an early characterisation of literary language as opposed to ordinary everyday language. The Formalists took a functional view, asking what was literature 'for'? The answer given by Shklovsky and his colleagues was that the purpose of literature was to 'defamiliarise' our everyday world, to make a reader perceive afresh the phenomenal and social world around. Cook (1994) offers a more modern version of the idea, informed by cognitive psychology. Literary text worked, it was proposed, by making a reader halt and ponder over the unusual language it used, which 'deviates' from that found in more everyday contexts, which the Formalists called 'practical language'. Literature in this view consists of special uses of language. The idea that what distinguished literary language was that it was carefully pondered and constructed by the literary writer, and consequently, often, by the reader too, remains influential, and can be shown to be the case in many instances.

'People who live by the sea no longer hear the waves,' Shklovsky observes in 'Art as Technique' (1917), often taken as a manifesto for Formalism, and widely reprinted (e.g. in Rice and Waugh 2001). Art should 'de-automatise' or 'de-habitualise', especially in the modern world.

Quote 1.4   Habitualisation and defamiliarisation

Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife and the fear of war. 'If the whole complex lives of many people go on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been.' And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*
(Shklovsky, in Lemon and Reis 1965: 12; emphases in the original)

Ideas of noticing and prolonged perception will be familiar and attractive to those interested in second language acquisition research (compare Schmidt 1990; Ellis 1993). Readers of literature, as we shall see in Part 2, particularly second language readers, do indeed pause longer over words and remember surface forms better than 'ordinary' readers of other kinds of writing. The Formalists were right to suggest that *some* poetry at least 'foregrounds' utterances in the consciousnesses of (some) readers and audiences, making them more aware of the linguistic 'devices' which are communicating the literary idea, whether creative metaphor, unusual syntax or word order ('deviance') or marked repetitions or 'parallelisms', or whatever other device calls attention to the form itself. The Czech Formalists in the 'Prague School' developed and extended the Russian Formalists' insights. For Mukařovsky, poetic language aims at 'the maximum of foregrounding', that is, 'the aesthetically intentional distortion of linguistic components'. Similarly Shklovsky had written: 'Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important' (1917).

Quote 1.5   Poetic language

In poetic language foregrounding achieves maximum intensity to the extent of pushing communication into the background as the objective of expression, and of being used for its own sake; it is not used in the services of communication, but in order to place in the foreground the act of expression, the act of speech itself.
(Mukařovsky, quoted in Carter 1994: 2247)

In such a perspective, the language is more important than the content. This seems to overstate a good case, since for many 'what' is said is as important as how it is said. In perhaps the most well-known development of such Formalist ideas, which brought Formalism to the attention of New Criticism in the USA and UK, Jakobson (1960) proposed that the dominant focus in poetic communication is on the form of the message itself. Thus

'I like Ike', though not in the end poetry because of its dominant 'persuasive' function in political life, holds our attention as a presidential campaign button because of the foregrounded, 'poetic' sound effects, which are *deviant*, but also *parallel*, where *parallelism* (the term is borrowed, significantly, from Hopkins) is singled out for attention by many of those who wish to argue for intrinsic linguistic features of literary texts; 'patterning' (e.g. repetition) promotes attention to the language. Thus Yeats' 'Easter 1916' is memorable for its repeated line 'A terrible beauty is born'. What distinguishes literature from advertising in such a view is the 'function', what it is designed to do, rather than specific linguistic features.

Similarly, Jakobson is known for his interest in '*sound symbolism*', an area back in favour again today, mainly through the efforts of cognitive stylist-icians, though now as '*Iconicity*'. This is the idea that sounds have meanings which audiences for a poem (or any utterance) understand and respond to at some level, just as writers and performers exploit these latent expressive meanings of the sound system. Thus Bolinger (1950), in a much-cited paper, proposed that the initial *fl-* sound in English (as in *flag, flight, flower, fly*) typically expresses movement; that initial *gl-* tends to denote light, while *-itter*, *-ow*, and *-are* suggest, respectively, intermittent, steady, continuity and intense, hence *flitter, flow, flare* or *glitter, glow, glare*). (See discussion of iconicity in Ungerer and Schmid 1996.) Such ideas of form possessing meaning are characteristically 'Formalist' and obviously of interest to language learners and teachers.

But Jakobson's central question in his highly influential 'Poetics' (1960), is 'What makes a verbal message a work of art?' He claims to identify 'the *differentia specifica* of verbal art in relation to the other arts and in relation to other kinds of verbal behaviour' (p. 10). In a reprise of the now familiar if difficult distinction, then, the question is what makes a literary use of language literary, and not 'ordinary', and whether there is a purely linguistic criterion. Jakobson as a Formalist believes such a linguistic argument can be made, though he is already, however unwillingly, straying into more pragmatic, even discoursal areas: 'focus on the message for its own sake, is the POETIC function of language' (p. 15). But again we must ask *whose* focus is this exactly? Perception requires an agent perceiving, and here Attridge's (1988: 199) poststructuralist critique of Jakobson is surely on target when he argues that Jakobson's argument proceeds by 'excluding the reader' (p. 38) and the contexts of any actual reading. (Compare the discussion of literary reading in Chapter 3, especially section 3.1.) Some readers (say) may wish to read Sylvia Plath's poetry as language exercises; many more have responded to it as expressions of an individual life.

Jakobson is particularly well known for his overwhelming demonstrations of parallelism and patterning focusing the reader's attention in texts like Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 (Jakobson 1980), and again, most readers of poetry would readily assent that devices like rhyme, rhythm, assonance or

alliteration are integral to successful poetic performance. The criticism those writers who claim a special status for these features in literary work have to answer, is that the very features we tend to think of as prototypically 'literary' (patterning, imagery, word play, ambiguity and the rest) are not exclusive to literature, but pervasive, for example, in advertising too (e.g. Cook 1992) and even in everyday conversation (Tannen 1989; Johnstone 1994; Carter 2004) and children's play (Crystal 1998; Cook 2000). This point is developed later in the chapter in discussing 'Creativity'. Werth (1976), for example, in a good-humoured article, early pointed out that one of the best examples to be found of parallelism in a text is a telephone directory, long lists of near identical entries which nevertheless hardly constitute poetry! Culler (1975/2002) notoriously (Jakobson himself just 'couldn't see it') demonstrated how parallelism dominated Jakobson's own prose. Jakobson's response was to insist that it was a matter of degree, emphasis and, above all, of function: 'Any attempt to reduce the sphere of the poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to the poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification' (p. 15), he concedes; he is writing only of 'the predominant function' of any message. The point remains that Jakobson privileges writings with dense parallelism demonstrable as 'literary' to a high degree, where other readers (Bakhtin, for example, reading the novelist Dostoevsky: see section 1.6 below) will value other features more highly.

Certainly, a pedagogy based on the perception of complexities of texts will inevitably tend to give the expert teacher a starring role; and concomitantly, to intimidate the less accomplished or non-specialist student coming to these literature texts for the first time. Language learners want and need to focus on form, but not to take on difficulty for its own sake. Fortunately, not all or even most literature is textually or linguistically difficult. Crucially, as the rest of this chapter argues, the language of literature is not fundamentally different from more ordinary language, but very much related to it. Formalists' increasing tendency to stress function rather than form is a concession to this position.

In conclusion, the Formalists' idea of Literature as a particular interest in form, the words themselves (and consequently in difficulties of meaning, ambiguities, paradox and other interpretiative dilemmas), in reading as well as in writing literary works, is a fruitful one, which has taught us much about typical features of much literary language, but reservations must be entered:

- This account deals best with poetry, and more especially modern and modernist poetry. Literariness as defined by the Formalists is not equally applicable to all works usually considered literary, across times and genres. Given the range, it is doubtful if any such account of 'literature' as a whole ever could be convincing.
- The Formalists actually described and contributed to a specific sociocultural historical moment of the reading of literature; form, 'the words

themselves' do not force 'foregrounding'; it is a preference of the trained literary reader to notice certain aspects of a work in literary contexts. (See Chapter 3 below; important contrary arguments in Miall and van Peer, reviewed in Chapter 4.)

- The kind of 'literariness' the Formalists identify is to be found well beyond literary genres – compare discussion following of Creativity (section 1.3) and Dialogics (section 1.4).

1.2   Oracy, literacy and literature

In section 1.1, I have tended to present literature as if it were an unchanging, undifferentiated object, but of course literature has a dynamic history of readers and writers, syllabuses, publishers, libraries, booksellers and more, and much of today's literature would not have been recognisable to literature teachers (there were a few) a hundred years ago. An important alternative way to approach the question of the nature of literary language is to trace in brief outline the development of modern notions of literature and literary language upon which the more theoretical and academic work is based. We will then be in a better position to understand the advantages of seeing literature as discourse. Consideration of the key role of education in defining and delimiting literature is deferred to Chapter 2.

A dominant eighteenth-century meaning of 'literature' was 'a written text', as today we might receive 'literature' from a double glazing company through the post (see Williams 1976). For Samuel Johnson, in his *Dictionary* (1755), the word literature signalled 'Acquaintance with "letters" or books; polite or humane learning; literary culture' (quoted Miller 2002: 2). The nineteenth century tried to restrict literature even further to ideas of *valued* plays, poems and fiction, despite the widening contemporary ambit of literary efforts in the novel in particular, and the growth of popular literature. The historical spread of literacy through European and Western populations, industrialised print technologies and the introduction of compulsory schooling have been basic to the growth of the idea and practice of literature as it has been known, as have nationalist ideologies (compare Chapter 2). Today, some see new electronic media making the idea of written literature particularly problematic if not obsolete, even as ideas of monolingual nation states with clearly defined national cultures are no longer tenable. We will need to return to the vexed question of literature as writing, and the relation of this kind of writing to the wider spoken language and to cultural contexts. Certainly, literature understood as 'verbal art' (now usually written) evolved from and remains intimately related to oral forms of verbal art. (See section 1.3 below; also Fabb 1997; Finnegan 1992).

Quote 1.6   Oral vs. written language

There is no clear-cut line between 'oral' and 'written' literature, and when one tries to differentiate between them – as has often been attempted – it becomes clear that there are constant overlaps.
(Finnegan 1992: 2)

Our modern notion of literature (imagination, creativity, originality), in tension with a spoken everyday vernacular, derives importantly from Wordsworth, T. S. Eliot and the classic writers read, or read about, in literary educations (compare McGann 1983).

Quote 1.7   Poetic language and ordinary language

Every revolution in poetry is apt to be, and sometimes to announce itself as, a return to common speech. That is the revolution which Wordsworth announced in his prefaces and he was right . . . and the same revolution was due again something over a century later.
(Eliot 1942; quoted in Adamson 1998: 589)

Literary history is always necessarily a selective retrospective narrative (Perkins 1992) and we are right to be particularly suspicious of protagonists' versions. Nevertheless, Wordsworth's manifesto, to write a new dialogic poetry, 'a man speaking to men' ('Preface' to the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1802), and Eliot's slightly mischievous kidnapping of the idea, point to the fruitful tension that always holds between language perceived to be marked as 'poetic', and the 'everyday'. However, where Eliot suggests some kind of eternal cycle of formal alterations in the service of defamiliarisation (compare Jakobson and Tynyanov 1928; Bradford 1993), we should observe rather the increasing historic trend to use more colloquial or informal language, in literature as in other areas, through the nineteenth century to the present day. A tendency from the earliest times, the reproduction or rather representation of ordinary language in literary contexts, becomes the norm in modern times (Blake 1981). Attridge (1988: 4) has written of the 'oscillating and unstable relationship' between ordinary language and literary language, remarked on since Aristotle advocated the use of 'unusual words' to distinguish the literary work as something special, but 'the use of normal speech' too in due moderation, a kind of tension between the need to be interesting and the need to be comprehensible (Attridge 1988: 2) which faces the creative writer. Ordinary language haunts or inhabits literary language, just as supposedly literary language informs the ordinary. Bradford has a similar proposal to Attridge's.

Quote 1.8   Linguistic creativity in literature

Literary styles can feature in non-literary discourses, and vice versa, but a literary text is defined by a tension between these two elements that permeates its entirety: modernism has shown how far this tension can be stretched.
Bradford (1997: 168)

Adamson's (1998) account is the best modern literary history of 'conversationalisation' (though see also Bradford 1993). In outline, what Adamson traces is the increasing acceptability in modern literary writings, through the last two centuries in the West, of linguistic features more usually thought of as 'spoken', unplanned or unedited discourse, even colloquial speech, as opposed to the standard and educated forms of traditional literary genres. At the same time, we observe the paradox that literary language is planned, 'rehearsed' to an unusual degree – perhaps only the drafting of international treaties involves such careful editing and rewriting. More an appearance of spontaneity, then, than the real thing. Wordsworth advocated for literary usage the real language of men *speaking* to men. He used the ballad form (*Lyrical Ballads*) because it could legitimately allow representations of ordinary speakers to be taken seriously, as well as generally displaying many features of the oral tradition of narrative. In this way Wordsworth's ballads prefigure and initiate the tradition of the modern literary work, which is increasingly likely to contain representations of speech, as well as dialect features, clichés, parataxis rather than hypotaxis, repetitions (see Tannen in section 1.5 below), parenthesis and digression (Adamson), contractions, second-person pronouns, ellipses and other such characterisations of 'spoken' language (see Biber 1988, discussed below). At the discourse level, *intertextuality* (section 1.4 below) and the incorporation of voices of other speakers are increasingly obvious from Dickens (see Bakhtin 1981), through Eliot ('The Waste Land') to John Ashbery in our own day. Where early representations of non-standard speech were merely comic or distractions (see MacCabe 1978; or Blake 1981) such voices become fully legitimate, often barely noticed features of literary characters and narrators, or aggressively valorised in a writer like Tony Harrison ('V', 1984), or James Kelman (*How Late it Was, How Late*, 1995; see Toolan in Bex et al., 2000. Compare also discussions of New Englishes Literatures in Chapter 2). These uses of vernacular diction are 'acts of identity' in the term Adamson borrows from Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) classic sociolinguistic work on Caribbean creoles. In fact, vernacular language features strongly in postcolonial literature from the time of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* to Walcott and Rushdie today (see Talib 2002). Adamson also suggests that modern literature in English seeks for stylistic range, and that this has dictated, due to the decline or virtual disappearance of 'high' languages like Greek or Latin, the greater acceptability in modern literature

of swearing, scatological language and the like: Harrison again ('V'), but already, though more shocking, in 1960s Larkin: 'They fuck you up, your mum and dad...'. If readers tend to think of modernism as difficult, elliptical, disconnected, demanding on the reader (Joyce, *Ulysses*), Adamson's account would suggest that this is partly a result of the incorporation into literary writing of the kind of spoken features illustrated here, which occurred gradually through the modern era. The language of modern literature is often private, with the reader a kind of overhearer rather than addressee – just like much of modern advertising copy: 'Wish you were here,' Harrison writes in an imagined postcard to his dead father. Or consider:

> This is where we are spending our vacation. A nice restful spot.
> Real camp life. Hope you are feeling fine.
>
> (Ashbery, quoted in Adamson, p. 675)

This is not textually or linguistically difficult. It is everyday, ordinary language, if ever such a thing existed (though notably 'written' here), but found increasingly in apparently literary works, which will prompt reader-elaboration to produce a properly 'literary' response (compare discussion of Culler 1982, and literary reading practices, Chapter 3 below). At the linguistic level we understand. The problem for the literary reader is often, rather, 'What does it all mean, and why am I (the reader) being told this?' These are central concerns of literary reading, the need to infer, which is also a key skill for all learners to develop more widely.

The second point to underline, which emerges from any historical consideration of the styles of literatures in English in the modern age, is that 'English Literature', or other national literatures, despite misleading statements in the British National Curriculum or equivalent documents, has not been written exclusively or often even predominantly in what is known as Standard (British) English. If such a thing ever existed anywhere out of the textbooks which tried to teach it, it was not in literary writing that it was to be found. This is of course ever more true as postcolonial new 'literatures in English' (Naipaul (Trinidad), Rushdie (India), Coetzee (South Africa), Derek Walcott (Caribbean) or Les Murray (Australia), never mind Kelman (Scotland) or Doyle or Heaney (both Ireland) are accepted into the canon (for 'canon', see Chapter 2).

The key point here, then, is the unusually wide linguistic range of literary texts. Jeffries' (1993) survey of twentieth-century English language poetry notes the pervasive 'spread of non-standard English' (p. 24) and 'an unprecedented use of vocabulary from areas of life not traditionally recognised as poetic': 'The choice of vocabulary (sometimes called 'diction') for a poet has probably never been wider than in the twentieth century' (p. 79). This will be a challenge for the learner, but widening of vocabulary is now commonly recognised as essential and often at the same time a neglected aspect of language learning.

Style and variation in Biber's corpus linguistic studies

> **Concept 1.3 Corpus linguistics**
>
> Large-scale collections of naturally occurring text held on computer and/or available for computer-assisted searches and analysis. The samples are ideally coded or 'marked up' to facilitate the investigation of linguistic features. Well-known examples would include the BNC (British National Corpus), COBUILD (Collins and University of Birmingham) or CANCODE (Cambridge University Press and Nottingham University).

Corpus linguistics gives quantitative and objective support to the idea of a shift from more literate to more oral and vernacular styles across many genres, including the literary, in the modern period (nineteenth century to the present) (Biber 1988; Biber and Finegan 1989). The tendency is established in Biber's work through a complex computational-stylistic consideration of variables ('factors') associated with literacy (complex noun phrases, higher type token ratios, word length, passives, nominalisations and many more) and canonical conversational situations (deixis, present tenses, demonstratives, emphatics, hedges and amplifiers, co-ordination devices, etc.: see Biber 1988: 101–20 for more detail and precision). Hyland (2002) rightly alerts users of Biber's work to the difficult choices that have to be made by corpus linguists in selecting what to include and defining and counting the data, as well as problems in comparisons across different times. But this is broadly careful and convincing work if we remain at the general level of the literate-oral dimension, where the intuition that (say) eighteenth-century fiction is less colloquial than twentieth-century fiction can be empirically substantiated, or ideas of genre as a more critical determinant of style and formality than mode (spoken or written) can be shown, but without any necessary allegiance to a 'Great Divide': 'No absolute spoken/written distinction is identified in th[is] study' (Biber 1988: 26).

> [A] linguistic dimension is determined on the basis of a consistent co-occurrence pattern among features ... when a group of features constantly co-occur in texts, those features define a linguistic dimension.
>
> (Biber 1988: 13)

> **Concept 1.4 Biber's studies of register variation: summary**
>
> A particularly relevant corpus linguistic approach which uses the capabilities of computers to handle large amounts of data and to perform complicated quantitative analyses rapidly and reliably. 'Factor analysis' identifies co-occurring patterns of linguistic features in texts. A set of co-occurring linguistic features established in this way is a 'dimension', and dimensions are found to vary systematically across registers and genres.

Linguistic features co-occur in texts because they reflect shared functions. For example, 'Interactive' or 'Involved' dimension texts have significantly more second person pronouns, direct questions and imperatives. Epistolary novels or lyric poetry may well have such Interactive features and functions. Narrative discourse tends to be associated with past tense verbs, third person pronouns, perfect aspect verbs, present participial clauses and others. The key finding for present purposes is that genres are 'multidimensional'. They can be characterised linguistically, but only comparatively, rather than because certain features are to be found exclusively in those texts, and only *multi*-dimensionally, that is by displaying *sets* of significantly co-occurring linguistic features (or not co-occurring, i.e. appearing with significantly *less* than expected regularity), 'patternings'. The more precisely a register is specified (such as 'nineteenth-century romantic novel' rather than 'novel') the more easily and reliably linguistic dimensions can be identified. 'Literature' (or 'Writing') would be a vast, almost incoherent register, and so tolerates a very wide range of linguistic variation – indeed cannot be usefully identified purely linguistically, as argued through this chapter.

A useful overview and introduction to this work is S. Conrad and D. Biber (2001): Ch. 2.

Early work of Biber and colleagues quickly identified three important basic 'dimensions' which differentiated patterns of language use between genres:

- *Interactive* uses of language as opposed to more *Edited* text.
- *Abstract* as opposed to more *Situated* language.
- *Reported* rather than more *Immediate* styles.

The work is fascinating and repays study in detail, but it should be noticed that literate/oral, as already observed, is not a basic dimension in language use according to these studies, nor, more emphatically, is there any indication that 'literary' language as opposed to 'ordinary' language is an empirically valid distinction. The categories of the ordinary and the literary are too large and amorphous, as we have suspected. A category like degree of Narrativity, however, obviously a dimension found in many literary as well as less straightforwardly literary texts, is a way in which speakers distinguish their uses of language, and more will be said of the relevance of this to the discourse approach proposed in this book below. Important, too, is Biber's observation (1988: 22) that 'linguistic variation in any language is too complex to be analyzed in terms of any single dimension' – such as, we might add, literary/non-literary. Dichotomies, in fact, are rejected by Biber on the basis of his empirical investigations in favour of continuous scales (compare Carter and Nash 1990). This may be less theoretically neat than some of the earlier twentieth-century proposals would like, but is likely to be more accurate. Thus, for example on Dimension 1, 'Involved versus Informational Production', science fiction tends to be relatively more informational and romantic fiction displays more 'involved' interactional features (Biber 1988: 128; Figure 7.1). Or again (Figure 7.5: 152), science fiction tends to be (only very

slightly) more abstract than romantic fiction. These are examples of how the general principles can apply. But these are all statistical tendencies which individual examples (individual texts) can be seen to buck. In any case, the implication of such work is that we need to retreat from the idea of 'literature' as some kind of identifiable super-genre, in favour of more easily character-isable genres such as 'science fiction'. Genres are real, according to this work, but only to be characterised linguistically in terms of clusters of *tendencies*, rather than required features (compare Carter and Nash's 'literariness' referred to at the outset of this chapter; Biber's work is discussed further also in Chapter 4).

Returning centrally to the issue of the oral and the literate, Biber refers to the work of Chafe and to sociolinguistics. There are continuities and complemen-tarities with the work of Tannen in particular in this respect, discussed below under Dialogics (section 1.4). Chafe and Tannen are well known for their innovative work investigating the literary, literate and spoken dimensions of language use over many years, and their own conclusions are clear and complement Biber's.

Quote 1.9   Distinguishing speech and writing

Literacy, where it exists, has provided fertile ground for the growth of other genres, among them literate forms of speaking as well as colloquial forms of writing. Under these circumstances, we should not be surprised to find that there is no single feature or dimension that distinguishes all of speech from all of writing.
(Chafe, in Chafe and Tannen 1987: 390–1)

Distinctions between orality and literacy on the one hand, and spoken versus written language on the other, do not suffice to characterize real discourse . . . the relationship of literary to conversational language [is] . . . closer, and distinctions between them foggier, than had previously been thought.
(Tannen 1982: xi; xii)

[We observe] . . . the inextricability of speech and writing in even those modes of discourse that seem most exclusively a matter of writing and reading, and the inherently social nature of all discourse.
(Chafe and Tannen 1987: 398)

Speech representation in literature

An area where speech and writing meet, not entirely distinctive to literary texts, though a characteristic of many, is in the use of what is called Free Indirect Speech. Modern stylistics and narratology have given much attention to the phenomenon of speech representation in literature and other written texts (key discussions in McHale 1978; Leech and Short 1981; Fludernik 1993; Simpson 1993). It is important to remember that speech representation is

exactly *representation* – 'represented' not 'reported' (Banfield 1982). Nobody actually speaks, however clearly we may think we hear their voices as we read. On the other hand, as Bakhtin (1981) argues, it is precisely modern 'novelised' literature which excels at (apparently) bringing a wide range of social 'voices' into contact. Bakhtin sees the novelist as a kind of ventriloquist. Where the more decorous eighteenth century attempted to keep the borders policed, with clear punctuation and assignment of speech to characters securely socially placed for readers, by the nineteenth-century distinctions of the narrator from the characters, and of characters from each other on any secure linguistic basis, by 'styles' or even by punctuation, becomes increasingly difficult. In the same way, a learner speaking another language, is to some extent speaking the words of others, a point returned to in Chapter 2.

Quote 1.10   Bakhtin on language use ('discourse')

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – over-populated with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accounts, is a difficult and complicated process.
(Bakhtin 1981: 294)

Thus, considering the phenomenon of 'reported speech' (see also Tannen 1989), Voloshinov (1929/1986), a member of the 'Bakhtin Circle', pointed to the importance, quantitatively and qualitatively, of 'double-voiced', free indirect discourse, which Pascal (1977) and others trace back to Jane Austen and earlier, in which the boundaries between speech and thought, or even between the words of varying characters or narrators become blurred. Consider an example:

Concept 1.5   Free indirect speech

(1)   Speech: 'Am I too late?'
(2)   Indirect speech: 'She asked whether she was too late.'
(3)   Free indirect speech (FIS): 'Was she too late?'

(after Wales 2001: 165)

In (1) and (2) we are clear who is supposed to be speaking (character and narrator, respectively). In (3), the FIS example, the writing prompts the reader's inference that the narrator is inside the thinking consciousness of the character, sometimes expressed as the *blending* of the words of narrator (third person 'she'; past form 'was') and character, assuming thought to be explicitly linguistic, which is anyway unlikely to be always the case. The

written words of a literary work in particular are often difficult to assign to a single speaker, however fictional or hypothetical in the last analysis, and yet such writing is haunted, inhabited, even made possible by speech. It is natural and important to want to know who said what, in understanding a story or poem, but often difficult finally to decide in the case of literary texts. Once again the spoken-written boundaries seem to break down, and the preference of many writers on this phenomenon for the label of free indirect *discourse* (FID), rather than 'free indirect *speech*', is in line with this problematic status or source of many utterances, in literary discourse as elsewhere, where language seems to escape the control of a single individual author, speaker or reader and divisions between thought and speech seem to break down. (The idea of discourse is explored further at the end of this chapter.) Nevertheless, it can be seen, once again, how literary texts, *because* they typically make use of a wide range of styles, varieties and *registers* (Biber 1988; Bakhtin 1986; Butler 1991), could be of interest to a student of language. If the language of literature is in any way distinct, as has been argued, it is distinct for such a toleration of a greater variety than is found in any other kind of language use. It can include spoken and written features, diverse levels of formality, social, professional styles, dialects, sociolects and idiolects: a range of the language necessarily of interest – if undoubtedly challenging – to the language student. It is unlikely in any case to represent a grammarian's or lexicographer's idea of the standard written form of the language.

1.3   Literariness and creativity in everyday language use

Quote 1.11   Linguistic creativity

It is in spontaneous operational speech that the grammatical system of a language is most fully exploited, such that its semantic frontiers expand and its potential for meaning is enhanced.
(Halliday 1994: xxiv)

The conventional aspects of language are the ones that are the most alive.
(Lakoff and Turner 1989: 127: cf. Bakhtin 1981; 1986)

Creativity is [therefore] recognised to be something common as well as special, ordinary as well as extraordinary, collaborative as well as individual. These distinctions are important because creativity often gets loosely associated with notions of divine 'creation from nothing' (*ex nihilo*) on the one hand, and stereotypes of individual 'geniuses' – often male, sometimes mad – on the other. *Re-creation* is here offered as a crucial bridging term. It refers to the fact that in practice creation always involves making something new out of something old and something else out of what already is.
(Pope 2002: 196)

These views of Halliday and others stand in stark contrast to the traditional position of the literary experts, with which this chapter opened, according to which linguistic creativity is the special preserve of the literary text. Can both be right? Are they mutually exclusive? A classic view of literary creation as central to any notion of literariness involves Romantic notions of solitary genius and involuntary 'inspiration' (Bennett and Royle 1999; Pope 2002). There is a similarly mysterious view of linguistic creativity in classic Chomskyan linguistics, which posits novelty, previously unformulated and unheard sentences as a norm, or at least as the distinguishing feature of human language and so of humanity. In the later twentieth century, however, different ideas began to be heard: that creativity was not unique or even particularly distinctive to literature and its geniuses; that perhaps creativity in life and in literature were not entirely unlike in kind or degree; and indeed that the whole notion of creativity might need to be re-examined. From post structuralist literary theory the challenge was one of *intertextuality*, recombinations rather than complete originality, and from linguistics the impact of computers analysing corpora challenges some hallowed ideas of what language is and how speakers and writers might use it. Typically, it now seems, linguistic creativity consists in tweaking the system, exploiting frames which need to remain recognisable, 'kicking the proverbial bucket': 'How many more beans are there to spill?' as Wray (2000: 51) asks.

Bakhtin (1981, 1986), in the same way, sees two major forces in language use and evolution, the centrifugal (originality, creativity) always in necessary tension with the centripetal (standardisation, 'correct' forms). We learn to use a language by 'ventriloquising', creating our own 'voices' as accents or inflections of pre-existing discourses in which we struggle to participate. Literature offers a privileged site in which we can observe and reflect on these processes (Bakhtin 1981; see also discussion of language acquisition as appropriation in Chapter 2).

Formulaicity and creativity

Staying for the moment with corpus linguistics, it is now clear from the work of Sinclair (1991) and others such as Halliday, how extensively 'prefabricated' much everyday language use in fact is, despite previous Chomskyan claims. The importance of the work of Carter (1999; 2004), Carter and McCarthy (1995; 2001) and others in this area, as in the 'CANCODE' project, is to demonstrate as well how rich in linguistic creativity ordinary language use is too. The way in which these apparently contradictory findings can be reconciled is to see linguistic creativity, in life as in literary writing, as a constrained activity, very real, but operating within constraints. Discourse perspectives, a pragmatic interest in how language is actually used, together with a literary awareness brought to the study of naturally occurring

speech and language use recorded in the CANCODE database, quickly led to a perception of the startling degree of creativity and neologism in everyday language use: 'the inherent creativity of so-called 'ordinary', 'everyday' language has been overlooked by researchers, who have tended to focus on literary texts or on more obviously creative language such as advertising language' (Carter 1999: 195). In this way CANCODE, an extensive collection of informal English, reveals pervasive phenomena of pattern-developing and pattern-forming (compare Jakobson's 'parallelism') in such everyday English language use. Where previous work had tended to assume more written/rehearsed language, including representations of speech (drama, dialogue), was closer to the literary, the CANCODE casual spoken data reveal extensive punning and playing, inventiveness in forming new words, and in all a picture emerges of the centrality of linguistic creativity to ordinary everyday interaction, in the service of both affective relations (feelings), pleasure and 'involvement' (Tannen 1989; Biber), and even (though secondarily) of the new perspectives which the Formalists claimed literature was best at delivering. At the least, the 'deviance' view of literary language, which opposes literary to ordinary language, needs to be revised or more carefully modulated (see Carter 2004). 'Creativity is an everyday demotic phenomenon. It is not a capacity of special people but a special capacity of all people' (Carter and McCarthy 1995). 'Language makers' (Harris 1981) – all speakers – know that an intrinsic part of 'communicative competence' in any language is to use, understand and collaboratively play with puns, proverbs and the sounds and shapes of words. Writers in second language acquisition are beginning to recognise this too. (See Chapter 2 on sociocultural and ecological approaches to literature in the language classroom; also Cook 2000.)

   Other work consonant with Carter and others related to the CANCODE project would include Moon (1998: Ch. 6 – variability in formulaic sequences); Crystal, *Language Play* (1998) and Cook (1996; 2000 – language play intrinsic to language acquisition: see section 2.3 below); or Hall (2001 – cliché in the contemporary poetry of Tony Harrison). Pratt (1977) had already demonstrated the widespread use of playful, non-transactional speech acts outside literature (hypothesising, telling lies, stories, etc.) or Weir (1962) (the importance of language play in first language acquisition); Vygotsky (1978) argues for its significance in cognitive development.

   Tannen (1989) has published some of the most interesting and readable work on the extensiveness and importance of supposedly 'literary' devices such as repetition, 'echoing', representing the speech of others, lively imagery and precise details, and narrative in conversation and other parallelisms in everyday conversation, which she reads as 'involvement' strategies, employed to invite and express affect and sympathy, and claims that

writing such as literature only exploits these fundamental oral devices in more elaborated ways.

Quote 1.12   Tannen on linguistic creativity

The central idea of this book is that ordinary conversation is made up of linguistic strategies that have been thought quintessentially literary. These strategies, which are shaped and elaborated in literary discourse, are pervasive, spontaneous, and functional in ordinary conversation. I call them 'involvement strategies' because, I argue, they reflect and simultaneously create interpersonal involvement.

(Tannen 1989: 1; see also Coupland 2001)

Similarly Friedrich (2001) suggests that heightened creative effects and features of language coincide with emotional and mental excitation, 'purple passages' which both represent and produce heightened attention to language, paradoxically (or not), just as meaning would seem more important than the precise words to be used. Corts and Myers' (2002) studies of sermons, or Cameron (2003) on teachers' discourse show just such 'bursts' of metaphorical language.

Pope (2002) highlights the growth and popularity of creative writing courses in 'English' departments in recent years as a hopeful sign that 'English' students are now coming to be seen as producers and writers as well as readers, that student writing is to be learned as a legitimate and potentially effective response to the writing of others (till now, writing in universities has been viewed as a testing and grading instrument rather than from the perspective of individual students learning and growing and developing a wider range of competences.) The case of a creative writing course at the University of Plymouth is instanced, which aims, among others:

- to establish the importance of revision in the process of composition;
- to challenge commonplace notions of creativity and originality.

(Pope 2002: 197)

We are back again with the importance of a linguistics of writing, which recognises the material conditions of language and writing, including literary writing as a provisional joint production of multiple hands and technologies as well as of readers through time (compare McGann 1983). Creativity studies are enriched further by Carter (2004) and Pope (2005).

Metaphor

Quote 1.13   Metaphor is ordinary

Il se fait plus de figures en un jour de Halles qu'en un mois d'Académie.

[There are more figures of speech uttered in a day in the Paris market, than in a month of writings by Academicians]
(French proverb, quoted Pratt 1977: 38. G. H. loose translation)

Metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon much studied in recent, especially cognitive, linguistic research, and provides a further good example of the literariness of the everyday, or rather of the problematics of such a division. The evidence indicates that metaphor is a central, not a peripheral, feature of language use, and that overall, much language, whether in everyday life or in literature, does not mean what it says (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Turner 1989: *Metaphors are so commonplace we often fail to notice them* (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 1, opening sentence); Gibbs 1994). McDermott and Tylbor (in Tedlock and Mannheim 1995) point out that literalness and referentiality are the norms of linguistic thought and writing, where the reality of everyday speech and writing is the pervasiveness of *not* saying what we mean. Where a conventional linguistics would seek first to understand literal ordinary language, and then the secondary but supposedly more complicated issue of figurative language (idioms, irony, hyperbole, metaphor), cognitive linguistics and cognitive poetics argues that even if there is such a thing as literal language (difficult to find or identify if it does exist: see Gibbs 1994) it is in any case rare and not typical in the way that metaphor much more typically structures and informs our thought and language. 'Ordinary, everyday English is largely metaphorical' (Lakoff 1993: 204).

For Jakobson and more traditional stylistics, metaphor is of the essence, if not the defining feature of Poetry. Unusual uses of language are identified as prompting focus on the language itself rather than the propositional content of an utterance. In fact, however, as already argued, the referential 'information-exchange' view of ordinary language has been greatly exaggerated; focus on form is common in less formal everyday language use too. The importance of the kind of cognitive linguistic work I have referred to is to demonstrate the 'ubiquity of metaphor' (Paprotté and Dirven) across all domains – 'the fundamental roots of language are figurative' (Carter 1999: 205) in opposition to referential-literal assumptions dominating mainstream linguistics to date (compare Tedlock, Friedrich). All language, for such an argument, is in a sense literary language, where again, literature may only be different because of a greater reflexivity and self-consciousness concerning the forms of the language it uses, or greater elaborations of 'entailments'

(Gibbs 1994) of conventional metaphorical mappings in a given culture. Metaphors are inescapable in this view, particularly when abstract or more complicated matters are discussed. 'Metaphor isn't just for poets; it's in ordinary language and is the principal way we have of conceptualizing abstract concepts like life, death, and time' (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 52). 'Novelty', creativity, 'poetry can depend on basic, underlying metaphors which structure out most fundamental, common everyday experiences' (Carter 1999: 206, after Lakoff and Turner 1989: 'Poetic thought uses the mechanisms of everyday thought, but it extends them, and combines them in ways that go beyond the ordinary (p. 67)). Language and literature, then, are essentially inherently creative and figurative, and users derive creative pleasure and negotiate social relations through conscious engagement with language and language use, in but also beyond the realm of literary texts. (See also Cameron 2003, and Cameron and Low 1999 for studies of the importance of metaphor in areas way beyond any conventional under-standing of the literary, such as education or medicine.)

Language teaching, similarly, has usually begun from assumptions of the literal and the straightforward exchange of information as the way language 'works'. If in fact this is not how language typically works, more attention will need to be paid in future to the primary uses of language as metaphorical and playful. (Cook 2000 has begun to explore this new perspective for second language learners.)

Narrative

As with metaphor, a vast body of research has been published in recent years on narrative, the central burden of which, so far as this book is concerned, is to demonstrate that stories are central to all human life and accomplishments, not just to literary culture. Social scientists, doctors, lawyers, through the full range of the human professions and activities, have come to see the importance of narrative understandings to what they do. Thus Norrick (2000), for example, quotes a rich database of examples of storytelling in everyday conversation, showing how we all use stories to establish relations and develop our ideas and meanings with others. Linde (1993) remains a classic study of the importance of stories we tell over our life spans to justify ourselves to ourselves and to others, in the ongoing job of constructing more or less coherent identities for ourselves. Toolan (2001), in one of the best introductions to this vast field, deals with not just formal aspects of narrative (plot, story, teller, narrative devices), but shows how we narrate time and space, develop perspectives, read characters and represent the speech and thought of others, even narrate others' ethnic, cultural or sexual identities to each other through our stories all day long. Narrative is also central to media representations of human life, whether in chat shows or the evening news. The development of narrative competence through childhood is another particularly fascinating aspect of all this, (Toolan 2001: Chapter 7)

and obviously of interest to educators. Narrative is a pre-eminent genre, or 'super-genre', because it informs so much of our linguistic, cognitive and social activity, interaction and development.

In short, humans are story-telling beings. Indeed, some have argued that the one area of human linguistic (or discoursal) expertise that goes on improving across the lifespan is our narrative competence. Literature clearly participates in this wider human meaning-making activity, and literary narrative is of interest to educators because it can assist our students in developing and reflecting on their own and others' competence in this central area of human activity. Once again, we see the way in which the literary and the supposedly non-literary cannot be easily set apart, indeed, are best studied together. Narrative competence means stories used in formal education can be accessible to students, and often gain attention and are more easily remembered than more abstract or expository texts, but can also be used to develop more advanced critical, reflective and expressive language and literacy skills too.

1.4   Dialogics: literature as discourse

Quote 1.14   Discourse (1)

Use of the term discourse (along with text) has at least served to cut across conventional distinctions between language and literature. Both, it is strongly implied, can only be grasped in relation to one another and as forms of communication in specific cultural contexts.
(Pope 2002: 202)

I regard this model of literature as social discourse . . . as socially responsible and progressive, and educationally useful. . . . [T]he programme should do more than just try to civilize the masses by giving literature to them. The real aim is to change or even deconstruct the notion of literature so that a very wide range of discourses is actively used by individuals in their conscious engagements with ideology, experience and social organization.
(Fowler 1981: 199)

An alternative take on Formalist 'literariness', then, is to note the pervasive occurrence and centrality of notionally literary, figurative or at least creative uses of language in uncontroversially non-literary uses of language, as well as the intricacy of relations between the oral and the written. Deborah Tannen's work in this field can be seen in just such a wider context of discourse analytical, sociolinguistic and anthropological studies of language and culture. Where the Formalists, for all the continuing interest of their work, had been finally unable to distinguish art speech from ordinary language, Tannen's

discourse analytical work, representative of much current research in the area, goes further, in showing the apparent 'literariness' or at least artfulness of ordinary language, that devices (narrative, metaphor, neologism) commonly exploited in everyday conversation are not so different from, but actually form the basis for what have traditionally been considered, prototypically literary features of language use. Bakhtin's ideas of primary 'Speech Genres' (1986) in ordinary language being elaborated in 'secondary' genres such as literary writing, while originally developed separately, have been widely taken up by such writers. I return to Bakhtin's highly suggestive work in Chapter 2 and here in concluding this chapter.

Literature is a complex many-layered notion or field of practices with a revealing history some aspects of which have already been touched on. The best way in to exploring literature (or Literature) in my experience is through a view of language as discourse. Since the notion of discourse is in turn complex and sometimes controversial, however, I conclude the chapter by examining some of the uses of the term *discourse* which will inform the book's interrogation of L/literature in education.

Quote 1.15   Discourse (2)

Discourse must be understood in its widest sense: every utterance assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the other in some way . . . . It is every variety of oral discourse of every nature from trivial conversation to the most elaborate oration . . . but it is also the mass of writing that reproduces oral discourse or that borrows its manner of expression and its purposes: correspondence, memoirs, plays, didactic works, in short, all genres in which someone addresses himself [*sic*] as the speaker, and organizes what he says in the category of the person.
(Benveniste, quoted in Mills 1997: 5)

'Discourse' is speech or writing seen from the point of view of the beliefs, values and categories which it embodies; these beliefs, etc. constitute a way of looking at the world, an organization or representation of experience – 'ideology' in the neutral non-pejorative sense. Different modes of discourse encode different representations of experience; and the source of these representations is the communicative context within which the discourse is embedded.
(Fowler, quoted in Mills 1997: 6)

Carter and Long (1991) ably contrast a view of literature considered as text with a view of literature seen as discourse. The first view, it is proposed, promotes in the student knowledge *about* literature, a more traditional aim of literary studies, where a view of literature as discourse promotes knowledge *of* literature. A traditional literary education urged attention to decontextualised 'words on the page'. Literature traditionally claimed access to universal values and qualities (Truth, Beauty). A discourse view, on the other

hand, significantly more in line with wider later twentieth century thinking, sees a text as constructed, contingent and requiring active interpretations in contexts. Literature as discourse is open to interrogation, confrontation and interventions (see, for example, Pope's work, including the call for 'transformations' of others' words (Pope 1995)). Literature considered as discourse is a response to other utterances and itself calls for a response (Bakhtin 1986), just as learning a language is coming to be seen as participating in ongoing conversations of others.

A view of language as discourse emphasises that language is a form of social action, that we do things with words (and others do things to us). Discourses are 'ways of being in the world, forms of life', in James Gee's sweeping but stimulating formulation (Gee 1996: viii). Engaging with discourses we signal and discover who and what we are in given contexts of communication, 'making sense' of ourselves, of others and of our worlds through our communicative resources, formulating or reformulating ideas, beliefs and values and our relations with one another. The idea of discourse enables researchers to acknowledge and give due weight to the extent to which we are constrained and directed in our everyday choices of language and wider behaviours by existing patterns, standards and expectations, but also to give due weight to the space for individual agency and creativity within these cultural and societal constraints. In the same way as the sentence grammar of a language enables and constrains the sentences of a language, discourse enables and constrains 'utterances', actual speech acts.

In a useful review of the provenance and concerns of discourse studies, Jaworski and Coupland (1999) highlight a set of defining parameters focused on by those who study discourse in its varied manifestations. First, they argue that discourse implies not simply an interest in meaning, 'language in use', but also a much wider and more ambitious interest in all the determinants '*beyond* language in use'.

Quote 1.16   Discourse (3)

Discourse is language use relative to social, political and cultural formations – it is language reflecting social order but also language shaping social order, and shaping individuals' interaction with society . . .

[Across disciplines] discourse is an inescapably important concept for understanding society and human responses to it, as well as for understanding language itself.

(Jaworski and Coupland 1999: 3)

The discourse analyst sees language as social action; emphasises the importance of context; of inferencing and constructive processes by all participants to communicative acts and activities; recognises the importance (after Sapir and Whorf) of social and cultural categorisation (ideology, 'common sense',

etc.: language as representation); sees textuality and mediation as a necessary but problematic condition of communication; and believes in the interacting value of the micro and the macro in studying interaction (compare Jaworski and Coupland 1999: 'Introduction'). Like the literary critic, the discourse analyst in this characterisation begins by asking 'What does that (piece of language) mean?' but recognises the need to go further, and ask 'What did that *really* mean?' which is a much wider question. (What was it doing? And for whom?) 'A discourse analysis directed at contextual accounting has no obvious outer limit' (Coupland 1988: 17).

Utterance is the preferred term in which Voloshinov and Bakhtin discuss the actually occurring, contextually bound sounds and signs speakers and writers produce in response to ongoing social interactions in which they participate, whether obviously literary or not, what we might term a unit of discourse. A unit of discourse can be anything from a grunt or a meaningful pause, to *Paradise Lost* or the *Bhagavad Gita*, but is to be understood in any case as a contribution to ongoing meaning construction whose originality is likely to consist more in its situation in a conversation or other sequence of linguistic exchanges (what came before or will follow) than in any formal features which may be identifiable in isolation. All language, for Bakhtin, is in this sense 'double-voiced' (*Poetics* 1984). Thus any literary discourse we may encounter is a moment of ongoing interactions with other discourses, both literary and non- or extra-literary. The utterance is Bakhtin's basic unit of language, and the utterance is to be defined by its 'addressivity'. Language always looks two ways – back to what has been said before, to which it responds, and forward, anticipating responses to come, requiring listeners to formulate their own words. 'An essential constitutive marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone' (*Speech Genres*, 1986: 95; compare remarks on a 'link' or 'chain'). Discourse is by definition 'unfinalisable' for Bakhtin (Morson and Emerson 1990). A response can always be made – an important idea for educators.

The idea of text as practice and productivity is now central to interdisciplinary fields such as discourse analysis, anthropological linguistics, literary and cultural studies. For many, Bakhtin first came to attention in the west in the 1980s through Kristeva's, then Barthes' (1977) popularisation of notions of 'intertextuality' (see Allen 2000), which has brought into question any simplistic notions of authorship, fixed code notions of language or single isolated readers:

Concept 1.6   Intertextuality

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn

from the innumerable centres of culture . . . the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner 'thing' he thinks to 'translate' is only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely.
(Barthes 1977)

[A]ny text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.
(Kristeva: 1980: 66)

This essentially Bakhtinian idea of discourse, as we shall see in Chapter 2 and elsewhere, opens up practical techniques for the integration of research and teaching of literary, linguistic and cultural studies which can be more meaningful than in the past. Kramsch, for example, argues for language 'appropriation' rather than language acquisition (new metaphors, new meanings).

Schmidt makes grand but exciting claims for the provenance of literary study.

Quote 1.17   Schmidt on the scope of literary study

[Literary study] should deal with the whole production i.e. genesis, transmission, receptive processing and effects of 'texts' of language in a society, aiming at the discovery of inter-subjectively definable characteristics which allow for the sorting out of those texts and modes of dealing with them that can justifiably be called 'literary'/ 'poetic' . . . The field of enquiry of literary science is conceived as the total process of literary communication in its entirety, literary communication being regarded as a sub-system of the comprehensive system of verbal communication in society.
(Schmidt 1982)

The essential qualification which our Bakhtinian perspective would want to insert, and it is a major one, is that the division is a difficult one at best, and that in any case, you can't understand one (the whole verbal system) without the other (instances of language use usually classed as 'literary'). Even the idea of a 'system' (as opposed to dialogic processes) would seem too static and reified for dynamic Bakhtinian 'translinguistics' (Todorov 1984).

1.5   Conclusion: language and literature

There is a danger of caricature in representing briefly such complex, many-faceted bodies of writings and practice as 'New Criticism', 'Russian Formalists', 'Jakobson' and the rest, never mind the simplification textbooks such as this

represent as 'Bakhtin'. I am well aware that a more subtle picture could easily be produced. But for immediate practical purposes, it has been established in this chapter that what may be linguistically distinct about the languages of literature, is that there is nothing particularly distinct about them. At best clines or dimensions of literariness can be traced, but no clear breaks or divisions. Literary language is often surprisingly ordinary, as ordinary language is often surprisingly poetic (Carter 1999; Hall 2001). If language found in literary texts is difficult, this may often be because of its sheer range. Literature (or a component, like Narrative or Metaphor) is a kind of super-genre which can demand more of its readers than more predictable genres like the business letter or a medical report. Hence linguistically, paradoxically, literature is central or at least special because it is not special: 'all life is there'!

Bakhtin charged the Russian Formalists with being unable to see the literariness of the novel because of its use of ordinary language, where their definition of literariness, based on poetry, required a narrow notion of (word- and sentence-based) formal linguistic creativity. The importance of contexts of reading, study, discussion – the pragmatics of literature – has now been established at least in principle and will be pursued further as the Section progresses (Chapters 2 and 3). Literature is an institutional reality ('Literature is what gets taught,' Barthes suggested – Chapter 2), sets of reading practices constructed by users who can also, by that token, develop them in more relevant and useful ways in their own interests. Literature is a form of 'social action' (Eagleton 1996); the challenge for educators is to make it a more progressive one, as Fowler suggests in the quotation at the head of section 1.4.

The influence of linguistic- textual investigations of literary language can be seen in the prominence and extensiveness of literature teaching as stylistics in second language contexts. (See, for example, Brumfit and Benton 1993), particularly in teaching at more advanced and university levels. The pedagogical interventions of Carter and colleagues, as sketched above, represent an attempt to extend a more traditional linguistic stylistics to something closer to discourse analysis of literary and other texts to deepen insights of learners into the workings of (in this case) English. Another important extension of a more traditional approach, touched on in Chapter 2, is the revival of rhetoric, effectively another form of discourse analysis in modern incarnations as outlined in Andrews (1992) and others, which asks why the text, literary or otherwise, takes the specific form it does, and what it means in context. The concern with context, and the diffusion of boundaries between the literary and the non-literary, as we have seen, are central to the contemporary linguistic ideas of discourse which inform current approaches to literature in language classrooms. One important practical outcome of ideas of literary discourse, has been the trend in education away from awed contemplation of hallowed authors' texts towards encouraging more active interventions, transformations and rewritings by readers themselves, 'a plurality of writings', just as MacCabe would have wanted, and a recognition

of the inextricable imbrication of the written and the spoken, the literary and the non-literary many first read of in Derrida.

Further reading

Literary language
Useful introductions in the work of Carter and colleagues: Carter (1999); Carter and Nash (1990); Eagleton (1996: Ch. 1); Widdowson (1992).
Tambling (1988) and Lecercle (1990) are more advanced and explore the relevance of Derrida's work.

Poetic language
Jakobson (1960) is the classic founding statement of modern formalist stylistics, more widely cited and known than any other publication.
Leech (1969) shows lucidly how many of these ideas would apply in practice.

Creativity
Carter (2004); Pope (2005): the argument for the 'ordinariness' of creativity, with examples.

Corpus linguistics and style and variation
Biber is the central researcher here, as discussed.

Metaphor
Gibbs (1994); Lakoff and Turner (1989).

Narrative
Toolan (2001); Eggins and Slade (1997: Chapter 6 especially). Genre in casual conversation: telling stories.

Discourse
Mills (1997); Jaworski and Coupland (1999) and Tannen (1989) are the best overviews for readers of this book.

Bakhtin
Dentith (1995) and Vice (1997) offer general introductions (Vice is more literary in orientation).

Formalism
Bradford (1997) is the most recent clear argument for formalist stylistics, intelligent and respectful toward Jakobson.

Criticism
Birch (1989) gives a useful critical review of major influential schools of criticism in modern times, which have dictated how we learn to read, talk and write about literature.

Stylistics
Simpson (2004) is the best introduction.
Verdonk (2002) is readable and stimulating.

2
Literature in Education

Literature in education

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- What is the place of literature in education? What is claimed to be learned from reading, studying, discussing and writing about literature in educational contexts?
- How has literary reading been assessed?
- How do literature and language relate to culture?

Chapter 1 sketched the linguistic features of literary texts which research has established, notably the variety and the relations to the spoken and to everyday creativity and language use. Students could in principle learn much about the target language through the variety present in the range of texts known as 'literary'. Nevertheless, no distinct single linguistic identity can be pinned down. The possible linguistic advantage of literary texts for learners of a language (an important advantage) would seem if anything to be its sheer range, which is unparalleled in other text types, and the creative strategies required of the successful literary reader. I return to issues of literary reading in Chapter 3. But apart from claims for the linguistic value of literary studies, literature has traditionally been taught across a variety of contexts as a set of particularly highly valued and supposedly engaging texts. I now turn to these wider educational claims in Chapter 2.

Such a set of claims for the value of literature can be loosely classed together as *humanistic*. Linguistic and literate competences are seen as crucial for full participation in a given society. Beyond this, claims are made for better cultural understanding of others, benefits for the ethical development of the individual and wider general educational benefits in terms of the development of worthier – or perhaps more critical – citizens. Literature for many broadens our notions of what it means to be human, and how we could live better as human beings. Brian Cox's (1991) five key justifications for the

teaching of English, included in his report on the subject in schools, produced for the British government (Department of Education and Science), have been the subject of much discussion, but are generally recognisable positions for practitioners in other countries' educational systems. (Compare discussions of the US context, for example, in Berlin 1996 and Scholes 1998; or for Australia, see Gilbert 1989.)

Data 2.1   Cox's 'Famous Five' reasons for teaching English

- 'Personal growth' view, focuses on the child; emphasises the relationship between language and learning in the individual child, and the role of literature in developing children's imaginative and aesthetic lives.
- 'Cross-curricular' view, focuses on the child's education as a whole: all teachers of English and of other subjects too, have a responsibility to help children with the language demands of different subjects on the school curriculum, otherwise areas of the curriculum may be closed to them. English as a subject and a medium of instruction.
- 'Adult needs' view, the responsibility of English teachers to prepare children for the language demands of adult life, including the workplace, in a fast changing world; children need to deal with day to day demands of spoken language and print; they also need writing skills to communicate clearly, appropriately, effectively.
- 'Cultural heritage' view, the responsibility of schools to lead children to an appreciation of works of literature widely regarded as the finest in the language (includes 'birthright', pleasure, quality of life).
- 'Cultural analysis' view, in which 'English' can help towards a critical understanding of the world and cultural environment. Children need to learn about the processes by which meanings are conveyed, and about the ways in which print and other media carry values ('demystification').

(DES 1989: para. 2.20–27, p. 21)

Goodwyn (1992) surveyed UK English teachers on these five views of English teaching, and reported majority support for view 1 (personal growth), a substantial minority committed to view 5 (cultural criticism), and little support for the other three (Marshall 1998: 110), even though successive UK governments and other advanced economies are putting increasing emphasis on rather narrow and utilitarian interpretations of views 2 and 3. 'The word "critical" does not appear in the [British] National Curriculum for reading at Key Stages 3 and 4' (Wilks 1998). A similar survey of second language teachers might be expected to show more favour to the second and third views, language and literacy, but there is no comparable survey of teachers' allegiances for the second language education field. Schulz (in Scott and Tucker 2002) notes that in new 'Standards' being developed for modern foreign languages teaching in the USA, literature is referred to in passing, but with no clear indication of why it should be included in language teaching programmes.

The first, fourth and fifth of Cox's justifications are the main focus of this chapter, though we should note here too the characteristic modern move to subsume literature teaching within wider notions of (English) language teaching and learning. Carter and Long (1991: Ch. 1), though more concerned with literature in adult EFL classrooms, similarly contend that justifications for literature in the curriculum fall under three heads: culture, language and personal growth.

In the light of these claims for the value of literature in education, Chapter 2 investigates how literature has been taught and learned, and why, with some examples and history, including the important postcolonial history of literature teaching. Issues in the assessment of literature are also addressed, preparatory to the case studies and research reported in Part 2. In line with the view of language and literature as discourse elaborated in Chapter 1, it is argued here that literature study and teaching is a social practice best understood as discourse processing in particular contexts. It is in local contexts, too, that participants in literary education, whether teachers, students or others, can most meaningfully participate.

Finally, it is argued that cultural awareness can be promoted particularly effectively through language and literature pedagogies, since language, particularly in the kind of texts usually included in literature syllabuses, reveals much about its users and the societies they interact with, and can also be used to prompt learners' growing awareness of their own individual and cultural identities, beliefs and values. 'Culture is a conversation' is a well-established maxim in anthropology and cultural studies. A perspective has developed, amongst practitioners and theorists, which emphasises literature as texts of culture, with values and beliefs central to a community of language users, and typically taught through education systems and educational institutions. Cultural concerns have in many cases replaced or subsumed straightforward linguistic concerns, such as traditional stylistics or New Criticism (Chapter 1), now seen as too narrow and dry. The claim is that students learn much about the culture of those who speak and use the language by reading and discussing their central works of literature. The second chapter aims to unpack notions of culture and the relations of culture, literature and language, and to examine more carefully the interactions between learners and texts, and what can be learned through such interactions. From the particular perspective of this book, another way to view this shift from 'language' to 'culture' is as a productive move to a reconstituted or revived view of literary texts as *discourse*. Participants of a culture 'do' much of their culture through language, including language in literature.

2.1   The literary curriculum: origins and evolution – What is studied, how and why?

Literature has not always been a school and college subject in the timetable, to be studied through appropriate anthologies and syllabuses of 'classic' authors

and texts and examined at the end of the course with grades assigned. Reading for pleasure or out of curiosity and private study pre-dated and will no doubt go on long after literature has been disestablished from the educational curriculum or changed out of all recognition (see Hartley 2001 for the UK, or Long 2003 for the US). However, the educational focus of this book determines a focus on the teaching and learning of literature, and some historical understanding helps highlight the issues which have preoccupied and continue to preoccupy this relatively recent field. Classic literature (in Greek and Latin) was already central to European education when in the nineteenth century growing nationalist interests and wider numbers entering and continuing education began to lead to emphasis on the importance of national literatures in the official national language being taught. The discipline which came to be known as English Literature developed recognisably through the nineteenth century, first in India and the imperial colonies, and then in the provision and organisation of 'useful' reading and learning for women and working men. What was to be studied? How and why? How did the subject to be known as Literature emerge to meet these questions? These are questions which still concern teachers as much as policy-makers today, even though answers evolve over time, and though, too, these issues have been given more attention to date in L1 situations than in contexts where literature is seen as a route to, intrinsic to, or even as the culminating end point of second language acquisition. Case studies and empirical investigations into language, literature and education are explored in more detail in Part 2. To anticipate Parts 2 and 3, there is surprisingly much still to know and understand, particularly as regards the value of literature in a second language curriculum, despite a wealth of speculation, assertion and counter-assertion, as argued very cogently by Edmondson (1997).

The origins and evolution of modern schooled literary study: The UK context

Literature from its institution as a subject of study in the modern era was seen by the governors and missionaries who instituted it as moral and religious training for, and sometimes even as a last defence against, the threatening 'masses', who were becoming more powerful in advanced industrial and national world orders with the coming of degrees of democracy and growing literacy requirements, increasingly enshrined in obligatory state education systems. Literature would offer values and moral training in an age which seemed increasingly to need them. Any teacher will immediately recognise, of course, that classroom realities – what students do with the literature given to them, in this case – can depart radically from the best intentions of curriculum planners like Collins:

Quote 2.1   What is literature? What is its value?

Literature consists of all the books – and they are not so many – where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity and attraction of form. My

notion of the literary student is one who through books explores the strange voyages of man's moral reason, the impulses of the human heart, the chances and changes that have overtaken human ideals of virtue and happiness, of conduct and manners, and the shifting fortunes of great conceptions of truth and virtues. Poets, dramatists, humorists, satirists, masters of fiction, the great preachers, the character-writers, the maxim-writers, the great political orators – they are all literature in so far as they teach us to know man and to know human nature. This is what makes literature, rightly sifted and rightly studied, not the mere elegant trifling that it is so often and so erroneously supposed to be, but a proper instrument for a systematic training of the imagination and sympathies, and of a genial and varied moral sensibility.

(John Morley, first Professor of Literature in London, 1888; quoted in Palmer 1965: 93–4)

The idea of a 'canon' of approved literary texts and authors of particular value, like (very like) a body of approved religious writings, developed in the nineteenth century as questions of which books exactly to teach became more urgent with growing numbers of literature students and growing demands on the teachers of literature.

Concept 2.1 The literary 'canon'

An authoritative list of books considered to form the centre of the literary curriculum. Any worthwhile literary education would, purportedly, help students see the lasting value and importance of these central works ('**classics**'), as well as their supposed interconnections in an attempted cultural network of values and beliefs central to their society. Shakespeare is usually seen as central and primary to the canon of English literature, though it is surprising how much disagreement is revealed beyond that relatively safe name when the history of canon proposals is examined. Even within the works of Shakespeare, the most highly valued works have changed regularly over the last two or three hundred years from the histories to the comedies or the tragedies or the late plays, forcing the realisation that a canon tells us more about the society that produces and endorses it than it does about the value of literary works.

(See Kermode 1983; Durant and Fabb 1990: Ch. 1; Eaglestone 2000: Chs 5 and 6. On Shakespeare's pre-eminence and changing reputation, see Taylor 1990)

Literature was also offered, of course, in genuine response to real demands for intelligent and engaging reading matter on the part of the more intellectual working classes and middle class women with leisure and some income. Palmer (1965), for example, traces the emergence of 'English Studies' in the nineteenth century out of a tradition of Rhetoric (especially in the Scottish universities) and 'Belles Lettres' to intellectual respectability (see Crawford 1992 on Scottish origins). Others (notably Viswanathan 1989) have shown important colonial origins of the subject in the British Empire, especially India. I turn first to the domestic UK developments, though we will need to return more directly to both postcolonial perspectives and, in closing the chapter, to rhetoric, a concern with the construction and contexts of texts (not privileging

literature unduly), in many ways close to the ideas of language as discourse already elaborated, which some believe is newly relevant for English today ('rhetoricians' include Eagleton 1996; Andrews 1992; Berlin 1996; Scholes 1998).

Quote 2.2   Origins of English study

The study of English in England began in quite a humble and informal way, as a kind of poor man's Classics, and more than a hundred years passed before it won recognition as a branch of scholarship in the highest seats of learning.
(Palmer 1965: vii)

Any 'canon' or literary syllabus will represent writings of particular value for a particular group with particular purposes at a particular point in time (Eagleton 1996). One notion of literature has traditionally been of 'fine writing', offering models of correct or standard English, however odd or untenable that might seem in the light of Chapter 1, in which oracy, non-standard and vernacular forms were identified as salient characteristics of modern litera- ture. Certainly, with a growing *nationalist* pride in the vernacular through the eighteenth century, along with the spectacular expansion of the British Empire, it became more respectable for gentlemen to study English, as in other European nationalistic contexts through the nineteenth century (Doyle 1989). Christianity generally took the lead, just as Protestantism had depended importantly on vernacular print culture for its success (Eisenstein 1979). Dissenting Academies, Low Church ministers and other relatively marginal 'missionaries of culture' took language and, increasingly, literature studies to the working classes at Mechanics' Institutes (to become Birkbeck College, London, or civic universities like Leicester or Nottingham), and to the newly formed London Colleges (to become University College London and King's College). Later, 'Extension' classes of the new civic universities (Leeds 1874, Sheffield 1879, Birmingham 1880, Liverpool 1881) catered for wider audiences along with women's colleges such as Queen's College, London (1848) or access newly granted to female students as in University College London (from 1878).

Data 2.2   The professionalisation of literary studies

- 1828 first Chair of English Literature, University College London.
- 1849 and 1878 first Chairs of English at Oxford and Cambridge, in Anglo-Saxon.
- 1860 first US chair of English Literature, Indiana.
- 1865 Professor of Logic and English Literature, St Andrews University.
- 1904 first Chair of English Literature at Oxford.

(See Pope 2002: 33. For comparable US histories; see Court 1992, or more readably, Graff 1987.)

Women quickly came to dominate English numerically as students as the subject was established at British universities in the early twentieth century, though the teachers remained, and largely remain male, especially at higher levels. 'By the 1880s…English studies…were expanding rapidly, but the expansion was only lateral, within the lower levels of the academic hierarchy' (Palmer 1965: 64). As the study of rhetoric fell out of fashion, the philological study of Old English (as it was termed) tended to replace it as the 'language' element of an 'English' degree. The seeds were planted for the later split of English into 'lang.' and 'lit.' studies (to be exacerbated further by the post-Chomskyan 1960s rise of linguistics), with little to say to each other. The moral and cultural interests of the newcomer Literature were increasingly at odds with drier 'scientific' linguistic interests.

Men like Matthew Arnold or Churton Collins, associated with the founding of English Studies, looked to literature to broaden horizons, to teach tolerance as well as taste and the 'education of the emotions'. From the later nineteenth century the state was increasingly central to the study of English in Britain and overseas, as in the case of Matthew Arnold, mentioned in Chapter 1, and literature was conceived as useful reading, especially to inculcate proper (middle-class) feelings and sensitivities in those who could not otherwise be relied on to possess them.

The content and aims of the L1 literature and 'English' curriculum is today still much discussed and always controversial, usually under the headings of 'canon' and 'classics', and the challenges to these mounted by feminism, post colonialism and other contemporary realignments. Should the classics be studied? exclusively? or are they no longer relevant enough to the interests of contemporary students? The content and rationale of literature syllabuses is a research issue raised again in Parts 2 and 3.

Concept 2.2   What is a classic?

'A difficult book over which we fall asleep' (anon.)
'Books which are bought but not read' (Barthes)
'Something which everybody wants to *have read* but not to read' (Mark Twain)
'One of a set of cultural texts whose task is to represent the past to the present' (Kress)

The origins and evolution of modern schooled literary study: English as a colonial project

Quote 2.3   English teaching and Empire

English language teaching was a crucial part of the colonial enterprise. . . . ELT needs to be seen not only as a tool in service of Empire but also as a product of Empire. (Pennycook 1998: 9, 19)

The aspect of the history neglected by Palmer and others which seems obvious now, but was not in 1965, nor even when Eagleton produced the first edition of his best-selling *Literary Theory* (1983) with its historical sketch (Chapter 2, to some degree based on Baldick 1983), is 'the irony that English literature appeared as a subject in the curriculum of the colonies long before it was institutionalised in the home country' (Viswanathan 1989: 3). A long history of English language teaching in India burgeoned after 1813, with the opening of India to missionary activity, and an 1816 memorandum responding affirmatively to 'native' demands for relevant education (English language colleges) to enable them to participate in the wealth being generated by the East India Company. (Canagarajah 1999 sketches a parallel history of English teaching in Sri Lanka.) In a strange alliance, leading to interesting variations in textbook syllabus, Viswanathan traces a Utilitarian effort to bring relevant 'modern knowledge' through literature, even as Christian missionaries sought to bring moral and ethical enlightenment to the supposedly benighted 'dark races' (see also Pennycook 1994; 1998). But it was only from 1835 that literature came to be seen as the key vehicle for teaching *both* language and values simultaneously as the English Education Act required Indians to 'acculturate' and 'ameliorate' through the study of English language classics, sixty years before the establishment of English at Oxford University in England. In this way, 'English' identity (compare Doyle 1989) was being constructed *against* the Others in the Orient (Pennycook 1998). The new subject was called 'English', not, as in most other countries, 'Literature' because the language and the culture were seen as an integral part of the study. 'English language teaching was a crucial part of the colonial enterprise' (Pennycook 1998: 9). But 'ELT needs to be seen not only as a tool in service of Empire but also as a product of Empire' (p. 19). Similar debates took place over what to call English/literature in another postcolonial site, the USA, and whether such a thing as 'American' literature might exist (Graff 1987; Ashcroft et al. 1989).

There is a clear lineage between the current debates around 'English as a World Language', and the introduction of an English studies dominated by literature to India in the early nineteenth century. (There are 'remarkable similarities between the rhetoric of nineteenth-century writers on the English language and current writing on the global spread of English' – Pennycook 1998: 31.) How separable, it is now commonly asked, are a language and the cultures that have historically developed it? In sum, literature may be seen as an opportunity as well as a challenge for the second language learner for and by whom English studies were originally developed and elaborated. I return in section 2.2 to the notion of opportunity or 'pedagogies of appropriation' (Canagarajah 1999, after Rajan 1992). For the moment, against the idea that the development of English language and

literature teaching were not in the real interests of learners, it is important to note Pennycook's insistence that:

Quote 2.4   The value of English to learners

[F]or many who have learned English, the experience has opened up new possibilities of personal gain and communal interaction, and to dismiss their learning and using of English as a colonization is to position them within a new academic imperialism . . . it is important that we establish some way of teaching English that is not automatically an imperialist project.
(Pennycook 1994: 69)

2.2   Literature in second language teaching

Literature is too often viewed by the second language educator as a source of activities, as 'material', with too little concern for the wider curricular issues which can help us understand what is going on when a student reads (or fails to read) literature. In this section I argue that both foreign language teaching and communicative language teaching have often missed (different) learning opportunities in using literature in ways which fail to coordinate the literary and the linguistic. Broadly speaking:

- literature is typically used in more traditional ways in university *foreign language education*. 'Literariness' is emphasised and linguistic elements underplayed;
- in *second language teaching situations*, where language is required more immediately for communication, and at lower schooling levels, literature is more likely to be integrated into a *communicative curriculum*, where language issues are focused on and 'difficult' or distracting literary features are played down;
- it follows that better balanced and better integrated approaches may have much to offer.

The ascendancy and then historical centrality of literature to language teaching is best researched to date for first language learners of national languages and literatures, in particular of English in the U.K. (Palmer 1965; Baldick 1983; Doyle 1989; see section 2.1, above). The insights gained into English language and literature teaching in India by Viswanathan were overlooked by the earlier more ethnocentric British research.

Claims made at the Centre for L1 learners have often been repeated uncritically. Certain claims are typically made for the value of literature, in all kinds of contexts, for language learners:

> ### Data 2.3   Claims for value of literature in second language teaching
>
> - affective arguments (pleasurable, motivating, personalising);
> - cultural arguments (cultural knowledge, intercultural experience);
> - psycholinguistic arguments ('focus on form', discourse processing skills – inferencing, processing of non-literal language, tolerance of ambiguity and others).
>
> More miscellaneously:
>
> - expands vocabulary;
> - aids language acquisition in unspecified but general ways;
> - 'gives a feel for' the language;
> - develops more fluent reading skills;
> - promotes interpretative and inferential skills;
> - contributes to cultural and inter-cultural understanding (compare section 2.4, below, for the last argument);
> - literary texts are supposedly particularly linguistically memorable (some poetry perhaps qualifies);
> - above all, literature is claimed to be pleasurable.

These claims are not wrong (as explored in this book) but have too often been taken on trust, and typically need to be framed more empirically and precisely for any useful investigation to be possible, to be researched, in short.

Nevertheless there is an association at least as well established as for L1 contexts, and usually similarly hierarchical, between literature and language teaching in formal foreign language teaching and learning contexts, notably the grammar schools in Europe and the European empires, and in universities. (The European History of English Studies website offers case studies by country and bibliography, largely summarised in Engler and Haas 2000.) The teaching of modern foreign languages and literatures was typically modelled in the first instance on the teaching of the 'classics' (i.e. Greek and Latin classics) which they often came to replace in more open and democratic educational systems in Europe, despite the more vocational demands supposedly to be placed on the modern foreign languages graduate. A crucial development for the role of literature in second language teaching programmes was the burgeoning of the 'communicative' language teaching (clt) approach, notably from the 1980s, particularly in more privileged educational institutions, often replacing a 'grammar-translation' model of language teaching whose final humanistic aim was to enable the student to read successfully the classic literature of the language. For clt, by contrast,

literature would come to be seen (by some) as irrelevant or at best a useful means or 'resource', rather than the end of study. This section of the chapter accordingly deals with literature in second language teaching in these two aspects, as well as sketching the most recent developments.

Overview

- *Traditional approaches*, deriving heavily from nineteenth-century notions of the canon and a moral agenda for literature, with at best a little New Criticism or elementary sentence-based stylistics study thrown in, but with linguistic dimensions often neglected or assumed. Typically found in 'foreign language' and higher academic contexts ('humanism').
- Approaches typically deriving from or prompted by *communicative language teaching approaches* (clt), in which literature is viewed as discourse, and literary texts on more equal terms with the other texts comprising a culture (*Literature with a small 'l'* (McRae 1991) ('springboard').
- The productive consonances of *clt and 'theory'* as reader response or post-structuralist ideas of the inevitability of different responses to texts by different readers, according to background, gender, race, nationality, etc., or in general the contexts of reading (critical reading; 'culture') feed into 'sociocultural' approaches to language teaching and learning (Kramsch and others; 'appropriation').

Traditional approaches

Commonly observed in modern foreign language studies across many countries and systems is a progress from 'comprehension' of less demanding and often pedagogically produced reading passages or extracts, along with grammatical exercises, vocabulary questions and drills, supplemented now-adays by some 'communicative' work often (the 'springboard' approach) to 'criticism' of prestigious literary texts for the elite students in the university who have crossed the post-compulsory education divide and can now 'get serious', who will be assumed (not unproblematically) to be linguistically competent and ready to discuss themes and ideas. In these 'higher' classes, discussions will often proceed with at best highly selective reference to the text supposedly under study. In both cases, language concerns are swiftly relegated to a secondary issue (by teachers at least; students are likely to be much more aware of vocabulary difficulties and culture gaps: see, e.g., Davis and Bistodeau 1993). Is this wish-fulfilment, or a view of reading development informed by empirical research? Chapter 3 on reading, together with emprical studies reported in Part 2, will reveal that language proficiency is certainly a more crucial factor at lower levels of reading proficiency, but also that particularly for the second language reader, language can never cease to be at the centre of literary (or any other) reading, especially if language is understood as discourse (what it does for its users) rather than simply words and sentences.

In their post-communicative revolution view of *English Literature in a World Context*, Brumfit and Benton note across countries and cultures:

Quote 2.5   Literature teaching and levels

There is a striking tendency for creative, cultural and affective factors to group themselves in the non-university sector, and for formal textual analysis, as well as theory, to be found in universities.
(Brumfit and Benton 1993: 5)

Even at advanced levels what emerges in many parts of the world is a dire educational picture of lecture-based teaching, using anthologies of classics extracts or largely unread classic works, supporting an unacknowledged thriving industry of translations, cribs and 'Notes' summarising author's life and times, themes, plot, characters, and anticipating exam questions with lists of key quotations to learn. (Compare Muyskens 1983; for 'kunji' crammers in India, see Rajan 1992, especially Looma). Curricula seem largely intuitive or are justified purely on grounds of tradition with little concern or regard for educational research- or even the expressed desire of students and other stakeholders for a vocationally relevant education. (Liskin-Gasparro 1999: bibliography). How did things come to reach this pass? The origins lie in the nineteenth-century UK and colonial histories already sketched.

For Africa, for example, Abety (1991) offers a detailed and precise breakdown of elements of a fairly traditional literary curriculum in Cameroon, much influenced by the demands of external University of London examinations. In Europe, Rizzo's description of a slimmed down traditional canon of Eng. Lit. for TEFL learners in Italy would seem to be representative still of much equally conservative European activity (Rizzo 1993). We return to questions of curriculum and syllabus in Chapter 5.

A coda to this section can perhaps be offered by considering the kind of books being published for advanced 'foreign' readers of (English) literature (as they were invariably labelled), some of whom, of course, would teach the less advanced. One of the better examples is Lerner (1954). *English Literature. An Interpretation for Students Abroad*, is a characteristic study by a literary critic and teacher with wide experience of work in the colonies and commonwealth as well as in the British (and later North American) Centre. English literature is to be interpreted for these students. Chapters conclude with extracts and commentaries (never questions) demonstrating further points made by the chapter. 'Liking' or agreeing with an author are dismissed as secondary to 'appreciation' (Ch. 3), which is an objective assessment of how well the language has been used: sensitivity to language will produce sensitivity to literature and sustained ongoing reading of literature will refine sensitivity to new levels. The 'foreign' reader has little to contribute

on 'his' own account (the possibility of female readers or even writers is barely raised). Cultural difficulties are dismissed as more apparent than real: Milton's Christianity is not particularly important to *Paradise Lost*, it is suggested, which seems counter-intuitive to say the least. Reading and more reading will increase language proficiency somehow. In any case, 'this book is written for those who have mastered the language but are unfamiliar with literature' (p. 58), who (it is claimed) want access to the 'universal' ideas and values of canonical English Literature.

Communicative approaches

The communicative approach to language teaching, whatever else the often rather vague and elastic term may suggest, is normally taken to be centrally concerned with learners negotiating meaning for themselves, learning by doing things with language, in authentic contexts. The movement led to an important revival of the fortunes of literature in progressive classrooms from the 1980s, largely discredited for language teachers because of the traditional approaches sketched above which had been found to be too remote for the vast majority of learners. The study of language, literature and culture was now to be integrated.

Data 2.4   Literature in a communicative approach perspective

- Effective language and literacy learning comes about through individuals negotiating meaning for themselves; the need for meaningful adult tasks and contexts. Literature (widely understood) offers a large enough range of potentially motivating and interesting texts for any individual's interests.
- Learners should be assisted from the earliest stages to develop strategies for dealing with authentic language materials, including the contingency that foreign language use in the real world is often likely to involve the need to deal with unpredictable situations and events beyond the current level of linguistic proficiency ('autonomy' and independence; strategies).
- Effective citizens can read critically and discuss large ethical and political issues; the complexities of modern life, including language across different and multiplying media, require expertise in 'reading between the lines'.
- Language education should facilitate and even promote freer movement of ideas and people between communities, extending mental and even physical horizons beyond current geographical and cultural limitations.

The *communicative critique of traditional approaches* to literature teaching stemmed from the perception that the study of literature is not always necessarily pleasurable or meaningful for all readers, despite the claims of its enthusiasts. A number of classroom studies across time and space have shown that classroom uses of literature put off at least as many students as

they encourage (Hall 2003; Sarland 1991 for first language classrooms). Brumfit (1981) makes the additional criticism that foreign language literature or 'advanced reading' syllabuses often fail to manifest any sense of progression, or at best specify items of knowledge rather than advances in skills or abilities. Why read Text (or often *Extract*) 2 after Text 1 rather than before? The rather inadequate answer in many cases is simply that it was written earlier.

Short and Candlin (1986: 89) write of the typical 'flight from the text', where teaching *about* literature (literary history, classic criticism, author biographies, plot summaries, more latterly 'theory' in place of attention to specificities of texts) generally stands in for 'teaching the literature itself'. This last essentialist phrase is hardly unproblematic, but can stand for now by way of a meaningful contrast of emphasis at least. The proponents of a communicative approach asked why, if language is logically to be at the centre of a language syllabus, literature syllabuses for language learners failed to engage with or at least to explicitly signal their relevance to language acquisition and language skills. This has indeed been a significant failing.

Talib, of the National University of Singapore, in 'Why Not Study Non-Native English Literature?' (1992) argues that such considerations lead naturally at least to the selection of local writings in local Englishes. But such proposals have met resistance from those who want a more standard British or 'Centre' model for students to read, as well as those who feel the reading of literature should broaden rather than confirm horizons. At worst, Centre applied linguistics writers are accused of a new imperialism or Anglicism in Pennycook's (1994) terms. (Other advocates of local literatures include Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986a; and Kachru 1986.) That the issue arises and can be contentious is a product of the impact of communicative language teaching approaches, and the general receptiveness prompted by developments in literary studies which have prompted greater awareness of difference, including different readers with different interests and backgrounds, all relevant to English as a world language and literature. The communicative approach is fully consonant with such reflective debates.

A study of journal articles for teachers and others in the field appearing in the US-based *Modern Languages Journal* and the British *English Language Teaching Journal*, reveals a similar kind of evolution from more traditional to more humanistic ideas of 'response' and on to current concerns with culture and identity in more obviously multilingual and multiethnic communities of language users.

Kramsch and Kramsch (2000) sketch an indicative history of literature in language teaching, with particular reference to the USA, as evident in *Modern Language Journal* articles through the twentieth century, in which the increasing marginalisation over time is clear, at least until present times.

1. *Until roughly 1914, a traditional view of literature as the purpose and centre of language teaching prevails* in academic circles, using grammar translation methods, even as, perhaps more emphatically on account of, the rise of Direct Method and more commercial and vocationally oriented language teaching schools which would have had little time for literature. For an elite in this first period, literature played a pre-eminent role in the teaching and learning of languages: '*the study of language in those days meant the study of literature*' (Kramsch and Kramsch 2000: 554).

2. *From about 1918 to 1929: literature as a source of reading potentially accessible to all literate Americans*, whether they have the means to travel or mix with Europeans or not. A more democratic second period is discerned post war.

Already a leading theme of this book was becoming clear, as disputes are published between the philologists, who see literary works as linguistic texts for analysis, and a more humanist or literary critical approach, which looks for response, pleasure and appreciation without overdue worrying over the linguistic detail (pp. 556–7).

3. *From 1929 to 1945, literature increasingly irrelevant, at best a luxury supplementary material for the more advanced students*. A more ideational, content-oriented view of reading as the goal of foreign language instruction came to predominate, the Kramsches argue. Texts were seen as repositories of information which could be retrieved by literate readers, and, moreover, this process of information retrieval could be tested scientifically. A legacy of this view remains in the worst of the 'comprehension' tests which are still encountered in some classrooms. What can easily be tested by questions with wrong and right answers is not, typically, what is of most interest and value in the literary text (see Assessment, below). Nevertheless the psychologists were publishing influential articles on reading, curriculum development and testing (561). Those who advocate using literature in these years, often justify their activities by appeal to a growing demand for translators, whose skills could be honed on these demanding naturalistic texts (562).

4. *From 1939–1945, literature is offered as a source of solace in a troubled world*, and, anticipating more modern arguments for literature reading as a training in critical awareness, some educators argued for literature as *'a political safeguard against indoctrination and propaganda'* (p. 562). Reflecting the growing prestige of psychology, literature was also justified as a way to know what 'Others' were thinking, indeed *how* they thought.

5. A succeeding period, *roughly 1945 to 1957*, sees a view of literature developing **as** *'content and entertainment'*. Literature at this time is increasingly seen as only appropriate to advanced level study, an ideational content to which the student gains access after having mastered the

linguistic structures carefully graded through audio-lingual methods. Moreover, as well as a kind of pleasurable reward for the successful, literature could be seen as light relief, an 'entertaining supplement to audiolingual drills' (p. 563).

6. The Kramsches note a significant reduction in the number of articles even mentioning literature in *The Modern Language Journal during the 1950s*.

7. *A more 'Humanistic' phase*, however, is discerned *from 1957 to 1979*, in which culture with a small 'c' can include literature, though professionalism of linguistics and language teaching in general 'further drove the study of foreign literatures, perceived as an elitist pursuit and extraneous to everyday communicative needs, virtually out of the picture in the study of foreign languages' (p. 566). At the same time, in those few articles which do deal with literature at this time, a growing precision is noted over how exactly to teach literature in language classes, together with an interest in inter-disciplinary approaches, including appeals to anthropology and humanistic, for example Rogerian, psychology, as well as the application of 'readability' studies to foreign language text selection and teaching.

8. *From 1979 until the end of twentieth century* literature comes to be valued in the context of the rise of *communicative language teaching*, as *'authentic text'*. What the Kramsches term 'the proficiency movement': 'saw in literature *the opportunity for vocabulary acquisition, the development of reading strategies, and the training of critical thinking, that is, reasoning skills'* (p. 567). It is noted that articles begin to refer to research in psycholinguistics and discourse analysis ('schemata' and the like). Other critical points are made in the conclusion to the Kramsches' survey. The learner-centredness of reading in the communicative paradigm, first, is highlighted by way of noting the absence of concern with the production of the literary text, the author, his or her intentions, and above all the language of the text, which tends to be an inconvenient obstacle on the way to examination of 'culture' and society, rather than central to those notions, and of interest in itself, as it surely should be in a language learning classroom. Notable, too, is the typical relative 'insulation' of literature study in language departments, at least until very recently, from poststructuralist and post-modernist interrogations of the nature and status of literary text and literary reading, as well as of the whole nature of language learning, certainly one area this book is designed to engage with. A hopeful sign the Kramsches descry, again one to be taken up in what follows, is the growing interest in applied linguistic and language teaching circles in.

9. *'Literariness', linguistic creativity, play and metaphor in language use*, a broad area where literature and language study most obviously come together (Gibbs 1994; Carter 1999 and 2004; Cook 2000; Pope 2005; Chapter 1, section 1.3 above).

A parallel story, with only slight differences of emphasis emerges from a consideration of the British publication *English Language Teaching Journal*

from its founding in the 1940s, with more global reference to a variety of teaching situations for EFL (English as a Foreign Language), under the auspices, first, of the British Council, and then a more diversified base of readers and researchers.

1. *The 1950s professionalisation and suspicion of literature* are well in evidence here too, at least in negative terms, as a lack of articles in *ELTJ* on literature in language teaching in the early years. The effort was to distinguish the new approaches from that discredited tradition. *ELTJ* begins to publish articles in this area regularly with the rise of:
2. *The communicative approach*, in which British ideas and practitioners played so prominent a role. A communicative approach argues for *the importance of meaning and personalisation for learners, for affective values in learning, for the use of authentic materials and 'real' language and communication.* For all of this literature was seen as an ideal resource. Early examples make assumptions which seem much more difficult today about learners' (or 'foreigners'') desires to become 'one of 'us', but 'response' is already a key word, with stress on the need to respond rather than to analyse every word as a more 'natural' approach to literature. Thus through the 1980s articles appear on the *humanistic value of reading*, and advocating '*reader response'* approaches to literature teaching in language classes (Adeyanju 1978; Elliott 1990; Hirvela 1996). Advocates of more precise analytical approaches ('*stylistics*', in Edwards 1967; Yorke 1986) are typically rebutted by more intuitive and practical teachers (Gower 1986). A special literature teaching issue (44.3, July 1990) argues the need to shift from more traditional to response-based and communicative educational approaches.
3. *Through the 1990s, 'culture'* is increasingly the buzz word, with literature ('with a small 'l': McRae 1991) seen as potentially playing a role in facilitating the learner's access to this English-using culture (or later as a source of contestation of linguistic imperialism, as Prodromou 1992).

Other relevant journals (compare Part 4, section 9.1) reveal a similar story.

To turn again to a representative textbook of the age, Moody (1971), by contrast with Lerner, was an experienced EFL practitioner, with a background in secondary teaching rather than higher education, and in second language education in Africa and elsewhere, who offers a practical handbook for overseas teachers, in Longman's well-established 'Handbooks for Language Teachers' series, including principles for selection and presentation of texts, down to lesson plans and even some scripts for teachers (Moody 1986: 58). Moody's experience in teacher training had obviously led him to feel that it was impossible to be too precise and explicit in such materials. More significant by way of contrast with Lerner (and anticipating in many ways Hill's (1986) later title in Macmillan's own competitor series for inexperienced or less highly trained teachers), Moody distances himself from 'appreciation' in

this context (p. 25), though himself also the author of a book on *Literary Appreciation* (Longman 1968), preferring to stress the progressivist notion of the importance of 'students' own interests and experiences' (p. 83) (not of interest or relevance to the more mandarin Lerner), and the importance of close linguistic analysis where appropriate, though not for its own sake (p. 20). Literature is central, Moody proclaims in a strikingly contemporary opening, because 'Literature is Language' (p. 2). Moody's educational experience is prominent throughout, especially in proposals for extension work, integration into other language and composition work, and the demands of exams. Indeed, Moody again anticipates, if only tentatively, more recent work on 'transformations' (Pope 1995) in working with literary texts in classrooms.

A final measure or indication of changes that have taken place in the field are the two related literary histories offered by Carter and McRae (1996; 1997/2001). The earlier work is a simpler version of the later, roughly speaking designed for the advanced student and their teachers respectively, but with similar principles of annotation, illustration and readability built in, as well as insistence on the ongoing changes which characterise a literature and any accounts of its history, and the historic as well as contemporary multi-lingualism of Englishes, including accounts of more recent writings in English, up to the later 1990s: 'the question of what is English about English literature is still a big question today' (1995:2). Popular genres are investigated as well as strictly canonical literature, in a way that would make Lerner uncomfortable, and the later work in particular has been praised for the language notes, expanded in the second edition (ranging from 'The earliest figurative language', through Wordsworth's 'real language of men', to dialect uses, modernist syntax and beyond. The idea that the later work can be targeted 'for the British reader and for readers abroad, for foreign students as well as those whose native language is English' (p. xvi) is not mere publishers' puff, but one more indication of the changes that have taken place with regard to older traditional certainties and divisions and boundaries. In the same way, this book, while respecting real and important differences between L1 and L2 students of language and literature, is reluctant to strictly separate the two constituencies. Jacket publicity for Carter and McRae (2001) significantly refers to 'students of writing', where earlier works addressed students of literature, and to 'English Studies' which is inexorably replacing longer established ideas of 'Eng. Lit'.

The analysis of literature textbooks is not explicitly dealt with in Part 2, but could be an interesting textual project, and would easily extend to investigations of actual classroom or student uses of the material.

Clt and 'theory': culture and discourse

In more recent times, there has been a kind of recalling of origins for many communicative practitioners, beyond first wave enthusiasms and back to

Habermas, Gadamer or other important philosophers and social theorists for whom 'communication' was to be fundamental to the development of a more just social order. This reaction has typically involved elaborating ideas of culture and discourse, often by researchers grouped under headings such as 'sociocultural', 'ecological' or 'critical'.

Alan Maley, for example, a significant if not the central 'first-wave' developer and promoter of classroom pedagogies and materials for literature in communicative language teaching (Maley and Duff 1989; Duff and Maley 1990; Maley 1993), taking the humanistic line, advocates the use of literature because it is intrinsically motivating to talk about death, life, love and the like, larger themes which otherwise escape (purportedly) 'communicative' syllabuses, preoccupied, as they tend to be, with timetables, tourism and other exchanges and transactions. The point is well taken in many cases, where original ideas of the communicative were lost to more instrumentalist perspectives. In such ideas, too, lies the origin, for example, of an article like Adeyanju's (1978): 'Teaching literature and human values in ESL', which appeared in the *English Language Teaching Journal* in 1978. The irony is that this was just as this paradigm of universal 'human values' and the like was breaking down, as MacCabe and his generation studied in Paris. For those who take a more discourse-oriented view of literature, 'death' is a discourse, love, life and other human experiences are experienced through language. Approaches to literature as discourse must therefore consider the language of the literary texts as discourse. The final failing of the humanistic approach to clt may have been a tendency to move too swiftly to content and response, with insufficient attention to the discourses which enable this move – the language in short!

Second language teaching has tended to follow on from such developments with some lag, and has generally been conservative and humanist in orientation. Section 2.4 details some interesting exceptions in the work of Kohonen et al. (2001), Lantolf (2000), Kramsch and others. 'Humanism' is not necessarily intended as a criticism. We all 'have' experiences. Learning how we are alike as well as different from others, to tolerate or accommodate difference, are vital 'humanistic' linguistic and intercultural skills. The proposal of many today, however, is that to consider literature and culture as discourse offers students more sensitive, practical and precise ways to negotiate foreign language literatures *of particular relevance to the language learner*, and that to learn a language is to negotiate new positions, not to risk assimilation and annihilation, or at best the devaluation of pre-existing values and skills (including your own language and culture) (compare section 2.4 below). That simplistic humanistic programmes have not generally been effective is now largely uncontroversial.

Bredella and Delanoy call for a new research discipline, underdeveloped till now, of 'literature in education'.

Quote 2.6   Literature in education as a research area

Literature in education concerns itself with the study of the interactive processes among literary texts, teachers and students in specific educational contexts in order to improve existing practices of literature teaching.
(Bredella and Delanoy 1996: xxiii)

The programme will be revisited in a similar form in Part 3 as 'action research' for teachers who wish to change and improve classrooms if not wider life experiences for participants in education. 'Understanding another culture' can easily lapse into a new ethnocentrism, a new exercise of power, rather than, as intended, transcending the old dichotomies (us and them, familiar and exotic). The challenge is to teach in such a way as to prompt revisions in understanding of such relationships as well as in self-understanding.

Literature in slt: conclusion

In the last analysis, however, it is important to stress that many of these progressive and communicative 'Centre' ideas traced through journals and books in the preceding few pages had very limited impact on everyday practices in English literary and linguistic education around the world with which I began. In the 'Centre' English teaching countries (UK, USA, etc.), in the dominant communicative paradigm, the teaching of literature in second language contexts is typically not systematic, not well integrated and often peripheral. The language of the text itself is considered incidental and is not a focus of attention except for some more formalist-stylistic approaches. In 'Periphery' ESL and EFL contexts the paradigms are at best New Critical, often very traditionally humanistic still (themes, universal human values).

Quote 2.7   Literature teaching in centre and periphery

'Literature is back, but wearing different clothes,' wrote Maley (1989: 59). Of course, it never went away, and has always been a large part of EFL for many learners: in South Asia, for example, the English textbook is sometimes *only* a collection of literary texts.
(Gilroy and Parkinson 1997: 213)

Data 2.5   Example story

More representatively, then, Narayan, himself an English teacher early in his career, in his novel *The English Teacher* (1945/1978:10) recalls:

'…the grim tolerance with which boys listen to poetry, the annotator's desperate effort to convey a meaning, and the teacher's doubly desperate effort to wrest a meaning out of the poet and the annotator, the essence of an experience lost in all this handling…

For Narayan's English teacher (fictional but recognisable, and not unrelated to Narayan himself), things gradually come to a crisis familiar to many English teachers, especially those working in less privileged environments:

'. . . the dead mutton of literary analysis and theories and histories . . . This education had reduced us to a nation of morons; we were strangers to our own culture and camp followers of another culture, feeding on leavings and garbage . . .

I was entangled too much in theories and platitudes and holding forth to all whom it might concern . . .

'What fool could be insensible to Shakespeare's sonnets or the "Ode to the West Wind" or "A thing of beauty is a joy forever"?' I reflected. 'But what about examinations and critical notes? Didn't these largely take the place of literature? What about our own roots? . . . I am up against the whole system, the whole method and approach of a system of education which makes us morons, cultural morons, but efficient clerks for all your business and administrative offices . . .'

'Dear Sir, I beg to tender my resignation for personal reasons. I request you to relieve me immediately . . .' I put it into an envelope.' (p. 179)

We need to register the 'postcolonial' aspects of this teacher's disillusion, but for the moment may note, with Protherough (1989) and others, that the dominant and abiding image of English teaching and of English literature in many students' minds, in traditional classrooms, is of tedium, condescension and irrelevance. The 1950s through 1970s saw more 'scientific' approaches to language teaching; at the turn of the twenty-first century a new perspective seems possible:

Quote 2.8   Reasons for a new turn to literature

In the structural/functional syllabus, there was often no room for literature, which was regarded as elitist, remote, deviant and not authentic . . .

The reason for its return seems to us to be the convergence of ideas from two main sources: first, literary criticism, including the debate on the nature of literary language and reader response theory; second, communicative language teaching.
(Gilroy and Parkinson 1997: 213)

Literary language is discussed in Chapter 1. Reader response theory is discussed in Chapter 3. The discussion in this chapter now turns to relevant developments in communicative language teaching, though by way of the central curricular question of assessment.

2.3   Assessing literary reading

Assessing literature in L1 education

In the last analysis, a curriculum is an idealisation, or at best a statement of good intentions for the future. Classroom realities will often differ.

Another way to approach what is studied under the name of literature in various educational systems is to attend to assessment, which will always affect classroom practices as well as, in intention at least, outcomes, and leaves clear textual traces for the researcher to analyse. Literature was examined from its introduction. It was introduced to be examined. At the same time as social changes and the widening of educational opportunities required by a modern economic order promoted the rise of literature, commentators have pointed to the importance to an increasingly bureaucratic society of increasingly examined subjects (the citizens and the disciplines they studied). Thus the Indian Civil Service instituted exams in English literature in 1855, rapidly encouraging the development of a washback exams industry. Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations in English followed in 1859. Textbooks and crammers were now very much in demand, even though there was a long-running debate, still much in evidence today, over how exactly to assess literary knowledge or 'competence' or reading. Exam questions attempting to integrate language and literature now look distinctly odd and inappropriate.

Data 2.6   Nineteenth-century exam question: the Indian Civil Service

Derive and conjugate the irregular verb to break, and state whether there is any grammatical error in the following: 'I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained' – Shakespeare.
(Viswanathan 1989: 135).

With all their admiration for Shakespeare's supposed 'genius', his pre-standardised language was a source of anxiety for these English examiners.

Flint, in *The Woman Reader 1837–1914* (1993), paints a similar picture of pioneers of women's education anxiously examining literary facts and dates and the ability to paraphrase, translate and note philological oddities, a world away from modern ideas of 'response', reading for pleasure or recreation, never mind 'personal growth' (see also Chapter 3). Literature was not to become known as a 'soft option' for under-achievers, or at least must contest that idea. This anxiety is not a new one. The literary section of a school-leaving exam for eighteen-year-old girls (Flint 1993: 134–5) gives a list of ten works for which authors and a brief summary are required. Grammatical questions are followed by an exercise in identification of quotations from Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*; translations of obscure quotations; or 'Give as accurate an account as you can of "Il Pensoroso"' ('Il Pensoroso' is a long, elaborate meditative poem by Milton, hardly amenable to an 'accurate account').

Data 2.7   Senior local examinations for 18-year-old school-leaving girls in the 1870s: Sample questions

- Identify the author and give a brief description of 'The White Doe of Rylstone' and *The Fable of the Bees*.
- Give some account of the fourth period of Shakespeare's career as a dramatist and of Addison's periodical essays.
- Give as accurate an account as you can of 'Il Pensoroso' or 'The Passions' or the two poems in which Wordsworth's 'Matthew' appears.
- Write notes on: 'We have done but greenly/In *hugger-mugger* to inter him'; 'Some men there are love not a *gaping pig*'.
- Give the substance of Belial's speech in the 'infernal consultation' [Milton's *Paradise Lost*].
- Exhibit your acquaintance with some lyrical passage of 'Comus'.

Autobiographies of the time suggest that preparation for such exams left little time for pleasurable or recreational reading. The emphasis in questions like these is on the factual, literature as hard knowledge- much of which seems to miss the point, or the 'affordances' of literary text and possible literary reading experience.

In underlining the relative recency of 'English' as an academic discipline, MacCabe (1984) notes that the first recorded use of English as an academic subject in the Oxford English Dictionary is an 1889 citation from a polemic book entitled 'Sacrifice of Education to Examination', which perhaps indicates something of how the new subject was viewed, as a key element in the new order of compulsory education and certification through examinations – as well as the unease of some of the well-intentioned with this situation. The OED definition then records the range of meanings of 'English' as: 'English language *or* literature as a school *or* university subject or examination' (MacCabe 1984: 70). (Compare Pope 1998 on the field of 'English' and how it might feature in a reformulated more reflexive 'English Studies'.)

More enlightened educators today have attempted to move the reading and teaching of literature away from the testing of facts to more sophisticated ideas of comprehension, including the idea of different individuals responding differently (Chapter 3), even critically. The modern understanding of 'comprehension', after all, is of relating new knowledge to already established understanding, though this raises problems for a dominant rigidly quantitative ideology of assessment. Miall (1989), for example, has consistently argued the importance of feelings or 'affect' for the literary reading experience, and that this aspect is neglected or overridden in literary education and assessment. Yet 'response' is always going to be difficult to reconcile with the education system's demand for statistics, passes and fails, and as a result, much teaching and examining is recognisably still in the tradition of those early exams, with wrong and right answers implied if not nowadays explicitly required. Alderson succinctly raises a real issue for all language and literature educators, as well as those who might wish to research literary reading.

Quote 2.9   Alderson on the difficulties of assessing literary 'comprehension'

If it is the case that readers respond to literary texts in personally meaningful, often idiosyncratic ways, it is hard to see what sort of 'meaning' one could test in order to say that a reader had actually understood a literary text.
(Alderson 2000: 66)

What might an appropriate understanding be of part of the Bible or the Koran, or of a poem? How many interpretations are legitimate of humorous advertisements or political manifestos? Whose interpretations are to be privileged: the writer's? the reader's? the literary critic's? the subject specialist's?
(Alderson 2000: 150)

Sinfield (1983) summarises his own witty 'examination' of Shakespeare assessment in the England and Wales secondary context in his parodic title:

> Give an account of Shakespeare and education, showing why you think they are effective and what you have appreciated about them. Support your comments with precise references.

In Sinfield's account, titles run from the wildest extremes of universalist humanism (1) to the trivialisingly 'personal' (2), but in any case, as his title suggests, tend to close down non-approved 'responses' (3), despite the proclaimed openness and tolerance of the literary field, emphatically *not* 'anything' goes:

Data 2.8   Literature exam questions

(1) At the centre of *King Lear* lies the question 'What is a man?' Discuss.
(Oxbridge A level)

(2) (Apply to *Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice* or *Romeo and Juliet*.)
Put yourself in the place of a character in one of the works you have studied, faced with dangerous situations. (i) Describe the situations, (ii) show how you dealt with them, and (iii) explain the effect(s) of your action(s) or decision(s).
(North West CSE)

(3) Give an account of the scene in Capulet's orchard where Romeo sees Juliet on the balcony, showing what you have enjoyed [sic] about the words spoken by the lovers.
(Welsh 'O' level)
(Sinfield 1983; compare Gilbert 1987; Hall 1999)

UK Attainment targets (1994, reported in Alderson 2000), for example, define Key Stage 1 (seven year olds) reading competences in partly literary terms: 'They [pupils] express their response to poems and stories by identifying

aspects they like.' *Dis*liking doesn't seem to be a valid aspect of literature reading, or 'response' in this perspective.

Quote 2.10   Literature as a discourse

Becoming certificated by the state as proficient in literary studies is a matter of being able to talk and write in certain ways.
(Eagleton 1996: 201)

At best, literature assessment has been a rather inexact science, stemming from the rather special nature of literary reading and understanding. This does not mean literature cannot or should not be realistically assessed, as some might protest, but developers of assessment exercises and criteria need to be fully aware of the kind of complex issues raised here. Further relevant discussion occurs under 'Literary reading' in Chapter 3. A useful watchword for evaluators is offered by Culler (1977).

Quote 2.11   Aims of literature assessment

Our examinations are not designed merely to check whether [the student] has read and remembered certain books but to test his or her progress as a reader of literature.
(Culler, in McRae 1996: 37)

Ideas such as these have led to growing preference among informed educators for more progressive forms of assessment of literary reading and understanding. Some proposals and case studies in literary assessment are examined in Part 2, Chapter 5.

Assessing literature in L2 education

Quote 2.12   Alderson in the difficulties of assessing reading for pleasure

Reading is, for many people, an enjoyable, intense, private activity from which much pleasure can be derived, and in which one can become totally absorbed. Such reading – sometimes called extensive reading in the teaching literature, sometimes called reading with intrinsic motivation in the psychological literature – is difficult if not impossible to replicate within an assessment setting. The intervention of questions, tasks, outcomes, between the reader and the text is likely, for some at least, to be disruptive and to create a self-consciousness which destroys the very nature of the event. We need to acknowledge that in such settings, for some purposes, the assessment of reading may be both difficult and undesirable.
(Alderson 2000: 28)

Quote 2.13   Literary comprehension as a construct

With the best will in the world, we are bound to 'misunderstand' texts; it happens all the time, is a normal part of communication, and will not change because of classroom teachers of reading saying, 'No, you're wrong. The author means...' by which, of course, we mean, 'The teacher thinks the author means...'

...[U]ltimately the interpretation is up to individual readers. And I think this not because of adherence to some libertarian philosophy, but because in reality, that is all that is possible... it is not helpful to think of a unitary, 'total' comprehension.

(Urquhart 1987: Comprehensions and interpretations: 404, 387; compare also Weir 2004)

Assessment of literature reading in a second or foreign language must be even more centrally concerned with evaluating understanding of the language of the text where syllabus documents claim or imply that reading of literature will pay second language acquisition dividends, and since we know the importance of language proficiency to successful second language reading. Too often, the key criticism made of assessment exercises in second language literature education is that: '[Such] questions can be answered if the candidate has read only a translation or even a simplified version of the text' (Carter and Long 1990: 217) – or, we might add, a decade or more on, where internet cribs have been accessed, which may enable successful performance in such invalid assessment exercises, but do little or nothing for the learning of the student. Thus typical questions ask for plot summaries, character sketches, themes or the like, in short 'content' which is propositional rather than evidence for processing of literary texts written in another language.

One response to a difficult situation in University of Cambridge (UCLES) examining, for instance, has been to retreat from testing of literature as such to, for example in FCE (First Certificate) a (supposed) reading of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, or William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* as input to a conversation with an examiner designed to probe oral proficiency, but in no way assessing literary proficiency. More recently Cambridge ESOL continues to suggest optional set texts for reading for FCE (270,000 candidates each year in 100 countries) and the more advanced CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English) examinations, 'to encourage extended reading as a basis for the enrichment of language study' (Preparing for Paper 2), but now as a basis for testing Writing in Paper 2, where questions continue to be general enough to be answered without any reading of the set texts in the foreign language (English). Such questions will certainly test writing abilities in English, but have abandoned efforts to assess reading literature in a foreign language.

Data 2.9   Sample FCE questions

Either:

(a) 'Sometimes the bad characters in a story are more interesting than the good ones.' Is this true of the book you have read? Write a composition, explaining your views with reference to the book or one of the short stories you have read.

Or:

(b) 'This is such a marvellous book you want to read it again.' Write an article for your college magazine, saying whether you think this statement is true of the book or one of the short stories you have read.

Sample CPE questions
5 Based on your reading of *one* of these books, write on *one* of the following. Write (a), (b), or (c) as well as the number 5 in the box.

(a) Anne Tyler, *The Accidental Tourist* [essay]
'There was no room in his life for anyone as unpredictable as Muriel.' Write an essay for your tutor discussing that statement, comparing the personalities and lifestyles of Macon Leary and Muriel Pritchett and illustrating the comparison with events from the novel.

(b) John Wyndham, *The Day of the Triffids* [article]
Your local newspaper has invited readers to send in articles entitled 'It kept me awake . . .' on books they have read. Write an article about *The Day of the Triffids*, focusing on what makes the book frightening and how the suspense of the book is maintained.

(c) Graham Greene, *Our Man in Havana* [novel]
A library is about to have an exhibition on fathers and daughters in literature and has asked its readers for some ideas. Write a letter to the library staff recommending *Our Man in Havana* as a possible book to appear in the exhibition. You should briefly describe the characters of Wormold and Milly and discuss their relationship and its importance to the novel.

(CambridgeESOL.org website)

Language should, then, be an important factor in the assessment of second language literature reading. A second general aspect to note, however, and complementary to the interest in the language of the text, is the factor of what a reader does with, or 'takes from', a text. Reading, as we have said, is an interactive process in the sense that different individuals with differing backgrounds and interests take differently from texts, perhaps especially where literary texts are concerned (Halasz 1991). Bernhardt (1995), Alderson (2000) and others have shown how second language reading study and

assessment has too often focused on the text at the expense of the reader and reading behaviours. Second language reading competence is often assumed, however implicitly, to be a matter of moving from linguistically 'easier' to longer and 'more difficult' texts (sometimes 'edited' or specially prepared, towards 'authentic'). Even leaving aside questions of how exactly constructs like 'easy'/'difficult' are operationalised, such an approach ignores the question of reader variables in the sense of what readers can and might want to do with a text. Alderson (2000) sees this situation as one ground for the need for more qualitative approaches to second language reading research. Literature teachers will recognise the observation of Chatman (1978: 42), concerning 'the problems of the elementary literature class, where students understand the meaning of every sentence in isolation, but cannot make any sense (or any satisfying sense) out of the whole narrative text'. The problems of such 'literalist' weaker readers of literature in integrating the information taken from the text into larger propositional units can be usefully studied through verbal protocols (see, e.g., Block 1986, discussed in Chapter 6).

2.4   Literature into cultural studies

Literature, discourse, culture

What relationships exist between language, literature and culture?

Literature, language and culture have always been seen as interrelated in various ways. This section explores current ideas of culture as discourse because they offer a way into better understanding and investigation of these relations, both in and out of classrooms, for students as well as their teachers. Culture is increasingly understood in dynamic terms, constructed interactively between people, continuously, particularly through language use.

Quote 2.14   Culture and understanding

- 'Culture is a conversation' (Raymond Williams)
- 'Culture is a verb' (Street)
- 'To understand is to know how to go on' (Wittgenstein)

Definition: culture
An historically transmitted semiotic network constructed by humans and which allows them to develop, communicate and perpetuate their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.
(Geertz 1973: 89)

Literature was first conceived and taught as offering a privileged and prestigious access to distinct national 'cultures' and languages. Literature in education

is increasingly conceived and practised today as some variety of cultural studies, where *culture* is now thought of as hybrid, contested and in constant (re)construction, and significantly *linguistic* in its workings. Similarly, language acquisition is increasingly fruitfully viewed as participation under constraints in new cultures (e.g. Holliday 1999; Kramsch 2002). Together, these new perspectives on literature as culture and language learning as a form of cultural and linguistic negotiation (or struggle) open up new vistas on what learners could usefully be doing in their literature lessons, whether in first or second language situations. Once again, I find it convenient to use L1 versus L2 distinctions, but readers need to ask themselves how well they hold, and where they become unhelpful and problematic.

Overview

- The more specialised concern with literature is being generalised in many educational and research sites into a wider interest in 'culture'.
- Linguistic anthropology views culture as a process ('practices' and 'events'), with language at its centre, including ideas of culture as an ongoing conversation.
- Culture is also viewed as a set of stories we tell about our selves and others in search of understanding and fulfilment.
- The cognition of culture – schemata – cognitive frames through which we think our worlds and identities, is a live topic in which literature can play a major role.
- Bakhtin's discourse linguistics – language as culture, process, conversation-conveniently represents and often directly informs much of this ongoing work in cultural studies.

A reformulated literature as discourse studies sees literary study as necessarily engaging with questions of language and culture in wider social uses. Certainly, cultural studies and literary studies, as suggested in section 2.1 above, have moved closer in recent years in the West, in both higher education and at lower levels of English teaching. Easthope's (1991) title and its contents, *Literary into Cultural Studies*, was broadly indicative of concerns and methodologies to come, in studying interrelations between high canonical and popular literary texts, film, and even comic strips. Trimmer and Warnock, in the US, also argued that 'literary study is being revised into cultural studies' (1992: vii). In this section I show how an understanding of culture as linguistic processes, movements and exchanges, as represented most obviously by linguistic anthropology, furthers a view of literature as culture, which could offer valuable purchase to the student, before turning most precisely, in the final section of the chapter, to traditional and emerging views of literature as culture in second language teaching and learning, which forward-looking action research could develop further still.

Data 2.10   Linguistic anthropology

Linguistic anthropology studies 'the role of language in people's lives' (Duranti 2001: 1). It views language as a social tool and language use as social action or a 'cultural practice', that is 'as a form of action that both presupposes and at the same time brings about ways of being in the world' (Duranti 1997: 1). Language users are social actors who bring about the transmission, reproduction and modification of culture largely through language use. Linguistic anthropologists work with notions of *discourse* and often even more explicitly with Bakhtinian *dialogics*. Their understanding of language and culture is particularly dynamic, always changing or potentially undergoing change through interaction: *'Language lies on the border line between oneself and the other'* (Bakhtin 1981: 293). Borders and creativity are of particular interest, and literature can be seen as just such a border line activity, both of and yet not everyday language use, real and not real, decontextualised and yet always in fact received in a context, new and yet old too. Readers of foreign language literatures are very obviously border crossers.

Duranti (2001) offers an extensive glossary of linguistic anthropological terms, only some of which can be discussed here, and further reading.

The new emphasis I have outlined on views of *literature and language as discourse* leads obviously in one aspect into *cultural studies*, which studies the stories cultures are told and tell about themselves, in which identity is seen as continually constructed and negotiated through language, including literature and other social and cultural media. In this view, literature continues to offer a privileged entry to culture, if now with a small 'c'. *Narrative* is a good example of a category which is clearly much involved with literary studies, but also exceeds the literary, extending into wider human and cultural concerns. (See section 1.3 above.)

Identity, including personal identity, once seen as relatively fixed and permanent, is now viewed as much more contingent and in permanent evolution, and importantly dependent upon language events in which a person participates. Language and communication are seen as central to identity construction: 'the linguistic construction of membership' (Kroskrity, in Duranti 2001: 106). We are not always the 'same' person for all people for all time. Who we are in a sense depends on who we are talking to, with what aims, in what situation, etc. Identity is a performance in a speech event which has some coherence enhanced through appropriate if often creative use of registers and genres. Norton (2000), for example, reports on 'the evolving and uncertain identities of her female language learners in Canada, and how these influenced their language learning progress.

Concept 2.3   Identity

Appearances may be deceiving, as O'Donnell's following anecdote suggests. Even more relevant here, language itself may be misleading (what is 'it'?) (see Brown and

Yule 1983 on problematic instances of 'cataphoric reference' like this; Emmott 1997 discusses and illustrates readers' need to integrate anaphoric and cataphoric references in ongoing construction of story understandings):

A farmer had an axe he liked.
He liked it so much he put two new heads and three new handles on it and kept it in the same place he had always kept it.
(O'Donnell 1998: 158)

'English' has been seen by some as an attempt to co-opt members into a constructed national identity (compare Anderson 1983 on literacy practices and the construction of national identities). But it is increasingly seen now as a discourse to which readers/students can orient themselves more creatively, if under real social, political, economic and cultural constraints.

Concept 2.4   Transculturation

Ethnographers have used this term to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture.
(Pratt 1992: 6)

This idea can be compared to the common finding that learners do not always or necessarily learn what teachers teach, or Pennycook's reminders that there have always been two sides to the colonial and postcolonial encounters of English speakers. Examples are Canagarajah's ethnographies of Sri Lankan classrooms, or Rajan and others on literature teaching in India.

Concept 2.5   Contact zones

Social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.
(Pratt 1992: 4)

For Bakhtinian linguists, dialogue is seen as the fundamental form of speech (where a more traditional psycholinguistics might be more concerned with monologue or single decontextualised sentences), so that 'cultures are continuously produced, reproduced, and revised in dialogues [sometimes antagonistic] among their members' (Mannheim and Tedlock 1995: 2). The language learner is a participant, however unequal (Canagarajah 1999), in such dialogues, since culture is seen not as irremediably exclusivist but 'emergent' (p. 3), through such linguistic exchanges. Becker, for example,

stresses the linguistics of formulaicity and creativity, use and awareness of proverbs and cliché, among others, as sketched in section 1.3 above, exploited by the everyday conversationalist as also by the central cultural forms of a society. Such formulaic language is seen as central to the language and culture of a given society:

Quote 2.15   Language use and intertextuality

. . . the pervasiveness of a kind of indirect quotation in all of our languaging. Everything anyone says has a history and hence is, in part, a quotation. Everything anyone says is also partly new, too, and part of anyone's ability in a language is the ability to tell the difference between the new and the old.
(Becker 1995: 286. Haiman 2003 develops a theory of (post)modern society based on pervasive quotation and recycled language)

For Bakhtin, as we saw in section 1.4 above ('Dialogics'), culture comes into being as material struggles over, with and through language in linguistic events and practices such as classrooms, readings and conversations. The clear corollary is that culture is not a fixed and discrete itemised list of facts and knowledge to be taught, but a set of linguistic experiences in which cultural artefacts, whether literary (the 'novel' for Bakhtin) or increasingly in the modern world in other media, will have a key role to play.

Concept 2.6   Hybridity: a 'mix' of two types

- What is vital [for Bakhtin] is that [the] languages be 'hybridised' so that an 'interminable' dialogue is created between them . . . the mutual 'interillumination' of languages.
  (Morson and Emerson 1990: 315, 317)
- Language lies on the border line between oneself and the other.
  (Bakhtin 1981: 293)
- . . . my taste for in-between states and moments of hybridity . . . ambivalent borderline[s] of hybridity.
  (Bhabha 1994: 208)
- Sarangi and Candlin (2003) write of the importance of recognising different things going on at the same time (e.g. a service encounter in a restaurant could be interweaved with a developing extra-marital affair between the customers.)
- Both Fairclough and Kress argue that genres ('discourse types') are typically hybrid in the modern world.

Central to Bakhtinian linguistics is the idea of *heteroglossia*. Heteroglossia is a term coined by Bakhtin from the Greek 'other-speech'. An example would be the ventriloquising of different 'voices' of characters in a novel. 'Who is speaking?' is a central critical question prompted by the idea, and which is too often

unasked by less proficient readers. Literature teaching has for long been associated with an attitude of suspicion toward texts, which will be particularly sensitive to its silences, gaps, 'faultlines' and inevitable contradictions.

Concept 2.7 Heteroglossia

At any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form.
(Bakhtin 1981: 291)

. . . there are no 'neutral' words and forms . . .
(ibid.: 293)

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.
(ibid.: 294)

Bauman (1990) writes of the privileged if difficult role of the 'stranger', who is the intercultural figure increasingly common in a postmodern world, neither friend nor enemy, but indeterminate, with no secure attachments or identity. While obviously uneasy with the too ready cliché, Simpson, in the rich *Oxford Book of Exile* anthology of writings on exile, observes: 'Each of us is an exile . . . We can never return' (2002: vii). Such studies feed directly into Kramsch's proposals for literature in the language classroom examined in section 2.3.

Literatures of exile, migration and diaspora, ideas of 'border crossings', are increasingly in favour in classrooms favouring this kind of view of language learning as (problematic) 'socialisation' rather than 'acquisition' (see Kramsch 2003: introduction; also Nunan 1992; Legutke and Thomas 1991; Part 2, Bredella and Delanoy case study). In these ways, in line with the overall theme of this chapter, a growing effort has been made to rescue the language learning classroom for wider education, and away from narrowly conceived linguistics and the field of 'second language acquisition' which has tended to dehumanise learners in favour of ICT-inspired images of input, intake and language-as-grammar, language learning as a change of 'parameter settings'. In Chapter 1, we considered the explosion of work in recent years on metaphor, including proposals (notably Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Gibbs 1994) that the basis of thinking or 'cognition' is figurative. A related and influential school in the study of culture which is beginning to impinge on second language acquisition studies comes under the heading of *social cognition*, with its update of more traditional schema theory.

Concept 2.8   Schema

Expectations of 'typical' situations or processes which come under a name are 'schemata' (plural of 'schema'). Mention of a word like 'classroom' or 'restaurant' will conjure up sets of expectations in a hearer's mind, that is, the hearer has a 'schema' of a restaurant or a classroom, based on previous experience, whether personal and direct or gained more indirectly. The argument of cognitive scientists has been that schemata enable us more successfully to negotiate our ways through complex worlds than would be the case if every situation had to be learned anew each time it was encountered. It was noticed from the earliest elaboration of this concept that members of different cultures have different schemata for concepts that can be denoted by the same label.

Schema theory has long been recognised to have much to offer students of reading development and of language learning (e.g. Carrell, Devine and Eskey 1988), but there are difficulties:

- much that is cultural is not shared;
- culture is more than just knowledge;
- are cultural systems inside or outside the minds of individuals, or both?

(after D'Andrade, in Shweder and Levine 1984)

The shift with writers such as D'Andrade (1995) and Shore (1996) is that schemata, under the influence of developments in psychology such as connectionism, are now understood more flexibly and contingently than was originally reported (compare Atkinson 1999 for some useful remarks). For this updated model, schemata will vary more between individuals according to previous personal experiences, and continuously develop in response to new experiences. For example, ideas of norms of marriage and the courting story exist in a society (Holland et al. 1998), but will vary significantly between individuals within a society according to age, gender and all the other sociological variables, just as ideas of such a cultural schema vary between differing societies. Shore (1996) represents an important attempt to integrate cognition and social context (culture): 'neither dimension is more important than the other' (p. 40). Cultural knowledge and understanding is seen as constructed by individuals, but within definable constraints and norms.

Quote 2.16   Shore on cultural models

Cultural knowledge is best thought of as a distributed system of models. Cultural models are socially distributed in that not all members of a community will share all models or will have the same variant of a model.

An adequate description of cultural models necessarily includes an account of which, or whose, perspective is being modelled.
(Shore 1996: 312)

Meaning [is to] be understood only as an ongoing process, an active construction by people, with the help of cultural resources.
(ibid.: 7)

Cultural studies, then, operating discoursally, as sketched here, is particularly interested in (among others) the following broadly 'literary' areas:

- narrative (e.g. Shore 1996);
- gender;
- genre;
- identities;
- autobiography;
- translation studies and comparative literature (e.g. Bassnett 1993).

Language and culture are 'performed', or come into being, in study-able ways, in such sites (particularised contexts). This view of literature as culture, in the senses just sketched (culture as verb, as dialogue, as processes) is clearly of relevance to second language teaching and learning, but remains under-researched in favour of more traditional and static understandings of culture. The following section will suggest that there is much to be done here by the interested active teacher-researcher.

Literature, language, culture in second language learning

Quote 2.17   Reading literature of another culture

It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.
(Rushdie 1991: 17)

Language teachers have often justified the use of literature as 'the best that has been thought and said' in a language (in Arnold's phrase), some kind of linguistic and/or ethical model, or (apparently contradicting such more universalist claims) as offering privileged access to the culture of a specific speech community (often national in modern European contexts especially). Alternatively, literature is said to promote intercultural understanding and mutual respect, though how exactly it might do this is left implicit, and there can in any case be no guarantees with literary texts, which have sometimes been found to confirm stereotypes as much as they break them

down (Bredella, in Byram 2000; also Naidoo 1992, in Chapter 5 below; or reception of Maxine Hong Kingston's fiction as portraying the 'inscrutable Chinese'; Trimmer and Warnock 1992).

A more critical, discourse-oriented approach, as we have seen, asks 'best' for whom and in what way? and seeks to understand high canonical culture such as literary art works in relation to wider cultural and linguistic contexts. Ideas of homogeneous national or other cultures are equally suspect in a postmodern globalised world (Featherstone 1990). The resources students bring to their studies are to be valued and built on rather than ignored or deprecated. In the final section of this chapter we look at how culture has been related to literature and language teaching, and in particular more recent developments of sociocultural theory and language learning associated with the heritage of Vygotsky as well as Bakhtin, particularly in the publications of Claire Kramsch.

Quote 2.18   Aims of literature in education

What seems to be needed is the development of strategies for enabling Bruner's 'different construals of reality' to confront, discompose, energize, and deprovincialize one another.
(Geertz, in Kramsch 2004: 256)

One response to the increasing demand for some kind of cultural curriculum was identified in the Council of Europe's 'Threshold' specifications (van Ek and Trim 1991). Chapter 11 'Sociocultural Competence' offers a prescriptive list of what learners need to know, including 'at what times people have their regular meals' and other such 'cultural studies' data, which have to be learned the night before even by native speaker teachers who would not otherwise know these facts about 'their' culture. In other words, this is *not* their culture! Sadly, this kind of approach – culture as something static – has often dominated 'communicative language teaching' approaches, including the British Council's 'British Studies' projects (see BC website). Even 'cultural awareness' without such specific content would surely have been a more fruitful approach (as outlined in van Lier 1995, final chapter).

In the USA, similarly, Hirsch (1987) produced a highly controversial list of facts and names, particularly for the benefit of immigrants, which he claimed amount to North American 'cultural literacy'; more recently Bloom (1994) has tried to resurrect unquestionably 'great' literature. Critics attacked what they saw as Hirsch's fantasies of a national unity which never existed even in a less complicated earlier USA and may not be desirable anyway. Simplistic ideas of culture like this inform some English Literature courses which are seen as more a source of knowledge and data, celebrating

the exotic (bowler hats and village greens) than in more experientialist curricula ('reader response', Chapter 3). A phrase often used to capture this approach is the 'four Fs' – 'foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts' (cited in Hinkel 1999).

A negative response to such curricula, entirely understandable, is to turn from literary texts produced at the Centre to more relevant and local literatures (Ngũgĩ 1986a; Talib 1992). But privileged canons, as already argued, need to be deconstructed as well as replaced. Shakespeare will hardly go away (nor need to) just because a few teachers with social consciences get their classes to read Achebe.

Important exceptions to these 'communicative' parodies of course always existed. Thus Candlin (1996) recounts the history of the *Encounters* English language course for German secondary schools, from the late 1970s on. If a 'communicative' classroom means anything:

Quote 2.19 Candlin on communicative language teaching

[I]t is a site where in relation to language and language learning and teaching, the relationships among a number of participating persons, positions, topics, subject-matters, processes, orientations, roles, values, and ideologies were held not to be fixed, and the nature or pre-eminence taken for granted, but rather to be in a state of constant, creative and usefully exploratory struggle. Framing this creativity and defining the activities of this classroom was the search (never-ending, of course) for meaning.
(Candlin 1996: xi)

The communicative classroom works on Halliday's principle:

Every act is not only linguistic, a use of the potential of the language system, but it is also social and cultural, an expression of who we are and what we give value to.
(quoted in Candlin 1996: xiv)

Ethnography is a tradition of study and writing developed by anthropologists. In this view, you learn best about another culture, *and your own*, by participating in its activities and by reflecting on these experiences. A recent publication in ongoing ethnographic investigations into aspects of culture and second language learning is Roberts and Byram (2001), 'The Ealing Project' (see Chapter 5). Kohonen (see Kohonen et al. 2001) has pursued analogous projects in Scandinavia, arguing for the need to integrate language learning in wider educational practices, in which personal social and linguistic development are seen to work together.

Quote 2.20   Culture is relational

Culture, in an individual, as in society at large, is plural, changing, and often conflictual . . . The principle of language relativity enables us to understand to a certain degree how speakers of other languages think and what they value . . . to 'see ourselves amongst others . . . a case among cases' [Geertz].
(Kramsch 2004: 252, 255)

Or:

What do they know of England, who only England know?
(Rudyard Kipling)

In an important review paper Atkinson (1999) summarises an emerging contemporary consensus in TESOL circles on culture as the move away from an idea of discrete fixed national or other cultures (nouns, 'things') to the idea of culture as constituted through creative (primarily linguistic) interactions in social contexts, Street's 'verb': something we all 'do', a dynamic, ongoing process. Literature as cultural studies investigates issues of difference (racial, sexual), appropriation, class, context and history, and all the ever more obvious problems of perspectivism and interpretation which more universalist humanistic discourses would tend to gloss over, but which can strike newcomers to a culture very forcibly. Ideas of 'translation' are often seen as critical to such approaches, though even such a well-motivated metaphor seems to propose too neat a solution to very intransigent issues, unless we remember all the complexities 'translation' usually involves.

In discussing second language classrooms, Holliday writes of 'small cultures', where the stress is on 'emergence' and 'human processes' rather than large abstractions which can take on a life of their own and produce reductive accounts of activities.

Quote 2.21   Holliday on 'small culture'

Small culture is thus a dynamic, ongoing group process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense of and operate meaningfully within those circumstances.
(Holliday 1999: 248)

Holliday gives the example of a group of students interacting on a post-graduate course. Another case would be a group interacting with and through a culturally and linguistically 'other' literary text. The idea of 'dialogue'

is central to Holliday's conceptualisation of small cultures He suggests (after Sarangi 1994) that discourse will be central to the workings and to the study of such small cultures:

Quote 2.22 Culture as discourse

[D]iscourse has to be considered as the concrete expression of the language–culture relationship because it is discourse that 'creates, recreates, modifies and transmits both culture and their interaction'.
(Sarangi 1994: 414)

On the one hand, the small culture approach is most appropriate for a world which is increasingly multicultural at every level. On the other hand, it is the only way to illuminate full inter-cultural complexity in any world.
(Holliday 1999: 260)

One of the most promising directions for the use of literary texts to investigate culture in ways relevant to the needs and interests of language learners would seem to be offered by the work of Lantolf and others in the Vygotskian tradition of sociocultural approaches to (second) language learning (e.g. Lantolf 2000). Such a Vygotskian approach is keen to stress the agency and personhood of the language learner, who is seen as a person with a history and intentions and desires. The proposal repeated through many papers in Lantolf (2000), if still controversial, is to explore a new metaphor in studies of second language learning – *participation* – where previously the dominant metaphor has been *acquisition* (Sfard 1998). The idea is one of ongoing social interaction as opposed to connotations of accumulation and possession of language as a material object, or the human being as a computer ('input, processing, and output'). In the Vygotskian perspective, 'human social and mental activity is organized through culturally constructed artefacts' (Lantolf 2000: 1). This is an important idea because it potentially returns literature to a central role as texts through which language learners can explore who they are and who they are not, and who they might be becoming as they participate in this new language. Language learning is seen as the development of new ideas and personality, rather than acquisition of a set of new labels for familiar objects or at most of new syntactic rules. Thinking and languaging are effectively inseparable in practice, so that the very objects, the classifications, ideas and beliefs are no longer the same to be labelled. ('Learning a new language is not an innocent re-labelling of the familiar furniture of the universe': Kramsch 2000: 138). Orientations are required to new metaphors and narratives, including narratives of the self. Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) offer a stimulating paper on the hitherto neglected resource of first person

accounts of second language learning by successful biculturals in autobiographies, fiction and other literature. Much more research in such a useful vein can be envisaged on such written resources as well as further extensions to less privileged biculturals (see also Cameron 2000). For Vygotsky, the self is seen to be socially mediated before it is internally realised, and so a new self develops in interaction with a new language and culture. 'Inner speech' represents one important way in which language becomes interiorised individual thought and understanding. Thus, for example, this approach also privileges play with language (Sullivan 2000), where pre-existing signs are re-accentuated and appropriated (see section 1.3 above) under creativity and in discussing Bakhtin.

Quote 2.23   Learner-centred approaches to language learning

Learning a second language is not about simply learning new linguistic forms, but it is about learning how to construct, exchange, and interpret signs that have been created by someone else.
(Lantolf 2000: 22)

It is no longer sufficient to talk about 'individual differences' in SLA against the backdrop of a universal learner. Difference and variation itself have moved to the center of language acquisition research
(Kramsch 2003: 4)

What learners are exposed to is not 'input', but 'affordances' from which they select those that best fit their experience . . .
(ibid.: 7)

Learners 'align' themselves] with a speech community, rather than conform[ity] to native speaker (NS) use.
(ibid.: 5)

[F]oreign language learners do not just learn the language, they are also constantly engaged in judging the relevance, validity, pertinence or usefulness of this or that bit of knowledge, this or that assignment, thus staking out the phenomenological field of their learning endeavour.
(ibid.: 11)

Kramsch is probably the best-known scholar of literature and culture in language teaching falling broadly into the sociocultural framework sketched, from Kramsch (1993), more explicitly incorporating Vygotskyan ideas in Kramsch (2000). Kramsch consciously tries to effect a dialogue between Vygotsky and Bakhtin which can address educational contexts of language and literature learning. She argues that language needs to be understood as 'a social and cultural practice', with the aim for learners being to:

construct for themselves a linguistic and social identity that enables them to resolve the anomalies and contradictions they are likely to encounter when attempting to adopt someone else's language.

(Kramsch 1997: 360)

Culture is not a thing, but a process: 'cultural reality is as heterogeneous and heteroglossic as language itself' (1995: 89). The idea involved is one of context and culture as on-line constructed intersubjectivity, and then intertextuality (Kramsch 1993: 175; compare section 1.4 above): 'the language learner . . . creates new signs by manipulating signs created by others' (2000: 152). She notes the (potential) excitement and challenge of a different language and culture for learners, instancing her learners' code-switching and 'multiple possibilities for self-expression' (ibid.: 368), ranging from 'memorizing and performing prose and verse', 'playing with language and writing multilingual poetry at the beginning of language instruction' to more advanced classes' 'exercises in translation and in comparative stylistics' (ibid.: 368). Like Carter (2003) or van Lier (1995), Kramsch argues that the advanced and relatively successful language learner will by definition be interested in metalinguistics (discussing language, form and meaning) and that such reflexivity and consciousness are crucial to the language learning process (Kramsch 1993). 'Second language acquisition is precisely this process by which learners acquire ever greater conscious control of the semiotic choices offered by the foreign language.' (2000: 151). The complaint is that:

Quote 2.24   Literature in a learner-centred classroom

Literary texts continue to be taught as finished products, to be unilaterally decoded, analyzed, and explained, or they are used to illustrate grammatical rules and enrich the reader's vocabulary
(Kramsch 1985: 356)

Such a traditional approach only confirms the students' belief that their major block to understanding is a lack of vocabulary and grammar and solidifies their dependence on the teacher.
(ibid.: 360)

[By contrast] In what Breen and Candlin call a 'process-oriented' classroom, it is as important to sensitize the students to the process of literary creation as it is to initiate them in the construction of interactive spoken discourse.
(ibid.: 358)

Linguistic problems including lack of vocabulary (in particular) are important in literature reading problems as we shall see in Chapter 3. But Goh (1991), for example (discussed in Part 2), shows that linguistic proficiency in

Singapore secondary students did not suffice for literary comprehension to take place.

Rhetoric and the new interest in literary studies in editing theory, bibliography and processes of writing, production, distribution and reception (see Chapter 1; also McGann 1983), emphasise that text is constructed and represents a set of strategic choices and silences. Kramsch, like Pope (1995) or Carter and Long (1987; 1991) advocates development of a methodology to involve learners as active participants in and explorers of these linguistic and cultural processes. Foreign language literature is seen by Kramsch as a privileged site for encountering and becoming discomfited by new discourses, as well as offering the opportunity for the new cultural participant (a.k.a. 'language learner') to come to terms with these new situated and particularised discourses.

Quote 2.25   Foreign language structures

Foreign language structures [make] thoughts available to them that they had not quite had in this form before.
(Kramsch 1993: 105)

'Looking for third places' is the concluding chapter of Kramsch (1993), offering for second language literature teaching a 'process' metaphor akin to those of Bhabha's (1992) 'third space' (see Bakhtin 1981; Pratt 1992; Bhabha 1994; Kramsch 1995, referred to in section 2.4 under theories of identity). Foreign or second (or third) language readers of literature sometimes read noticeably differently to their more acculturated teachers, just as 'reader response' (Chapter 3) would predict. The traditional classroom, informed by the idea of culture as fixed somehow 'out there', independent of the discourses in which it takes place and of language as a code of others ('native speakers') to be passively mastered, taught – as did the traditional literature classroom – that the 'experts'' views were more valid than those of the learner. A traditional literary education (even this is often a privilege), still only changing slowly, would have taught the teacher respect or reverence for classic literature, to attend to expert opinion and disvalue their own responses. Teachers will tend to reproduce such attitudes in their own students. But a classroom informed by ideas of discourse and dialogue encourages and explores and values alternative perspectives and experiences.

Quote 2.26   Literature and cultural estrangement

It is precisely those moments of discrepancy between the culturally intended reader and the culturally foreign reader that the language teacher should value the most [and exploit in the classroom].
(Kramsch 1993: 128; compare Byram and Fleming 1998)

> A dialogic process that attempts to locate the cultural component of language teaching at the moment of rupture or disjuncture between interlocutors' assumptions and expectations.
> (Kramsch 1995: 89)

The literary text should be valued, Kramsch argues, for its own extreme particularity, creativity, linguistic uniqueness. Literary texts are the most 'double voiced' (after Bakhtin) and so best for promoting enjoyment in and reflection on linguistic form and expression (1993: 131). Literary texts also tend to promote an ambivalent response, or awareness of the *complexity* of moral issues (Kramsch gives the example of Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.) and once again interventions (compare Pope 1995) are suggested as appropriate ways for teachers to promote awareness of alternative perspectives, or (say) use of multiple translations to demonstrate the alternative perspectives that can be taken, and the final impossibility/desirability of literary translation (of all translation). The strangeness of a poem should be faced head on rather than tidied away.

2.5   Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen something of the complexity, range and potential value of literature in educational contexts, which reaches far beyond its linguistic materiality to realms of experience and one's culture. I sketched some of the ways in which literature has featured in various kinds of education and the advantages and drawbacks which emerged. Literature often represents challenging material for learners and teachers alike, but potentially leads beyond narrow instrumental views of language and language learning to wide-ranging and fundamental features of all our lives which should be of value and of interest to investigate, discuss and understand better. 'Education', in short.

Further reading

References discussed in context in relevant sections of this chapter include:

2.1   The literary curriculum: origins and evolution
Eagleton (1983/1996): English as developed in the UK in particular.
Viswanathan (1989): English as developed in India.
Richardson (1994): Ideas of Literature elaborated in the early nineteenth century against debates and anxieties over mass literacy and unregulated access to print and a background of increasing educational provision.

2.2   Literature in second language teaching
Carter and Long (1991): Probably the best overview still for teachers, which offers a principled basis for and examples of uses of literary texts in second or foreign language education.

2.3   Assessing literature

Alderson (2000): Up-to-date and sharp critical account of reading assessment, includes much that is relevant for the assessment of literature reading, including some explicit discussions of literature assessment.

Carter and Long (1991).

Spiro (1991).

Henning (1992): Interesting attempt with some trialling reported to assess French literary interpretation skills by US college readers.

2.4   Literature into cultural studies

Kramsch (1985 and 1993): important early attempt to theorise and illustrate cultural appropriation by non-native readers, extended in Lantolf (2000) and Kramsch (2003).

3
Reading Literature

3.1 Introduction

What are the dominant theories and models for the reading of literature? What gaps or problems exist for our knowledge, especially with regard to second or foreign language readers of literature? What empirical research is necessary? More specifically, How does reading literature differ from other types of reading? What makes a 'good' or 'poor' reader of literature? And what is known about reading literature in a second language?

Literature for some is best studied as language (Chapter 1). For others, it is central to education, and literature and culture are inseparable and must be studied together (Chapter 2). For many practitioners and researchers in language and literature, however, literature is best understood as a kind of reading. (For an up-to-date review of reading research, see Grabe and Stoller 2002.) Certainly, while some remind us of the importance of oral literature – story-telling in conversations or ludic interpersonal and community uses of literary language and devices – for many, it will be difficult to think of literature without considering reading.

In this chapter, a development is traced from earlier, more psycholinguistic and decontextualised ideas of the reading 'skill', to more recent ideas of *literacy*, in which it is argued that any reading activity must be understood in wider contexts, that 'reading' or 'literature' are not always the same for all in all contexts, but rather vary with their uses and users, and have a history. Broadly, the move is from the study of 'read*ing*' as a somewhat disembodied 'skill', to a richer view of 'read*ers*', people with histories and identities involved in activities in specific contexts. My own preference, again, is for contextualised research, though I feel there is much to learn from more psychological and psycholinguistically oriented research, and so I review more important examples of such studies of literature reading in section 3.3 below. One expression of the more contextualised preference is Bennett's view of literature reading as responding to 'a culturally constituted text as a culturally constituted reader' (Bennett 1990: 216), though this would be too determinist for some.

Clearly, on any view, understanding how literature is read will be basic to pedagogic proposals as well as to any advocacy of literature as of value in language acquisition or wider language education. Some empirical evidence reviewed here suggests that 'literariness' lies in the mode of reading adopted, what is looked for and how meanings are produced in interaction with a text, as much as in any linguistic features.

I begin with a brief account of *reader-response criticism*, which has developed in more recent times in literary criticism into various feminist, postcolonialist and other 'critical pedagogical' questionings of the identity of the 'reader' being posited or expounded by earlier and more mainstream writers (section 3.2). A second response to the rather idealised reader of Richards and his successors is then sketched in section 3.3 in my account of mainly psycholinguistic, and then educational, research into empirical literary readers, which leads in the final section to the less well studied field of second language readers of literature.

Concept 3.1   Reader response

The key idea of reader response as an approach is that the reader is central to meaning construction, and that different readers read ('respond') differently. Reading is therefore best seen not as a narrowly decontextualised psycholinguistic process, but as events and practices in which the identities and conditions, previous experience and future hopes of readers contribute importantly to processes of active meaning construction from text. Readers are social beings as well as individuals. Without a reader, this view emphasises, a text can only exist virtually, as unrealised meaning *potential*.

Numerous introductions include Holub, *Reception Theory*; Freund, *The Return of the Reader*; Tompkins, 'Introduction' (1980). Richard Beach, *A Teachers's Guide to Reader-Response Theories* (1993) does what its title promises, with particular reference to US data.

3.2   Reader response criticism

Quote 3.1   Readers in literary theory

One might very roughly periodize the history of modern literary theory in three stages: a preoccupation with the author (Romanticism and the nineteenth century); an exclusive concern with the text (New Criticism); and a marked shift of attention to the reader over recent years.
(Eagleton 1983: 74, in Rabinowitz 1989: 81)

Where Formalist criticism (Chapter 1) focused on the precise words of the literary text, literary criticism in modern times has often taken a more 'top-down' view of literary reading, which stresses the importance of the

reader in constructing meanings derived from reading 'transactions' or interactions. Arguments that literary texts in particular require readerly activity points to their importance in education.

Research on reader response begins recognisably with Richards (1929, still a key study) and continued notably with Rosenblatt (1938, 1978, very influential in educational circles), with later important contributions from literary critics like Iser (1978) and Fish (1980), reviewed below. In many ways these works set the agenda which more rigorous empirical studies are still exploring. Two key findings became clear from the beginning. Where longer and/or more sophisticated, 'authentic' naturalistic texts such as poems, short stories or play scripts are read:

- different readers (even the same readers on different occasions) will respond differently to the same text, noticing and valuing or disvaluing different features. 'Those who can read texts do not all read them in the same fashion' (Chartier, in Bennett 1995: 135);
- at the same time, there is often a remarkable degree of consensus over the meanings and significance of a literary text, especially after further reflection and discussion.

A question over which more disagreements have arisen (e.g. Pilkington 1994) is whether there is anything special or different about reading literary texts as opposed to reading non-literary texts. Barry (1987: 9) even suggested that this issue divided American critics (literary text requires mandarin exegesis) from British ('common culture' ideas: anyone who can read can read a literary text). As we saw earlier, with the question of 'literary language', we find again that research, carefully considered, suggests that literary reading both is and isn't different, that its difference is what wider understandings of reading processes could predict of an interaction with language with certain tendencies read in certain contexts by certain people for certain purposes – a *discourse* view, in short, will once again prove helpful, and points to the need for more local studies of precise interactions of readers with texts.

Key figure 2

I. A. Richards (1893–1979) Educated and first lectured at Cambridge University. Key works include *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Practical Criticism* (1929). Considered a founder of English Literature as a discipline in England, associated in particular with the doctrine of 'Practical Criticism', an educational practice akin to American New Criticism, discussed in Chapter 1. Richards later moved to the USA as Head of English at Harvard University. Literature graduates were to be trained to extract the maximum of meaning from consideration of the 'words on the page' themselves, rather than relying on supposedly extraneous information such as authorship, date, etc. to

(Continued)

assist them in forming interpretations. The effects of Richards' ideas on educational practice were extensive and continue to this day. Empirical research also often presents readers with such decontextualised writing in order to investigate 'literary reading'. While much has been learned about cognition from such *protocol research* (see Glossary; Part 3), the future would seem to lie in extending this line into investigations of affect, motivation, and above all to consider cognition in its contexts, reading as a social practice. For example, what is the relation of the protocol provider to the researcher? How does this impact on what they say? In any case, the question is whether literary reading typically takes place, or even should take place, under such experimentalist conditions, or to recognise the limitations of what such research tells us: see the discussion of Richards' experiment below.

In *Practical Criticism*, Richards (1929) reports an experiment carried out at Cambridge University, involving analysis of recall protocols obtained from a group of mainly undergraduate English students given thirteen poems without titles, author assignations or even dates, uniformly typed, and with any obvious anachronisms (old-fashioned language) removed. His readers failed to rate the writings as they would normally be rated by educational canons, even tending to rank the poems in reverse order of the usual evaluations of these poets. Literature as a discipline often prefers the difficult, where readers, predictably, will initially at least prefer less difficult texts in a testing situation. Richards was more surprised than we would be today by the failure of his group to know value when they read it. More interesting perhaps for a modern reader is the large degree of *consensus* between this very homogeneous group of readers (upper-/middle-class, public school-educated, male), though Richards as researcher and teacher worried about what he called 'stock responses'. The written protocols raised much interest and pedagogically were taken up as the 'unseens' still required on many literature courses today. The competent literary reader, so the argument ran, should be able to recognise quality literary writing without needing any supporting contextual information, though it is noted (p. 315) how many participants recorded being at a loss without sufficient context provided. Richards was taken aback by the difficulty many of his respondents had in understanding his chosen poems even on a straightforward literal level. He also notes in his conclusions that beliefs and values (religion for example) obviously influenced his readers' responses ('Introductory'; see also 'Part 4: Summary and Recommendations'). Richards argues that poetry reading can be taught: 'mistakes and bad training' (p. 309) and lack of experience with poetry reading (p. 310) are blamed for poor results. This clearly calls for replication studies with expert readers – the students' professors, perhaps – but it was left to successors to take up that challenge. Richards also suggests that literature reading and more everyday forms of understanding of

communication are not completely different orders of reality: 'there is no such gulf between poetry and life as over-literary persons sometimes suppose' (p. 319). In short, what Richards' experiment revealed, though he seems reluctant to fully accept the finding, is that meaning is context-dependent, a central belief of the loose coalition of theories and writings that fall under the heading of 'reader response criticism' (Rabinowitz 1989). His readers brought at least as much to the page (previous knowledge, beliefs and prejudices) as they took from it (as we now know that we all do). Reader response criticism, by becoming interested in real readers reading actual texts, inevitably heightened awareness of the centrality of classrooms and pedagogy to 'English' and the importance of readers' identities and activities.

Data 3.1 Some difficulties of readers of literature

- relative lack of experience of life;
- lack of literature reading experience;
- basic reading comprehension skills ('construing');
- 'stock responses', 'preconceptions' – readers tend to read what they expect to read, and respond as they feel they ought to respond;
- 'bewilderment' – readers give up on texts they cannot understand or produce wild interpretations;
- 'authority' – readings follow received opinions of value;
- reluctance to analyse literary meanings too closely ('profanation');
- verse forms, metre, sound and sense etc.: specific literary-linguistic features;
- imagery, figurative speech.

(G. H. summary, after Richards 1929)

Quote 3.2 Richards on literary reading

And, candidly, how many of us are convinced, with reason, that we would have made a better showing ourselves under these conditions?
(Richards 1929: 310)

The personal situation of the reader inevitably (and within limits rightly) affects his reading.
(ibid.: p. 277)

Louise Rosenblatt has had the most direct influence on literary education of any single reader response writer – perhaps of any writer, though at school level rather than in higher education. Her name is not even mentioned, for example, in Eagleton's authoritative and widely read survey of *Literary Theory* (1996), perhaps symptomatic of the low esteem in which universities

have often held teaching. Key works include *Literature as Exploration* (1938, 1970); *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978, 1994).

Where for New Critics, or Practical Criticism, the text was central and teachers were to train precise skills of textual exposition, Rosenblatt's key idea is 'aesthetic reading', an irreducibly personal experience in an active 'transaction' with a literary work, in which a 'poem' is created or 'evoked' (experientially) out of a 'text'. The teacher's role is to assist in this event, to facilitate the exploration of personal meanings.

Quote 3.3   Key ideas

1. The literary reading 'event'
The special meaning, and more particularly, the submerged associations that these words and images have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him. The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be-duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text.
(Rosenblatt 1938: 30–1)

2. Efferent vs. aesthetic reading
[S]omeone else can read a text efferently for us, and acceptably paraphrase, but no one else can read aesthetically – that is, experience the evocation of – a literary work for us.
(The Aesthetic Transaction, 1986: 125; quoted Church 1997)

Any text, according to Rosenblatt, can be read efferently (information processing) or aesthetically. The decision is the reader's.

3. 'Transactional theory'
'Transaction' . . . permits emphasis on the to-and-fro, spiralling, nonlinear, continuously reciprocal influence of reader and text in the making of meaning. The meaning – the poem – 'happens' during the transaction between the reader and the signs on the page.
(1995: xvi; quoted Church 1997)

Thus Rosenblatt explicitly contested the New Critical 'affective fallacy' which attempted to rule the reader's personal associations and feelings out of the legitimate frame, and to cultivate technical and linguistic expertise in literary readers. Aesthetic reading is also opposed to factual 'efferent' reading, which is what traditional 'comprehension' tests tend to assess (where does a character in a novel live? how many sisters does she have? who did what? See section 2.3 above on Assessment). The aesthetic–efferent opposition is polemic and may not be fully empirically tenable. But the idea that literary reading should be an intensely personal, pleasurable, absorbing occupation chimed especially with school teachers' aspirations in

the UK and the US in the 1960s and 1970s and was widely taken up as a guide to pedagogic practice. Readers produce meanings; texts do not read themselves:

> The poem, novel or play . . . resembles a musical score in its combination of openness and constraint.
>
> Rosenblatt 1978: 13)

Aesthetic reading, Rosenblatt argued, is not simply sequential and cumulative. Readers need time and space to develop and much encouragement so that young readers can develop confidence in their own responses, a 'discovery' rather than a 'transmission' model of teaching was required. Importantly, mistakes, hesitations, re-readings and re-thinkings and the need to discuss response with others were now seen as normal and desirable, where Richards had expected isolated individuals to be fully competent literary readers. The assumptions parallel those of communicative language teaching quite precisely. A natural extension was to affirm the role of literature in wider moral education, as its founders had posited (Chapter 1 discussion): 'Books are a means of getting outside the particularly limited cultural group into which the individual is born' (quoted in Marshall 2000: 386). Rosenblatt and followers argued the approach could link reading and democracy. The term 'transaction' is borrowed from liberal US educationalist John Dewey (Rosenblatt 1978). Rosenblatt inspired much secondary school research arguing for the value of discussion, in which ideas are elaborated, extended or even changed, as discussions develop. Also relevant to literature discussions, in this perspective, are personal stories in response to the text, and evaluative talk. Readers are encouraged to develop their own questions, associations and in general 'response', and the teacher's response is not to be unduly privileged. (Eeds and Wells 1989 illustrate these beliefs in practice, advocating 'grand conversations' rather than 'gentle inquisitions'.)

Rosenblatt's notion of 'aesthetic reading' is a natural, almost untutored response of a reader. That is, the idea seems to be that successfully reading literature is different, but anyone can do it, at least at the secondary level. From a more scholarly or at least theoretical perspective, writers such as Culler (1975), Meutsch and Schmidt (1985) and Pilkington (1994) have disputed in what ways, if at all, literary reading is different, natural or trained, special or ordinary. If literary reading requires competences and strategies relevant for any reading or communication, though possibly to a higher or more precise degree, its relevance to education is clear. If on the other hand, literary reading requires special skills and abilities distinctive to literature, other justifications for its place in more general and especially in language education, will have to be found.

Quote. 3.4   Culler on literary competence

Anyone wholly unacquainted with literature and unfamiliar with the conventions by which fictions are read, would, for example, be quite baffled if presented with a poem. His knowledge of the language would enable him to understand phrases and sentences, but he would not know, quite literally, what to 'make' of this strange concatenation of phrases. He would be unable to read it 'as' literature because he lacks the complex 'literary competence' ... He has not internalized the 'grammar' of literature which would enable him to convert linguistic sequences into literary structures and meanings.
(Culler 1975: 114)

Culler (1975: Ch. 6) asked, if literature professors are better in some way at 'doing literature' than their students, what exactly is it they are better at? I review some of the later empirical studies of the question below (expert vs. novice readers of literature). But Culler suggested that we do learn to read differently when we read literature, and even, on a loose kind of Chomskyan analogy, posited 'literary competence' as what is learned through a literary education, beyond specific knowledges gained of periods, authors, genres and movements. He has since called for the study of 'literature as a discursive system and ... the relations between literary and non-literary discourses' (*Pursuit* 2002: xxi), a central theme of this book too. Culler insisted that his enterprise fell under the heading of *poetics*, which should be central to literary and cultural studies, where most previous literary critical activity had been *hermeneutics*, or interpretation. (See 'Beyond Interpretation', including a critique of New Criticism, in Culler 1981, 2002).

Concept 3.2   Poetics and hermeneutics

Poetics – systematic or scientific study of *how literary meaning is made*, for example what a well-made story should contain, or formal conventions of the sonnet. The Russian Formalists, discussed in Chapter 1, saw their research as Poetics.

Hermeneutics – study of *what a text means*, the principles for establishing valid inter-pretations or understandings. What literary seminars traditionally discussed. Nineteenth-century scholars of the Bible began to elaborate hermeneutics as a discipline.

Note that in both cases, representative of modern developments in literary study, the trend is away from evaluation ('how good is it?') towards understanding ('How does it work?' or 'What's going on?').

The effort, for Culler, should be to explain *how* meaning is made or is possible, rather than to produce endless new (subjective) interpretations of literary works. Why are some responses or inferences made thought to be more

valuable or more legitimate than others? Culler therefore proposed intuitively that experienced readers of literature activate certain conventions of literary reading when they approach the literary text:

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Data 3.2 Culler's conventions of literary reading

- *The rule of significance*: we expect a work of literature, to the degree that it is 'classic', to express a significant attitude to some large universal problem concerning 'man' and/ or his relation to the universe etc. (humanism).
- *The precise words have been carefully selected*: importance of surface forms.
- *The rule of metaphorical coherence*: we expect to find significant and meaningful. patterning of imagery and other non-literal language.
- *The literary work should be readily inscribable* in a literary tradition.
- Thematic unity can be traced.
- *Convention of binary opposites, semantic or thematic axes also promoting coherence* (good and evil, man and woman, east and west, etc.).
- *The fiction convention*: 'suspension of disbelief', a thought experiment, imagination.

</div>

Evidently what Culler is describing are very much 'conventions of the institution of literature' (p. 116), of which he would be a prime example, but conventions which require a reader to bring into operation. 'Intertextuality' (discussed in section 1.4 above) is a good example: different readers perceive different intertexts based on differing experiences. Readers with more literary educations (teachers and professors) tend to assign more importance to sensitivity to literary intertextuality as a component of literary competence. The relevance to assessment of literature reading is again clear, and suggests the need for a model of development of literary reading competence (see Empirical Studies, below).

   The question is how far such conventions operate, or should operate, for non-specialist readers. Objections have been made to Culler's rather speculative and vaguely specified set of conventions, but they are suggestive and borne out to some degree (as well as filled out) by empirical investigations of Zwaan (see section 3.3 below and Part 2) and of Schmidt (1982).

   In one of the founding documents of empirical research on literature reading, Meutsch and Schmidt (1985) reported finding two key conventions operating in literary readings they investigated: the 'esthetic' (E) convention and the 'polyvalence' (P) convention. Readers of literary texts expect to find, and even use as a criterion for literariness, a release from demands of practicality, realism, etc. (E) and the possibility of deriving multiple, even mutually contradictory meanings from literary text (P). Literary texts are expected to be typically difficult or demanding. Meanings will be (it is thought) not obvious or easy to extract. Schmidt (1982) stresses that E and P conventions are learned socially, particularly through education systems. As with our opening discussion of 'literary language', Pilkington (1994) points

out that E and P conventions are to be found widely outside what are conventionally considered literary texts (e.g. jokes, nursery rhymes; see discussion in Chapter 1 on Creativity). So again, it would have to be concluded that literary texts partially have that status or identity because readers assign it to them in looking for ambiguities and pleasurable irreality. In addition, however, it may well be that we have learned to find and value these qualities in literary texts and teachers have trained us to look for them there, because they tend to be more obvious and central in such texts, and that such features or *affordances* (see Glossary below; also van Lier 1996) partly determine the inclusion or not of a text in a literary syllabus.

Literary reading is generally seen by researchers as an interaction between reader and text. This much is shared with cognitive studies to be instanced in section 3.3 below (see also Grabe and Stoller 2002). Where emphasis differed it has been on the relative importance of the text or the reader, with most reader response critics falling somewhere between the German Wolfgang Iser (text more important): and the North American Stanley Fish (reader more important). It is again tempting to see here a split between more constrained European hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions, partly growing out of nineteenth-century close readings of the Bible, where obviously the 'word' was of paramount importance, though it needed to be interpreted, and New World (USA) individualism and freedom, and the right to one's own beliefs, meanings and ideas, as already encountered in Rosenblatt's work.

Key figures 3

Fish 'experiment': Fish demonstrates the importance of readers in constructing meanings by relating the story of how a postgraduate class in metaphysical poetry he was teaching came into his room and saw on the board a list of names of stylistics authors from a previous class in this form:

    Jacobs–Rosenbaum
    Levin
    Thorne
    Hayes
    Ohman (?)

(These are indeed well-known names in the field of literary linguistics.) Fish as teacher told his second class that a religious poem was on the board and asked them to interpret it. A hilarious essay then recounts how the conscientious students noticed the cross shape in which the names were arranged, saw references to the old testament in Jacob, Levi, to crucifixion in 'thorns' and rose trees (German 'Rosenbaum') and so on. 'Ohman (?)' was taken as a reference to Christ, a man and yet not a man, every man and no man, and so on. 'Hayes' proved a problem (taken as a seventeenth-century spelling of 'hays'), but significantly was discussed and then put to one side – literary interpretations tend to leave some questions unanswered. Readers who have studied George

Herbert, John Donne and contemporaries particularly enjoy Fish's essay. The point, clearly, however apocryphal or embroidered this tale, is its possibility or plausibility, which Fish would claim demonstrates his model of top down reading by members of interpretive communities, who tend to find and value texts which confirm their expectations, and challenge their ingenuity as literary readers. 'Interpreters do not decode poems, they make them' (p. 327).
('How to recognize a poem when you see one', in Fish 1980: 322–37)

Iser (1971; 1974; 1978) also pointed to the indeterminacy of literature. 'It may well be that strategic indeterminacy is a special characteristic of literature, especially poetic language' (1971). 'No tale can ever be told in its entirety' and therefore there will always be 'gaps' to be filled in (*konkretisiert*) by the actively participating, inferencing reader; and no single reading 'can ever exhaust the full potential' of a text' (1974). The point to note, nevertheless, is Iser's insistence that the process of literary reading is 'regulated' by the text. His notion of the *implied reader* suggests that a text constructs a position for a reader from which it is best read, in a similar way, perhaps, to the way we 'accommodate' to other speakers in a conversation to optimise successful communication. Literary reading then becomes a quest for the implied reader position from which it will make most sense. Iser's position excludes some of the wilder possible implications of arguing for reader construction of meaning, what has been designated the 'anything goes' position, that one interpretation is as good as another because it is true for the individual who produces it. At the same time, ideas such as the 'implied reader' leave interpretation – especially the expert interpretation of the literary critic – very much at the centre of literary activity. In fact, if the reader at best realises the meanings already constructed for him or her in the text, the point of insisting on readers making meaning seems to be getting lost.

Quote 3.5   Iser on reading literary text

Whenever the reader *bridges* the gaps, communication begins. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves. Hence the *structured* blanks of the text stimulate the process of ideation to be performed by the reader *on terms set by the text*.
(Iser 1978: 169; my emphases)

Fish (1980), by contrast, argues that the reader constructs literary meaning, that an 'aesthetic reading' to take Rosenblatt's term (and partly her idea) can be produced on almost any text by the sufficiently determined reader, with actual textual features playing only a minimal constraining role.

> **Quote 3.6   Fish on literary reading**
>
> It is not that the presence of poetic qualities compels a certain kind of attention, but that the paying of a certain kind of attention results in the emergence of poetic qualities.
> (Fish 1980)

In principle, then, whether a work is to be considered literary, and how it is to be interpreted, is to be decided by individual readers it would seem. The fact is, however, that readers do largely seem to agree on which texts are poems, and even on what those poems mean, to a significant degree. For Iser, this is because of linguistic and textual constraints on interpretation. Fish's explanation, however, is the anthropological or sociocultural notion of 'interpretive communities', something like the 'small cultures' of Holliday, discussed in Chapter 2. (See also Swales 1990 for the idea of *discourse communities*; Wertsch 1991 or Lave and Wenger's 1991 idea of 'communities of practice'.)

In this case the cultures or communities are the institution(s) of literature, principally educational sites and systems, but also, perhaps, literary societies, reading groups and other arts and cultural organisations. Literature is seen as a social practice: exam boards set texts to read, teachers are trained in approved methods, literature is an institutionalised practice. Approval and sanction will not be given to unorthodox ideas that do not meet with the consensus of professional peers and superiors, and so will not be disseminated and taken up more widely.

> **Quote 3.7   Interpretive communities**
>
> Meanings are the property neither of fixed and stable texts nor of free and independent readers but of interpretive communities that are responsible both for the shape of the reader's activities and for the texts those activities produce.
> (Fish 1980: 322)

The reader is paramount, but context rather than intrinsic textual or linguistic features produces meaning. No reader, no poem in short.

An interesting attempt to test Fish's ideas empirically is Dorfman (1996). Dorfman's readers were ten postgraduate students of literature and ten undergraduate computer scientists. The two groups showed distinct styles of reading three texts, one 'entertainment' and two 'literary-aesthetic', titles and authors deleted. The 'experts' rated the 'literary' texts more highly than more popular stories, particularly the 'postmodernist' story by J. L. Borges. Most importantly, the experts cited similar reasons for their preferences. In other words, Dorfman's limited experiment seems to provide some initial empirical

warrant for the Fish's idea of an 'interpretive community'. ('Expert readers' are discussed in more detail in section 3.3.)

Den Otter (1991) provides additional empirical support for Fish's idea of a 'community' by considering literary knowledge as 'rhetoric' in published articles in literary critical journals: some styles of argumentation are published, others, more deviant, are not considered persuasive or substantial enough. Literature, once again, as a discourse, as Eagleton and others have argued, a ratified way of talking and writing about literature.

Ideal readers, super-readers and real readers

For all the stimulus to thought and activity such writings produced, with the literary critics, ultimately, reading is still rather idealised and abstracted (Culler was writing about an 'ideal reader' in 1975), and still tends to concentrate on expert readers reading canonical or 'classic' literary works in elite institutional contexts, indeed is basically autobiographical, 'stories about reading' in Culler's (1983) own formulation.

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Quote 3.8 Idealised readers in literary theory

The reader of whose responses I speak [is] an informed reader, neither an abstraction nor an actual living reader, but a hybrid – a real reader (me) who does everything within his power to make himself informed [including] the attendant suppressing, in so far as that is possible, of what is personal and idiosyncratic and 1970ish in my response.
(Fish 1980: 49)

[T]he reading self is by no means an ideal or impersonal entity. He is mostly over 35 and under 50, has experienced war, marriage, and the responsibility of children, belongs in part to some kind of minority group, is male and not female, and shares most of Slatoff's general ways of thinking and feeling.
(Slatoff 1970: 55; quoted in Culler 1983: 41–2)

***

Statements like these more and more raised questions about the relative validity or representativeness of the claims the early reader response critics were making. For example, 'If the meaning of a work is the experience of a reader, what difference does it make if the reader is a woman?' asked Culler (1983: 42), hypothetically. Writers like Fetterley (1978) and Flynn and Schweickart (1986) went on to show that it made a great difference, as others were to do for other aspects of identity and 'experience' such as race (e.g. Gates 1992) or even race *and* gender! (hooks 1989). To be a successful reader in the academy, it was argued, was to learn to read as a straight white male, at the cost of fidelity to one's actual experience of life; 'immasculation' is Fetterley's feminist (1978) term. Claims to objective, impersonal or universal responses to literature to which the student should aspire came to be seen as increasingly suspicious. 'The reader feels/thinks/notices . . .' or 'No reader could fail

to . . .' are Culler's (1983: 68) instances of the learning of this pseudo-objectivity in a literary education. Such doubts issued in challenges to the curriculum, as shown in Chapter 2. For reader research, the pressing urgency came to be seen as investigations of real readings by real readers, which education and psychology had of course been attempting for some years previously, and to which we now turn. The second language reader is of course a central instance of a 'different' reader.

3.3   Real readers of literature

Quote 3.9   Empirical study of literary reading

Indulgence in circular logic, speculative hypothesis, capricious use of terminology, and monolithic views of reading experience runs throughout all the reader-oriented approaches in literary studies, from the earliest to the most recent trends. . . . 'Readers' in these approaches are understood as universal, aggregate, hypothetical entities responding in unison.
(Bortolussi and Dixon 2003: 6)

Whereas psychology focuses on the simplest of stimuli (dots, dashes, words), literary theory studies the most complex ones (poems, novels, genre, culture).
(Hoorn, in Schram and Steen 2001: 131)

Many researchers have felt the need for empirical research of literary reading or readers – hence the frustration of Bortolussi and Dixon. The difficulty has always been how convincingly to research such a complex area – hence Hoorn's reservations.

Nevertheless, different readers with different backgrounds, it was proved conclusively in experiment after experiment in cognitive science, confirming teachers' experience, will notice different things in different contexts of reading (see below; also Grabe and Stoller 2002: Ch. 1). Reading involves thought as well as language; what a reader brings to a text can be as important as the text itself. 'The reader' was a pre-empirical supposition. Henceforth, researchers would always need to ask: Which reader? Reading what and for what purpose and where and when? A related need, as already indicated, would be to move from undifferentiated cognitive notions of 'reading' to more closely specified studies of *literacies* (discourse practices in actual communities) and actual readers.

Part 2 gives more detailed accounts of suggestive key empirical and applied research studies in the reading and teaching of language and literature. In this chapter, I continue to explore more generally what is known of literary reading by ordinary readers, and the issues raised, by providing overview sketches of the two dominant areas of research (psycholinguistic, cognitive

and linguistic; and educational), outlining topics and questions on which researchers have tended to converge by way of background to the case studies to follow. This is the 'field' of empirical study of literature readers and reading. The bulk of these are investigations of readers reading literature in their own first language, but they are suggestive and have often dominated second language research to date. A brief section concludes the chapter with an overview of research specifically into readers reading literature in a language which is not their own first language.

One overall conclusion from this review must be that this field has been dominated by psychology research and educational field studies. What is conspicuously lacking is an approach to literature as discourse, or literature as a social practice, from an applied linguistic point of view, which would ask what learners of literature learn through the discourses in which they participate, and whether these discourses could be developed more in the favour of and interests of the learners.

Literary reading: empirical findings from cognitive psychology

Some *questions and issues* empirical research on literature has addressed to be summarised in this section:

- What is literary reading? Is it different?
- What is the role of the reader in the creation of literary meaning? How do meanings derived from texts vary according to reader?
- What are the relative contributions of text and of reader and of language proficiency to meaning construction?
- What is literary understanding ('comprehension')? How does it arise? How do failures of literary reading occur?
- Do more and less experienced readers of literature read differently? Can literary reading expertise be taught or facilitated?
- Reading for pleasure, affective factors, moral and imaginative factors.
- Open-ended protocols and ethnographies: what occurs when literature is read?

Data 3.3   Reading literature: overview of empirical findings

- Genre makes a difference: what is thought to be 'literature' is read differently from non-literature; poems are read differently from stories.
- Readers of literature tend to look carefully at (certain) surface linguistic forms.
- *But* they do this in order to help them infer what lies 'behind' the obvious literal meanings of the text.
- Literary texts are expected to be 'complex' in themselves, and/or in the demands they will make on readers.
- This behaviour and these expectations are learned if not taught. Cognition is important in literary reading.
- So is affect (personal 'feelings', 'response').

Data 3.3   (Continued)

More specifically:

- Readers of literature pay more attention to precise surface linguistic forms, particularly if they are stylistically 'foregrounded' (van Peer 1986; 1992; and Miall and Kuiken 1994).
- Reading of literature tends to be slower because more careful and more thoughtful
- reading reported to be pleasurable is slower and more careful.
- Successful literary reading often requires more extensive and elaborate inferencing activity and deployment of personal experience and background knowledge.
- Literature readers expect a 'point', a meaning beyond the obvious story or situation related, and will actively, even imaginatively, try to construct such meaning and cohesion. 'Significance' matters more than facts or truth ('higher' truths: *Is a character good or bad?* rather than, *Does he have a moustache/ was he wearing a hat?*).
- Literary texts often contain surprises- unexpected language/ events/ developments, which require rapid and possibly extended revision of a reader's 'situation model'.
- But literary readers are more tolerant of these than readers of more 'transactional' (informational) texts would be, and will try very hard to accommodate them to their developing understanding of the text.
- Literary readers look for personal relevance and interest in texts purporting to be literary.
- Emotions and feelings are more likely to enter into literature reading experiences
- Experienced readers of literature and those with literary educations read differently. from less experienced, or those without formal literary education.

Quote 3.10   The complexity of empirical study of literary reading

How readers process narrative is essentially an empirical question that can only be answered by systematic observation of actual readers reading actual texts; it cannot be answered solely on the basis of intuition, anecdotal evidence, or even sophisticated models of human experience. Moreover, the answer to this question inevitably will be complex: Readers' mental processes will vary with the characteristics of the individual reader, the nature of the text, and the context in which the reading takes place. This means that what is required is a large body of empirical evidence on how these variables operate, how they interact, and how they combine to determine readers' processing.
(Bortolussi and Dixon 2003: 13)

Chapter 1 has indicated ways in which literary writing can draw attention to its own linguistic forms (parallelism, deviancy). Here, an important finding of existing empirical research to note from the outset, is that readers of literature are likelier to pay attention to surface forms and verbal texture (van Peer 1986; Zwaan 1993; Miall and Kuiken 1994; Hanauer 1997b), whether

this is taught or learned (Culler, Fish) or driven by the language and reading process itself as the Formalists originally proposed (Jakobson, Mukařovsky). This closer attention to the surface of the text, and deeper processing of the language, are naturally of great interest to second and foreign language educators (compare, e.g., Doughty and Williams 1998).

A key finding of cognitive studies of reading was to insist on the importance of 'Schemas', or background knowledge and reading, for reading comprehension. Cognitive science and psycholinguistics were demonstrating empirically through the 1970s that readers with different backgrounds or viewpoints understand and remember the same texts differently, with much research carried out on narrative or pseudo-narrative texts, sometimes known as *textoids* to denote their artificial, experimentally controlled length and features, including (often) a distinct lack of naturalness, *ecological validity* or integrity (including the use of extracts). Prior knowledge, experience and viewpoint clearly affect comprehension of any text, even what was noticed or felt to be of importance (interpretation) (Anderson et al. 1977; Grabe and Stoller 2002). As Iser and others had argued, successful comprehending reading requires active filling in of 'gaps' by the reader, inferencing, and the knowledge that helps readers fill in the gaps was proposed to come from experience, theorised in the 1970s as 'schemata' and related ideas (compare Brown and Yule 1983). Different schemas will result in different representations. Typically, original surface wording is quickly forgotten in what is heard or read, as the information is integrated into a '*mental model*' (Johnson-Laird 1983) or situational model (Kintsch and van Dijk 1983; Kintsch 1998), though some language is noticed and memorable, as in striking poetic writing or effective advertising copy. Where 'automaticity' of language processing cannot be assumed, however, as with younger or less fluent second language readers, language proficiency weaknesses can 'shortcircuit' larger reading processes, leading to greater reliance on linguistic 'bottom-up' processing strategies.

Schemata were also shown to be culturally relative (compare discussion in section 2.3 above), *cultural schemata*. Steffensen and colleagues, for example (Steffensen and Joag-Dev 1984), showed American and Indian understandings and interpretations of texts concerning weddings in the respective continents varying according to previous 'background cultural knowledge' of what occurs at 'a wedding' (where the linguistic label deceptively standardises). (See also de Beaugrande in Nardoccio – Singapore students; Piper – Vietnamese readers in Canada; or Carrell – US foreign language students.)

Such research ultimately reached back to Bartlett (1932) who had shown the creative and culturally biased nature of memory and comprehension in Cambridge undergraduates (again!) recalling an indigenous story from North America. Bartlett's undergraduates did not so much 'read' the story, in any naive sense of 'input', like a machine. Rather, they clearly built or

elaborated understandings around it using previous knowledge and experience. The conclusion to be drawn from such research, confirming the ideas of reader response, however disturbing to some, was clear: a different perspective of another (reader) was not automatically to be considered 'wrong' or inferior, but rather needed to be understood on its own terms. 'I can see where you're coming from' entered everyday discourse with warrant from research! Later work (compare Chapter 2 above, as well as Dixon and Bortolussi) has complicated this picture further by showing that identities are not fixed, 'experience' is a constantly evolving and uncompleted story, and so even the *same* readers can read the same text differently on different occasions.

'Comprehension', then, is now widely understood as the relating of new information to information already stored in memory, i.e. the 'reader factor' (Bernhardt) is crucial in determining how (well) a text has been understood.

Concept 3.3   Textbase and situation model

van Dijk and Kintsch (1978; 1983) usefully distinguished a *Textbase* – propositional understanding closely derived from the linguistic, material form of a text, the sentences of which it is composed – from a *Situation Model* (compare Johnson-Laird's (1983) '*mental model*') a wider image or understanding of the situation described or evoked, or its significance, derived from the Textbase by an individual reader. The point was that while most readers would agree about the contents of the Textbase because of its objective grounds, individuals would develop varying Situation Models from the same Textbase because of their differing backgrounds and so noticing differing features of the text or assigning varying significances to what they read.

More recently, Kintsch (1998) has argued that the process of literary reading is essentially the same as any other form of reading, though he notes too that the actual words of a literary text seem more important, and that successful literary reading (e.g. of a novel) requires the construction and maintenance in the reader's mind of 'complex, multi-levelled situation models' (who has done what to who, where and so on). Kintsch also notes that expert readers seem to differ from less experienced readers in the features they notice. I return to this under 'expert readers', below. Halasz (1991) showed that reading of a literary text tended to prompt more associations, especially personal situations, but also noted that literary readers tend to be reminded of other literary texts they have read too. This evidence perhaps confirms the idea that literary reading is more idiosyncratic, with the implications that has for teaching and testing of literature.

Data 3.4   Genre makes a difference

Langer (1990), using think-out-loud protocol methodology with secondary readers (US 7th and 11th graders) showed that **r**eaders of literary texts were more prone to look behind and beyond the text, at motivation, causation, character or feelings, and to hypothesise about possible future developments. All in all, literary reading involved more concern to activate different possibilities and levels of meaning, where readers of science and social science texts were more concerned to establish information, with readings becoming increasingly specific and precise. Langer argues for the importance of this kind of creative thinking and reading in education but also more widely through life, citing studies of professional and expert thinking (scientists, engineers, etc.).

Similarly, Hanauer (1997b; see also 2001), presenting to different experimental groups of readers the same texts (originally poems), graphically manipulated (prose paragraphs or the original poem in lines and stanzas), showed that genre identification, here the form of 'poem', made a difference to the verbal memories of his subjects. Those who read the poem (presented in verses and stanzas) showed better memory for the actual words used.

Zwaan, at one time a co-worker with Kintsch, produced one of the earliest and still one of the few single-authored book-length empirical studies of literary reading (Zwaan 1993). His conclusion again, based on one of the most extensive sets of empirical studies at the time, was that 'literariness is not taken to be exclusively a linguistic phenomenon, but [is] at least in part a cognitive one' (p. 4). Zwaan preferred to write about 'cognitive strategies' rather than 'conventions' as did Culler and others. Subtly designed experimental studies showed the amount of effort readers were prepared to invest in a text they considered 'literary'. The assumption of readers was shown empirically to be that a deliberately carefully constructed text, such as a poem, would be likely to repay equally deliberate and careful processing. An interesting finding, at variance with some other research, was that while elaborate inferencing was indeed associated with the processing of literary text, the inferencing is delayed by literary readers until necessary, ideally even until the text has been read in full. They concentrate on the surface, how meaning is being made, while apparently suspending judgement as to what it all means, though this will be the ultimate point of the whole activity. Literary reading may be more demanding of 'working memory' than some other kinds of reading. 'Indeterminacy' (what it all means, what is going on) is seen as a key feature of the literary reading experience, and extended tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity a trait of more successful literary readers. Like others (Chapter 1), Zwaan points out that it is difficult to oppose generic 'non-literary' texts to literary; rather different sets of processing strategies evolve with experience for different types of text. In reading literature, world knowledge and reference is less important than 'point' or significance: readers of literary texts in Zwaan's experiments were less likely to notice

inconsistencies, and processed texts which would seem unlikely or illogical in an ordinary everyday perspective more quickly if they were understood to be literary texts. ('Readers are prepared to go beyond the barriers of their world knowledge in order to arrive at a coherent interpretation of the text', p. 12: compare Schmidt's 1982 proposals). Literary readers, in sum, were found to process in a slower and more 'bottom-up' fashion. (This would presumably apply with even more force to the reading of poetry.) Zwaan's readers were cautious about reaching understandings, but very much wanted to understand and would work hard at it if necessary. The literary reading situation is shown to be a demanding one, but one that many readers seem to value.

Summary of Zwaan findings: L1 undergraduate readers of literature

- Memory for the actual words used is typically better for literary text than for other text types.
- Descriptions in literary texts are not necessarily visualisable or visualised ('point' is more important).
- Action sequences are noticed and remembered as important in narratives.
- Relative lack of interest in reference of words to the world; greater interest in the words themselves, and what they might 'really' mean.
- 'Literary comprehension is more elaborate in some respects (e.g. surface structure, textbase) and less elaborate in others (e.g. situational representation)' (p. 148).
- A 'loosely organized textbase' (p. 129) – a lot of propositions are held in the mind, but they are not clearly connected to each other (at least at first, though the effort is toward eventual cohesion).
- The proficient literary reader needs to, and develops proficiency in, holding possibly or apparently irrelevant information in retrievable memory; literary readers are better at and more interested in 'trivial' details. They have learned that the trivial can be important!
- Readers of literary texts have learned through experience to expect ambiguities and difficulties, and that the purpose of the text will not be immediately clear. On this basis they process carefully, 'bottom up'.
- 'Rule' of literary reading: Carefully inspect the surface structure for signals about the goal of the author and the point of the text and use these signals to form pragmatic inferences (p. 156).

Other relevant work on inferencing includes Graesser and Kreuz (1993), Graesser et al. (1994), Britton and Graesser (1996), Emmott (1997) and Gerrig (1993). Centrally, literary processing, according to many of these researchers' accounts, seems to encourage 'richer' and more reflective processing. Arguably, students need to learn or to be encouraged to do all this – and to be convinced that it will be worthwhile. For example, thinking aloud may be diagnostic for the researcher of literary reading, but is also developmental and reported to be helpful by some second language readers (e.g. Block 1986).

In the same way, the significance or value of a literary work is sometimes more obvious to us as we discuss it with others. Insights like this are pursued in Parts 2 and 3 as we move to more applied linguistic research considerations.

Quote 3.11   Expertise

Expertise can be described by reference to the differential way sources of potential information are perceived and understood by novices and experts, particularly in the way they use language to authenticate their status vis-à-vis one another. . . . training and experience . . . ritualized activities . . .

Novices' perception of the local task environment can produce information overload [whereas experts can process more and more complex information more competently because of 'expert knowledge' as cognitive organisation, mediated by language].
(Cicourel, in Duranti 2001)

One key discussion for cognitive research has been whether, and if so how, literary reading differs from ordinary reading, and what difference a literary education or extensive literary experience might make to the production of literary meaning as opposed to simply the accrual of generalised experience by more mature or older readers (novice–expert research, as it is sometimes termed). Certain common differences are certainly regularly identified by such research. Thus Graves and Frederiksen (1991), in a widely cited study, looked at student as opposed to literature professor readings of an extract from the modern novel *The Color Purple*. The specialists engaged in more elaborate inferencing, where students stayed closer to the text. Similarly, where experts seemed to welcome and want to explore difficulties and ambiguities, students tended to read such instances as signs of their own weakness as literary readers in not quickly understanding in full. Peskin (1998) reports similar findings for poetry reading. Dorfman (1996) shows postgraduates having learned to prefer difficulty and ambiguity, and to be somewhat scornful of 'entertainment', as having little 'point'. Novices predictably saw things rather differently! A final example is Zeitz (1994), whose experts demonstrated better recall for gist, more elaborate interpretations addressing more aspects of the text read, and more complex arguments and comparisons. In an unusual controlled experiment, which could prompt further investigations, Bortolussi and Dixon (1996) claimed to show that perception and appreciation of 'magic realism' was successfully taught to undergraduates over the course of a term.

Issues this 'expert–novice' research into literature reading raises for the educator are how far such insights can or should inform teaching of less expert readers. Whether, for example, such informed teaching would lead to greater perception of successful literature reading or to simple unhelpful

reproduction of one culture's reading habits on the site of another. After all, much of this research also seems to confirm Fish or Eagleton on literature as a 'community of practice' with more and less acceptable ways of taking from and talking about text.

Pleasure, play and the imagination

A final key difference between more expert and relatively less experienced readers of literature is that the more expert reader is likely to 'enjoy' the experience more, (though this 'enjoyment' needs further investigation), where many 'ordinary' readers report largely negative memories of being forced to read literature in school. This was one important insight of Rosenblatt and the reader response movement, which we return to in our review of educational research into literature reading below. Clearly, combining the pleasurable, and so motivating and memorable, with the useful, is of interest to educators. From more cognitive perspectives, it has been noted that some readers at least report pleasure in reading poetry, stories or other literature, that indeed they perceive the main 'function' of literature to be the pleasures if offers, 'a good read', and will sometimes return to repeated readings of the same text for pleasure. Teachers have always argued for just such pleasure in literature reading, even if admitting, to their puzzlement, that it doesn't always come about in the classroom. If literature is generally read more slowly and carefully, it is worthy of note too that readers are observed to slow down for sections of literary reading reported as particularly pleasurable (Nell 1988). There is an evident wish to prolong and extend pleasurable experience, to 'relish' it to the full. Evaluation seems to be key to literary reading experience, for ordinary readers as well as the critics and experts. More sophisticated research, such as Miall and Kuiken (2002), argues that the kind of cognition which characterises literary reading, including feelings of empathy, identification and personal engagement is inseparable from evaluation and distinctive to the literary reading experience. Literary reading in such a view, promotes personally valued ways of thinking and feeling and imagining. We perhaps can clarify what we like and value and what we don't, as we read literature. Much reading for pleasure is reported in institutional contexts, or by unusually accomplished readers, but private reading for pleasure is also well known, as for example in the growing popularity of reading groups which meet in private homes in leisure time on a regular basis (see, e.g., Hartley 2003; Long, 2003). Here again, however, research has found that members of such groups have typically been through some form of higher education, where, presumably, they learned to enjoy reading or at least, perhaps, 'caught the reading habit'.

Educational research

In education and educational research, mainly L1 but also SL, the impact of Rosenblatt in particular, as well as of other reader response writings, has to date been pervasive and decisive. It often appears from the single-mindedness

of research writings and studies in (especially primary and secondary) education that there could be no other way to teach literature, and that the only question has been to discover how to do it best within this paradigm. Hence, the research focus has been on individual readers, using protocol research ('think-alouds'), interviews, diaries and the like, all designed to discover what individual readers make of literary texts they encounter in classrooms and why. Much of this research has extended in a derived form to second language research and writings on literature in the classroom, though we should also note that critiques of 'response' have been made suggesting that teachers first need to ensure comprehension at a more linguistic and semantic level ('textbase') before more elaborated interpretations and responses can be usefully encouraged, even if notions of individual response are not themselves suspect. Second or foreign language teachers will understand such a criticism, which I return to in section 3.4, as we discuss second language reading issues.

Educational research on literature reading, then, has tended mainly to investigate literature for its *potential for moral, personal and social growth* (compare Chapter 2), including promotion of greater understanding and tolerance of others in various ways unlike ourselves, 'reading against racism', for example. A secondary strand, influenced by the kind of work reviewed in the previous section, has interested itself in the *cognitive strategies* and meta-cognition involved in literature reading, arguing for the wider educational relevance, for example, of tolerance of ambiguity or ability to see alternative perspectives on a situation. A third important area for our concerns here, and so reviewed briefly before turning directly in section 3.4. to second language literature reading research, is represented by a limited number of investigations into *more linguistic questions*, vocabulary growth as a result of reading, for example, (Nagy and Herman 1985; 1987; or Nagy et al. 1987); or arguments for the apparent wider language development benefits of reading for writing skills ('good writers read more' type arguments) (Krashen 1993). It should be noted that this last strand looks at extensive reading or reading for pleasure in general terms, likely to include literary texts, broadly understood, among others, but does not investigate effects of specific or unique literature reading programmes, partly, no doubt, because of the difficulties already discussed in narrowly defining what exactly defines 'literature'. We note again here, the relative dearth of applied linguistic studies of discourse in, through and around literary texts as a clear gap in current research.

Moral, personal and social growth

Reader response research in education has emphasised affective factors and tends to be qualitative and observational, rather than experimentalist in orientation (Squire 1994). Literature is often instanced as reading for pleasure, and a recurrent issue arises when pleasure is clearly not being derived from literature reading for many literature readers in school. The applied drive of such research is toward teaching developments which will address these

issues. In Chapter 2 the anxiety of those who first introduced literature into the curriculum for women was noticed, resulting in trivially demanding factual exam questions, presumably designed to lessen the danger of pleasure, fantasy and all the other qualities reader response writers now like to emphasise! Pleasure is a major value claimed by advocates of literature in education. Barthes (1973) similarly claimed that 'desire' drives (narrative) reading.

Certainly a related fact noted by educators early on (cognitive advantage) was that narrative was generally more memorable and easily understood than other text types. This was quickly co-opted as an argument for heavy use of stories in early years education, though others have reminded us of the necessity of educating students into other non-narrative genres if they are to master professional and scientific discourses at more advanced levels (Reid 1987).

Squire (1964), one of the earliest educational studies, still of great interest (protocols and interviews, 52 adolescent readers), noted that less fluent and confident readers were more text-bound and literal, fluent readers less text-dependent: 'High percentages of factual restatements of the narrative were made by readers who experienced difficulty in comprehending. The slow readers seemed almost to repeat elements of the story in an attempt to clarify its meaning' (1964: 24). Weaker readers in this study consistently failed to recognise or admit problems of comprehension, or would hold on to mistaken ideas rather than being willing (compare Zwaan) to revise their developing understandings. More successful readers showed more flexibility but also a determined effort to extract coherent meanings. They read actively and continuously to elaborate inferences. Squire notes also a wide range of responses across his readers, and the importance of individual reader factors. Interestingly, these adolescent readers were found often to be 'happiness bound', ('the pleasant overrides the plausible'), and had a strong preference for realism over more fantastic writings. Elsewhere, developmentally, researchers have noted a turning away from poetry after about ten years in UK readers of literature, and suspicion of metaphor: one interpretation of this might be a period of conservatism coinciding with insecurities of many young adults.

With time, literary reading came to be valued centrally if not exclusively as a personal experience, as in the following exchange quoted approvingly by Teasey.

Data 3.5   Extract

Student 1: In the lessons sometimes we've gone through a poem, but I still wouldn't know what it really meant to me by the end of the lesson.
Researcher (J.T.): Even if it had been explained to you during the lesson?
Student 2: You can't have a poem explained to you, can you? . . . You can explain what the words and metaphors mean but you can't explain a poem.
(Teasey 1988: 83)

Close linguistic analysis was out, except at the highest levels; teachers were taught to concentrate on 'response'. The situational focus – contexts of reading – is important in this educationally oriented reader response research. A number of studies, for example, demonstrate the importance for literary readings and understanding of the way in which literature is taught (see a review in Applebee 1977). Andringa (1991), for example, notes the apparent belief of her Dutch grammar school students that genre holds the key to successful literary reading, a belief which has demonstrably been learned in their classrooms: 'If I knew what it [genre] was I would know how to read it'. Purves (1973) argued that readers read (in school) as teachers teach them to, and that this is increasingly evident through secondary school, and internationally. Research like this (or see earlier discussion of assessment practices) has been one reason for increasing disquiet about notions of 'response' as often amounting to 'approved' responses. Cross-cultural classrooms, such as exist in SL and foreign language contexts, would seem to offer promising grounds for investigating the culturally constructed nature of response.

Quote 3.12   Literary reading as a institutional practice

One always and only learns to interpret texts of a certain type in certain ways through having access to, and ample experience in, social settings where texts…are read in those ways.
(Gee 1988: 209, in Beach 1993: 104)

Reasonably enough, the bottom line for educational research has normally been, even when implicit, the implications for applied practice. Thus Squire (1994) closes a useful review of such research (primarily from a North American perspective) with practical implications derivable:

Implications of research for educational practice
- The teaching of literature must focus on the transaction between the reader and the work (Probst 1988; Rosenblatt 1938; 1978).
- Response is affected by prior knowledge and prior experience.
- Response differs with time and place.
- Response to literature varies with the rhetorical model [need to introduce and use different genres].
- Readers generally have a common response to a literary text, yet no two responses are identical.
- Works of genuine literary quality can evoke richer, more meaningful experience than can 'pseudo-literature' (Richards 1929).
- It takes two to read a book.

- Important developmental differences can be seen in the way children respond to literature.
- The sounds of words are often as important as their sense.
- The ways in which we teach literature will permanently affect our students' responses (after Squire 1994).

Another key publication, with contributors from the UK, Australia, Canada and elsewhere, Corcoran and Evans (1987) identifies six characteristics of 'good' readers of literature which have emerged from reader response research in education.

'Good' readers of literature

- Can comprehend verbal ambiguities, regularise complex syntax, and discriminate among verbal rhythms.
- Constantly predict how a story will unfold.
- Expect to help the author make the story.
- Evaluate an author's point of view.
- Fuse emotional and intellectual responses.
- Know they can write and often do, enjoying the power of creating texts to be read by someone other than their teachers.

One final aspect of the educational interest in literature reading has been to plot a model of the development of children's emergent responses to literature (Squire 1964; Applebee 1978) which could inform syllabus design and assessment activities. Research on children reading literature inevitably linked development to wider cognitive and social expectations (egocentrism increasingly replaced by concern with relations to others etc.; learning to read in primary school; reading to learn in secondary school).

One model of Development as a literary reader, with curriculum and assessment implications, is an Australian model based on research by Thomson (1987) in which elements of Iser, Applebee and Squire can also be seen to be integrated. What is sketched, with some empirical backing, is development of the reader from a more literal minded text-bound actor, to critical and reflective advanced reader.

Response to literature: a developmental model

Process stages: kinds of satisfaction Process strategies

1. Unreflective interest in action.	(a)	Rudimentary mental images (stereotypes from film and television)
	(b)	Predicting what might happen next in the short term
2. Empathising	(c)	Mental images of affect
	(d)	Expectations about characters

3. Analogising	(e)	Drawing on repertoire of personal experiences, making connections between characters and one's own life
4. Reflecting on the significance of events (theme) and behaviour (distanced evaluation of characters)	(f)	Generating expectations about alternative possible long-term outcomes
	(g)	Interrogating the text, filling in gaps
	(h)	Formulating puzzles, enigmas, accepting hermeneutic challenges
5. Reviewing the whole work as the author's creation	(i)	Drawing on literary and cultural repertoires
	(j)	Interrogating the text to match the author's representation with one's own
	(k)	Recognition of implied author
6. Consciously considered relation-ship with the author, recognition of textual ideology, and understanding of self (identity theme) and of one's own reading processes.	(l)	Recognition of implied reader in the text, and the relationship between implied reader
	(m)	Reflexiveness, leading to understanding of textual ideology, personal identity and one's own reading processes.

Linguistic investigations of extensive reading as 'skill'

It is now widely accepted that speed of processing ('automaticity') is related to reading fluency, and that phonological features seem to be important for word recognition. Thus Beard (1995) points to the value of rhyme and word play as found in poetry, rhymes, jokes and other related literary and 'sub-literary genres, for developing literacy skills.

Two further approaches likely to be of particular interest to the teacher of second or foreign language literatures are instanced here, Nagy et al.'s work on vocabulary development and extensive reading which has influenced second language researchers such as Elley (1991; Elley and Manghubai 1983), Hafiz and Tudor (see next section), and Krashen's arguments for extensive reading having wider language development benefits, applied to second language teaching by himself and other associates.

Nagy and colleagues have investigated extensive naturalistic reading and demonstrated clear correlations between reading and knowledge and vocabulary development. What is less clear from this work is how exactly this occurs, and therefore how the process could be optimised. Interestingly, this research has also tended to conclude that while in general and quantitative terms, reading clearly and significantly supports vocabulary acquisition, some more difficult words are *not* successfully learned from context, and generally local contexts in which new words are encountered are usually not helpful for learners' to guess meanings. Thus this research makes modest claims, undoubtedly for first language readers and learners

supporting the value of extensive reading, but noting that reading alone will not be enough, some more conscious and explicit learning and teaching is needed, and it is noted too that how exactly the 'bootstrapping' or 'virtuous circle' of more words – more reading – more knowledge occurs, remains rather obscure.

Krashen similarly observes for first and second language readers that you learn to read by reading, and to write by writing, but also that reading and writing development ('literacy') are mutually supportive. This will all seem familiar and highly acceptable to many practising teachers. The problem, as often with Krashen's work, is that the empirical validity of his claims has been difficult to verify, partly because of the large terms in which they are framed. Elley has tried to respond to this challenge for second language readers in Fiji and Singapore, though like Krashen minimising L1 and SL differences, with longitudinal studies which again seem to support the general idea of the helpfulness of extensive reading to more general language development, especially where interactions take place around books, rather than more privatised forms of individual reading. The general educational wisdom of 'learning to read' in primary school, and 'reading to learn' in secondary school has certainly found wide acceptance across educational systems. The point made here is simply that empirical evidence is difficult to find when the claims are so large, and in the absence of real alternatives (educational systems not based on literacy).

It is time to turn more explicitly to consider what is known of the reading of foreign and second language literatures, with which this Chapter on literature reading concludes.

Further reading on reading of literature

Reader response: The classic, very influential, anthology here is Tompkins (1980), which contains readings by Culler, Iser, Fish and others as well as a substantial introduction. A more recent collection, again with a useful editor's introduction and well referenced, is Bennett (1995).

Richards and Culler are intelligent writers who could be read in more detail pursuing references given in this chapter. Fish (1980) remains a very amusing but also highly stimulating read, even if you may finally disagree with him! Additional to the Rosenblatt references given in the chapter, for influence of reader response on literature education in secondary schools, see, for example, Corcoran and Evans 1987 (mainly British and Australian references), or Corcoran, Hayhoe and Pradl (1994), which includes US and Canadian examples too. Zwaan (1993) remains the best cognitive psychology study of literary reading, though publications and papers on the IGEL website (see Part 4) should also be browsed. Marshall (2000) gives a good up-to-date overview of 'Research on response to literature'.

3.4   SL reading and SL reading of literature

Quote 3.13   Hanauer on empirical study of second language literature reading

- There is very little actual empirical data relating to the reading and comprehension of literature within the language classroom . . .
- Much stylistic research involves the analysis of literary texts, not how real readers, let alone non-native readers, understand these texts . . .
- [C]urrent arguments both for and against the use of literature in the classroom are only loosely based on empirical evidence . . .
- None of the theories of language learning directly state a role for literary reading within the language learning process [and yet literature is still widely used].

(Hanauer 2001: 295, 296, 297, 298)

In this section, we note a persisting distinction between more cognitive studies and more educationally oriented research. Bernhardt (1995) points to the dominance of studies of read*ing* rather than of readers in research, a concentration on texts and minds, rather than individuals in interaction. The concern with methods and techniques in pedagogy has also yielded some light on to what actual readers in actual classroom situations do, even if this more pedagogically oriented work often lacks what many researchers would consider sufficient rigour. There seems to be a turn in second language research as in educational research generally, to more qualitative investigations. A caution to enter, however, is that second language reading studies generally have looked much more at the reading of English than of any other language. This inevitably raises the issue of how far such knowledge can and should be generalised, and points to the need for more studies of the reading of non-English second and foreign language materials.

In many and important ways the conclusion to draw from surveys to date must be that second language reading does not differ greatly *in principle*, from first language reading and can often be studied using the same or adapted techniques and methodologies (Verhoeven 1999). Second language reading can be modelled in much the same way as first language reading. It generally improves with practice, and writers on the subject note the growing importance of reading fluency in an additional language (often English) for professionals and students globally. We will need at the same time to return again to the crucial difference between read*ing* considered as a mentalistic skill, and actual read*ers* who may understand reading and appropriately taking meaning from text in varying ways. '[A] lot is known about reading

texts in a second language that would never actually be read in an authentic literacy setting,' Bernhardt affirms, in her rather sceptical review of the history of second language reading research, after a career of herself leading this field (Bernhardt 2000: 796).

Language, however, is the obvious and critical difference between reading in your first language and reading in a foreign language and this is where the psycholinguists have quite reasonably focused. (You have to start somewhere.) Indeed different languages and scripts may require variations in emphasis on components of any reading model (Bernhardt 1991). 'Automaticity' is not quickly and easily achieved. Second language reading is typically more effortful, even for relatively advanced readers. Bernhardt's own work also suggests the difference in levels of automaticity may never be quite overcome even in very fluent and practised readers, who always read measurably more slowly in their second language. At lower levels a linguistic 'threshold' (Alderson 1984), particularly as regards vocabulary knowledge (Nation 1997) dictates careful choice of texts and preparation for extensive reading by second language teachers (Day and Bamford 1998), though neither should comprehension abilities be underestimated, or opportunities for wider learning curtailed.

Quote 3.14   Alderson on the language factor in second language reading

The evidence is that, in second-language reading, knowledge of the second language is a more important factor than first-language reading abilities . . .

   [P]oor second-language reading performance is likely to be due to insufficient language knowledge . . .

(Alderson 2000: 23, 25)

Measures of readers' vocabulary knowledge routinely correlate highly with measures of reading comprehension, and are often, indeed, the single best predictor of text comprehension . . .

   [P]oor readers tend to use or over-rely on word-level cues, and to focus on intrasentential rather than intersentential consistency.

   [L]ess proficient readers . . . [are] frequently defeated by word problems.

(Alderson 2000: 35, 41, 42)

L2 readers often have better memory for surface forms than first language readers because of their relative lack of automaticity in processing the language of the text. This tendency is likely to be accentuated when the reader is reading literature in a second language, which will prompt close, even excessive concern with the linguistic forms. Such close attention is obviously of value for a language learner, though successful reading of literature, as we have seen, will also be likely to require more complex and extended

cognition too. (Compare, e.g., Skehan 1998 on the value of cognition in learning, and 'focus on form' debates in language teaching (Doughty and Williams 1998).) In short, for determinable reasons, reading literature in a second language can be very demanding. Such a conclusion will hardly be news to teachers, but it is important to gain a better understanding of what the difficulties (and the opportunities) of literary texts are for second or foreign language readers.

Literary texts may well also challenge second language readers culturally (Steffensen et al. 1979; Carrell 1983; Anderson and Barnitz 1984; Piper 1985; Carrell, Devine and Eskey 1988; much of this work ultimately deriving from Kintsch and Greene 1978). These difficulties, however, while they may be of a different magnitude than for first language readers, are not of a wholly unknown order. For that reason I have included lengthy discussions in this chapter of what is known about first language reading of literature, because the findings are at least suggestive for understanding second language reading, and could prompt further research work to investigate empirically how much difference language and/or culture can make to a psycholinguistic process. We need to know if differences exist and what they might be. But of course there are differences, or at least some of the features which cause problems for first language readers will often be even more acute for second language readers (lack of vocabulary on a linguistic level, or unfamiliarity with appropriate cultural knowledge, on a more cognitive level, for example. See for more detailed discussion, 'Comparing L1 and L2 reading', Grabe and Stoller 2002: Ch. 2).

Importantly, a 'linguistic threshold' has been posited and shown to exist for some readers, below which comprehension and interpretation will be difficult, and above which readings approximating to first language norms will be more likely. At the same time it should be noted that relative familiarity with literature, the period, the topic or situation, etc. (relevant and activated background knowledge) can lower the linguistic threshold (Alderson and Urquhart 1984). An individual reader's familiarity with a topic can significantly override obvious linguistic weaknesses (Allen et al. 1988).

We know less about second language reading than about first language reading because less research has been done, and also because it is an inherently complex area (the additional language factor, also cognitive maturity and others). Logically, then, we know least of all, for the same reasons, about second language literature reading and teaching. It is often *assumed* that findings which apply to L1 reading, including the reading of literature, can be applied relatively unproblematically to L2 reading, or that literature reading is, for certain purposes, much like any other kind of reading. It is always important, however, to keep the distinctions clear as potentially very significant variables could be involved, and above all, to identify areas where more empirical investigation would help us to make the assertions more confidently or else qualify them appropriately.

Second language literature readers

> Most students read little in either the L1 or the L2, and they do not enjoy reading.
>
> (Grabe and Stoller 2002: 89)

- Literary texts are often measurably less readable at a purely linguistic level (vocabulary, syntax, sentence lengths and structures, rhetorical features, genre) (Schulz 1981).
- Non-standard language features – endemic, even constitutive to literature, as we have seen in Chapter 1 – may be unfamiliar (e.g. characters using dialect, in Goh 1991; historical characteristics of speech representation and writing).
- Vocabulary can cause particular problems for SL literature readers.
- Problems of literal comprehension, brought about by low levels of linguistic proficiency, can interfere with or even 'short circuit' higher level comprehension (inferencing, response). Less fluent readers, fixated on the words at the surface of the text, can fail to 'make significant connections' (Goh 1991; Chi 1995; Davis 1992).
- At the same time, very precise formal detail can be particularly important in a literary text (e.g. punctuation such as quotation marks, precise word choice) and its significance tends to be missed by the less experienced reader (e.g. Goh 1991; Lunn and Albrecht 1997, on Spanish verb morphology and literary meaning).
- The playfulness or creativity of literary texts (e.g. irony, comedy, point of view, speech or thought representation, puns) can be a challenge as much as a stimulus, and is often missed or merely experienced as a problem (Hoffstaedter-Kohn 1991).
- Reader background in terms of culture, experience etc. can also be an issue (Kintsch and Greene 1978; Carrell 1983; Steffensen and Joag-Dev 1984; Abu-Rabia 1996).
- 'Literature' understood as 'extensive reading' seems to have benefits for wider developments in language proficiency, including vocabulary extension (Elley and Mangubhai 1983; Hafiz and Tudor 1989; 1990; Elley 1991; Mason and Krashen 1997).
- 'Comprehension' of second or foreign language literature can be difficult to assess or agree on (not necessarily a problem for teachers in a classroom).
- Many language students are relatively unconvinced of the point or value of literature in second or foreign language learning ('attitudes' research).
- Affectively, literature can engender feelings of bewilderment, anxiety, disaffection just as easily as pleasure and involvement.

We need to know more. Kramsch (1997), for example, suggests anecdotally that second language readers experience a thrill of 'trespass' in reading the

literature of other cultures, that this is a key pleasure for such readers, a sense of rummaging in the private closets of people who live very different lives from ourselves. Others have argued that the feeling of belonging neither quite fully to one's 'own' speech community, nor to that of the language in which the literature is being read (sometimes labelled 'anomie'), can be advantageous for language learning. Such ideas are suggestive, but have little empirical substantiation to date. In general, studies of second language reading, much like second acquisition research, have tended to be dominated by cognitive and psycholinguistic paradigms. There is clearly a need for much more ethnographic and contextually sensitive research (read*ers* vs. read*ing*). Some areas which have been investigated are highlighted in what follows.

Concept 3.4   Attitudes

A number of studies of attitudes have suggested that teachers and lecturers are often more enthusiastic and convinced about the value of literature in education than their students are.
(Comparable first language findings are in van Schooten and de Glopper 2003; Sarland 1991.)

Martin and Laurie (1993) report results of questionnaires and interviews with students of modern foreign languages in higher education in Australia. The students as a whole did not perceive literature to be particularly useful or necessary to achieving their goals of higher oral communicative proficiency. Some of those who had experienced use of literature in language classes were more willing to concede its limited value, particularly for vocabulary building, but even those suspected the linguistic and communicative dividends of literature reading were not necessarily sufficient relative to the time which had to be invested.

   Apparently more favourable attitudes are reported by Davis et al. (1992), but a closer examination reveals that these results are not inconsistent with Martin and Laurie. US majors in foreign language were 'very positive' towards *study* of literature, though even here we should note that a significant minority of students identified as particularly interested in cultural learning and communicative competence were less positive. However, Davis's students were advanced in language knowledge, specialists and above all taking an elective, rather than obligatory, course. (I infer this; it is not explicitly stated.) Martin and Laurie's students were not specialists, were in some cases in their first year of study and lecturers *used* literature in a language course with, apparently, very little consultation or explanation. At the least it seems, as with any other approach, the use of literature should be negotiated with learners, and its relative advantages demonstrated rather than asserted,

assumed or left implicit, as often is the case. But again, this is why more research is needed, and this book hopes to prompt it!

In this respect, Hirvela and Boyle (1988) give an interesting account of use of literature in teaching of Hong Kong trainee teachers. Uneasy about this component of the course, Hirvela and Boyle consulted with their students and found that modern fiction was preferred to earlier, and that realist rather than modernist or other arguably more markedly 'literary' genres were preferred. The results will be fairly predictable to many language and literature teachers. The significance lies in the demonstrated value of the consultative exercise (higher course ratings from students after required reading lists were modified in the light of the exercise), as well as in the fact that readers will initially fight shy of more obviously literary texts if they lack experience in this area. Literature needs to be introduced gently and gradually, however strong our beliefs in its value. (Compare Schulz 1981 below.)

Language issues

Schulz (1981), from the USA, considers the relative lack of 'readability' of literary texts in linguistic terms, referring to factors such as complexity and difficulty of words, sentences and syntax – to which we could add sometimes demanding organisation at the level of genre, discourses and rhetoric. In the light of such factors, Schulz deplores a tendency in many higher education teaching situations to jump straight from the linguistic syllabus to the literary (themes, imagery, ideas), an often premature assumption that 'their language is up to it now', when in fact language issues should be more directly addressed in literature reading, certainly in earlier stages if not always.

Concept 3.5   Language in literature reading: example study 1

Davis (1992), a study of the recall protocols (in English) of 25 readers of French as a foreign language at Penn State University, illustrates a representative use of literature in a foreign language class. Reading the first chapter of Voltaire's *Candide*, the American students were continually distracted, and even 'short-circuited', by gaps in their vocabulary knowledge. Often they are conscious of these and frustrated, though not always. (Hosenfeld 1978 notes that lack of meta-cognition, a failure to realise when or what they do not understand, is characteristic of weaker second language readers in general.) Attention typically became focused on linguistic problems at the surface of the text, so that more important literary issues – from the perspective of the instructor – such as tone, style, irony and comedy, were lost. The literary point of *Candide* is its satire on naïve, eighteenth-century Enlightenment optimism. In Kintsch's terms (1998), the text base (language) was not fully understood, and so the thinking which would elaborate a 'mental model', enabling interpretation to take place (the 'point') was not possible. Too much working memory was devoted to text processing at the surface linguistic level, to enable higher level comprehension – in some ways the essence of the literary experience – to develop fully.

Concept 3.6   Language in literature reading: example study 2

A sophisticated study by Tian (1991) of Singapore secondary readers of literature in English supports and extends Davis's (1992) case study. Tian's students understood short stories at a literal 'text base' level of plot. (What happened, and who did what to whom?) However, higher level comprehension questions revealed real failures in inferencing and interpretation. Indeed they often failed to elaborate at all. Age and relative lack of real world experience, literary experience, and fully adult cognition may all have been factors (subjects were in their early teens). Relevant small details tended to be missed. The students are also shown (and report) having problems with cultural differences. In particular, non-standard language features (dialect, etc. -see Chapter 1) were problematic, were disliked and interfered with comprehension.

(The study is examined in more depth in Chapter 6, section 6.3.)

A Swiss study (Watts 1991) of readers of canonical English literary texts in an advanced foreign language class similarly reports problems thrown up by dialect, informal language and non-standard forms. These older learners add another interesting perspective because they actually complained about these features. They felt that they came to the class to learn 'the language', and that the language, centrally understood, does not include such non-standard forms, which would be of no use to them in communication. At least from the perspective of comprehension, arguably, they were wrong, if not from wider cultural and cognitive perspectives too. (See Jenkins 2000, on English as an international language.) The point, however, once again, (compare discussion of Attitudes and Hirvela and Boyle) is the need for negotiation with students so that they can understand the issues in language learning and why literature reading could be an appropriate activity in language learning. In this case, perhaps a richer sociolinguistic understanding is particularly necessary for more advanced learners (Jenkins 2000).

Hoffstaedter-Kohn (1991) is partly inspired by Schmidt's 'polyvalence' (P) principle (discussed in section 3.2), i.e. the idea that literary text 'has', or is usually read as having, multiple possible meanings. Her study of second language readers of German poetry (spoken protocols) shows again vocabulary as a primary obstacle for many such readers. On the other hand, many word meanings were easily resolved by use of dictionaries – or at least readers thought they were. In fact, the second language readers often failed to notice that in some cases several word meanings were possible. Where such ambiguities are noticed, readers lack confidence and tend to blame their own lack of proficiency for not knowing which 'real' meaning to identify (there may not be a single meaning of course) and are generally found to be poor at ambiguity resolution (why the ambiguity is there). Hoffstaedter-Kohn also found problems with processing of deviant syntax and unnoticed miscomprehensions which can seriously interfere with more macro-level understanding. Finally, like other writers, she notes that readers who do not

see ambiguities, or only experience them as difficulties, will tend to give lower evaluations than those who see multiple meanings and find them intriguing (compare discussions of expert readers in section 3.3.)

Concept 3.7   Culture

Cultural factors can be more important than linguistic factors for comprehension.

Culture, as we have already seen, can be an issue for the foreign language reader (Chapter 2; Goh 1991). Research on culture and reading comprehension is published in Kintsch and Greene (1978), or for second language readers, Steffensen 1979; Carrell (1981; 1987); and Carrell and Esterhold (1983); Barnitz (1986) offers a useful overview of earlier studies. Piper (1985), for example, shows that his group of recent Vietnamese refugees in Canada found fairly literal translations into English of traditional Vietnamese tales more readable than equivalent level and genre Western tales (Aesop) *translated into Vietnamese* (the first language)! that is, the cultural strangeness or familiarity of the material can be more important than just the language.

Example 1

In line with much of this earlier work, Abu-Rabia (1996) concludes from a close empirical study of 70 Arab and 80 Israeli 14–15-year-olds reading stories in their second languages and first language in Israel (Hebrew and English respectively) that cultural content can be more important than the language of the text in comprehension. Linguistic factors can be overcome if the cultural background assumed or referred to is familiar, while texts well within linguistic competencies can be unreadable or are misunderstood where cultural understandings are not shared.

Example 2

Spolsky (1989), also from Israel, writing from a more qualitative reader response position, reports the hostility of Jewish adolescents to anything 'Roman' as a problem in teaching Shakespeare's canonical plays. Students spend many years learning that the Roman occupiers destroyed their country and culture, temples, and sent leaders into exile. They are then asked to admire Julius Caesar, Antony and the rest! Spolsky argues that these are issues to be explored rather than suppressed or glossed over. Similarly, as a feminist she records her own and her students' unease with the passive fatalism of Joyce's Eveline, who could have escaped a trivial life in Ireland for adventure in Argentina, but instead decides to remain in Ireland looking after her unappreciative father.

Quote 3.15   Spolsky on resistant readings

As teachers we should encourage and not discourage, such resistance to texts. When experience and texts conflict, the authority of experience must be allowed expression . . . To be angry with Joyce over Eveline's fate is a legitimate response. From that response, based on life experience, the next step is recognizing that there are different cultures and that they have different values. But the third step must also be taken: we have to teach our students to understand and tolerate other cultures, without feeling the need to justify or agree with them all . . .

   Israeli students have to learn that the western world and the Jewish world have different assessments of how noble the Romans were. [The Western world needs to learn this too].

(Spolsky 1989: 179)

The fact that readers of another culture and language's literature may have difficulties processing both linguistically and culturally is not of course an argument for not using such texts at all. It is rather a reminder of the difficulties for a teacher to anticipate, and Oster (1989), for example, is surely right to suggest that appreciation of others' viewpoints, and indeed of the relativity of viewpoints, is one of the things students are in education to learn, and that literature may be able to support or facilitate such learning.

   A measure of how ideas have changed in this area can be gained from considering Gatbonton and Tucker (1971), a careful if limited study which reports 'Filipino high school students misunderstand American short stories because they read into them inappropriate values, attitudes and judgments' (abstract, 137). We might baulk more at the 'inappropriate' nowadays, but the point is taken, that the students were missing meanings original American readers would probably have taken. More startling is the reassurance (!) offered that after appropriate training the students 'performed more like an American control group'. An important issue in the reading of literature of other cultural and linguistic groups is highlighted here, that is, we read to understand more of the viewpoint, 'world' of others, but also, surely (Kramsch, etc.), the point of such literature reading is not to change Filipinos into Americans, passive reception and acceptance, but rather to broaden the horizons of all, to the benefit of all.

   Empirical research to back cultural learning through literature is sparse, however, and of its nature will always be difficult to show. (Compare discussion of culture in Chapter 2; and Kramsch 2000, discussed in Chapter 5.) Moreover, studies that have been done suggest that intercultural understanding is at best hard work, and can at worst confirm or even exacerbate pre-existing prejudices. Literature is no magic bullet. As the reader response approach has emphasised, different readers read differently.

Culture is a real issue for learners' identities, not a straightforward 'subject' to be 'taught'.

Example 1

Naidoo (1992; 1994, both deriving from her Southampton University, PhD thesis of 1991) carried out a careful longitudinal study of British 14-year-olds reading selected texts of agreed literary quality, which in their various ways would normally be read as indicting racism in various forms (Nazi Germany, Southern United States in the early twentieth century, Ireland and apartheid South Africa). However she notes the resistance of the most prejudiced to changing their ideas, and the ingenious readings and arguments which can be produced to ensure this conservatism. The work of the teacher is crucial, Naidoo concludes, since left to themselves readers tend to select works which confirm rather than challenge their world views, but even when required or cajoled into reading more challenging literature, they will find ways to resist, contest or divert uncongenial ideas.

Example 2

More recently, a short, 'action research' study in Germany which could form a model for further work, is offered by Jackstädt and Müller-Hartmann (2001), seeking to exploit the potential of the internet for intercultural contacts. 17- and 18-year-old learners of English were required to read:

- a play for young adults on the Northern Ireland conflict;
- a novel about different ethnic groups in the United States;
- a play about different ethnic groups in Canada.

Internet exchanges were then set up for the students to discuss these works with peers from the respective countries. Other teachers who have tried such projects will sympathise with all the difficulties reported (technical, as well as finding appropriate exchanges), but above all recognise the statement that the teachers learned as much as the students through this experiment. However, once again for present purposes, note too that there are multiple examples of mutual incomprehension and even annoyance with exchange partners from other cultures reported. 'They just don't understand.' And even resentment at the attempt of others to comment on 'our' situation. These are risky if exciting grounds for language classes, where strong feelings can be involved.

Example 3

Possibly more encouraging is Delanoy (1993), who reports in some detail his teaching of Farrukh Dhondy's story 'Come to Mecca' as an element in a carefully designed curriculum for intercultural learning. Dhondy's writings have in the past frequently been used for similar purposes by secondary English teachers in Britain. Initially, a rather textual analysis by the teacher failed to realise sufficiently the cultural difficulties his German L1 students

would have with the story of 'Brick Lane' Bengali immigrants in London. A group of intending English teachers then helped design appropriate facilitating activities and supports for classroom use with an advanced group of learners. Delanoy reports little or no resistance to his intercultural curriculum, but the advanced proficiency and commitment to English studies of the students would likely be a factor in this apparent willingness to engage with a culturally 'difficult' text.

Extensive reading

The perspective of this book has been that literature comes into being as an interaction between texts with certain linguistic tendencies and readers with certain expectations and interests, including reading for curiosity, pleasure and to 'expand horizons'. With the coming to dominance of communicative language teaching paradigms in language instruction, reading has often been advocated as an invaluable source of rich and extended natural or authentic input from which learners can benefit even as they take pleasure in it. Literature, then, especially if considered non-canonically, but rather as 'stories' or other expressive uses of the language, can be considered as *extensive reading* and here the argument is that extensive reading promotes language acquisition, in particular the acquisition of vocabulary, as well as the desirable greater automaticity in processing of the foreign language text and/or script. We have seen something of this work in section 2.2 above. More specifically, for second language classrooms, the work of Tudor and Hafiz (1989) and Hafiz and Tudor (1989), inspired in particular by Krashen, can be cited. The results of their limited experiments are suggestive rather than any way definitive, but do indicate, within their own constraints, limited gains in number of words being used, and accuracy of expression, supporting Elley and Mangubhai (1983), and noting that the preferred reading of their learners required to do extensive reading, was for 'story books' (graded readers in this case). This work is central to cases for the value of extended reading programmes made by Day and Bamford (1998) and others.

Classrooms and educational contexts

Quote 3.16   Andringa on literature classroom study

Methods of documentation, description, and analysis of real teaching situations offer a new perspective on literary education and mediation. Transcriptions of lessons and seminars, of group discussions and interviews, depict literary communication *in natura*. Methods of analysis borrowed from ethnomethodology and discourse analysis open the way to discovering and critically looking at conventions and patterns in the modes through which literature is handed down in institutional settings, and in the way processes of literary socialization are guided by the environment.
(Andringa 1994: 2269)

If this is true for mainstream L1 literature teaching, it can be easily predicted that it is all the more the case that we know little or nothing about actual teaching of literature in second language situations. Many more case studies are needed, and teachers will usually themselves be in the best situation to provide them. One of the best such studies to date is Andringa's own 'Talking about literature' (1991). Her two classroom transcript excerpts illustrate well literature learning as learning a way of talking about literature. Her high flying students learn genre labels ('satire', 'lyric') and are noticed and engaged with by their teachers to the extent they can display this kind of expertise in 'talking literature'. The approach is cognitive, intellectual, and tends to confirm again, a suspicion many have, that more 'response'-oriented literature classrooms are often those for students already being filtered into the 'less academic' streams. Arguably, other empirical research reviewed in this chapter tends to confirm the implicit message of these classrooms, that if you know 'what it is' (literature, satire, etc.) you will know how to read and talk about it in legitimated ways. The challenge is to open this 'closed book' to those who come less well equipped to LLE classrooms.

3.5   Conclusion

Literary readings arise out of interactions between certain *texts*, in certain *contexts*, and certain *readers*. An instance of this is the reader interacting with a literary text in another language. An individual study may choose to concentrate on any single one of these factors, but a full and convincing account needs to investigate the interaction of all three.

Further reading

Important overviews of issues in second language reading include Mackay, Barkman and Jordan (1979), Alderson and Urquhart (1984), Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1988), Barnett (1989), Bernhardt (1991), Aebersold and Field (1997) Day and Bamford (1998) and most recently, Grabe and Stoller (2002).

There is no good single study of second literature reading, though note Bernhardt (2000), which attempts a rigorous critique of second language reading research in general, from a linguistic orientation, identifying key variables.

Part 2

Exploring Research in Language, Literature and Education

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Introduction

Part 1 has offered a broad overview of research into the language of literary texts, the readership of literature, and the uses to which literature has been put in language education. Part 2 focuses more closely on a number of key studies which have given us a richer understanding of these areas but which also point to the need for further research, especially where applications to second language education are sought. In many cases there is a need to see where suggestive L1 research applies, or how it might differ for second language contexts. In addition, I have consistently pointed to the relative absence of consideration of literature as a discourse, literature practices as social practice. Historically we know that literature was introduced to education systems for the purposes outlined in Chapter 2, and for relatively under-privileged populations. At the same time, Chapter 3 reminds us that readers (and users of English) may develop their own agendas in response to literary texts and programmes. In exploring these key studies readers will be prompted to consider the research methodologies and issues involved as well as the content or findings these studies have given us – how studies were carried out as well as some of the conclusions they allowed. This is preparatory to Part 3 in which readers are prompted most directly to turn to their own research questions and interests in their own particular contexts, which can be informed by the work that has already been done. But I would also hope that some readers will be prompted to move on from narrower 'language acquisition' concerns to developing understandings of literature readers as human agents in interaction with larger cultural, political and economic systems.

A related important question tackled in Part 2, again leading on logically to Part 3 is: What issues arise from existing practices? A lot has been written and claimed for, and also against, the use of literature in second language class-rooms. What have usually been missing are careful studies of literature use, rather than speculation and assertions and counter-assertions (Edmondson 1997). If we know that literature is being used in particular ways and for particular purposes in second or foreign language contexts, what assumptions seem to be built in to such practices? How can these assumptions be investigated

to bring the practices into question, or to confirm their validity or improve their performance, perhaps, in the light or more empirical investigation? Literature teaching may have the potential to widen our understandings of language learning. Chapter 5 is central to such considerations.

Quote II.1   Research questions

What do literature teachers actually do during a fifty minute class period? And, by extension, what should students do? . . .

Do students have the necessary proficiencies (linguistic, cultural) to read and discuss literary texts? How can the literature classroom serve as a place where students' demands for utilitarian relevancy are recognised and responded to? Why do language teachers and literature teachers often feel they are in different 'camps'? And, most importantly, how can the study of literature (re)claim favor (or popularity) among foreign language students?
Scott and Tucker 2002: xi.

Note: Scott and Tucker actually write of 'linguistic' proficiency only; they also write of 'students' needs' being met. I have edited their questions in the light of the programme suggested by this book.

A belief informing Parts 2 and 3 as a whole is that useful research (for example, protocols of readers reading literary texts, requiring summaries or recalls) can be useful for teachers seeking to increase their understanding, but also at the same time directly useful to students in their learning, for example in raising metacognitive awareness, which arguably contributes to language acquisition and wider educational growth. Research and learning can go on together; they do not have to compete for our attention.

Broadly, literary scholars and linguists know a lot about literary texts (Chapters 1 and 4), while cognitive psychologists understand a lot about readers and reading (Chapters 3 and 6) Educational research tends to be more qualitative, in loose terms 'ethnographic', and has been mainly preoccupied with reader response-inspired classrooms and interpretation (Chapters 2 and 5). Much 'academic' research has tended to be more strongly influenced by cognitive and psychological paradigms and more focused on reading and comprehension, and has suffered until recently from the limitations of investigating unnatural reading practices and/ or the reading of 'textoids' – texts manufactured by researchers to investigate some specific question (see van Oostendorp and Zwaan 1994 and Emmott 1997, who criticise these practices). Second language education research, more driven from classroom experiences, sometimes features a predictably stronger interest in cultural aspects of literature reading situations, as well as aspects of language and language acquisition often taken for granted by L1 researchers. Such research interests are to be welcomed, but, in turn, can be anecdotal and

often need more careful framing and better design to tell us much more than intuition alone could already offer. The aim of Section II is to give examples of careful and meaningful research studies which could inform future work.

It is useful to close with Andringa's reminder of the eventual artificiality of separation of cognitive from affective or from more institutional aspects of literature reading, however strategically necessary such a separation may be for a specific stage of research. Ultimately, a fuller picture of literature reading and its place in education, must bring the different factors into dialogue. We notice, too, once again, the relative neglect of Andringa's third dimension in research to date.

Quote II.2   Aspects of literary engagement

Dealing with literature involves globally three dimensions. It has a cognitive dimension, containing the aspects of coding and decoding linguistic and textual signs on the basis of different kinds of knowledge. It has an emotional dimension, containing the aspects of emotional engagement, identification, affective response and evaluation. It has a social dimension, containing the influences of social constraints on what conventionally is expected of literature, how literature should be dealt with and how it is discussed. These three dimensions continuously interact in the processes of literary production, reception, distribution and mediation.

(Andringa 1991: 157)

Thus Part 2 consists of example studies as follows:

- Chapter 4: Textual and linguistic approaches. Stylistics, including corpus linguistics. Readability studies.
- Chapter 5: Education: curriculum, culture, classroom research, including assessment, syllabus.
- Chapter 6: Readers reading literature, including protocols and cognitive investigations but extending to more sociocultural research.

Part 3 provides pointers for approaching and designing such research, but also prompts the reader to push their investigations further towards considerations of literature as discourse or social practice.

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4
Language in Literature. Stylistics, including Corpus Linguistics. Readability Studies

Introduction

What do we know of the language of literary texts and what impact has this knowledge had on the uses of literature in education?

The language of literary texts has often been argued to be a reason for using literary texts in education (expanding vocabulary, challenging horizons, promoting pleasure and creativity in natural ways) but also for not using it (difficulty, ambiguity, obscurity, old-fashioned, non-standard, unrepresentative). Again, some educationists have advocated the conscious and deliberate exploration of the language of literary texts in class ('stylistics'), while others denounce the withering touch of the intellect on more unmediated 'natural' 'responses' to stories and poems, though language is particularly difficult to take for granted in foreign language learning contexts. In this chapter I examine some empirical studies of the language of some literary texts, and how such studies have informed or could inform teaching and learning activities. A basic position, already established in discussing literature as discourse (Chapter 1), is that literary texts can be best understood in comparison with non-literary texts, because there are different tendencies, but they are subtle and not dichotomous differences. Rather a discourse-based approach to literature looks for continuities as well as differences between the language of literary and less obviously literary texts.

The outlines of research findings regarding features of literary language are described in Chapter 1. It has been suggested by some commentators that language is of particular importance in literary texts because they are usually particularly carefully revised and reworked ('design'), and because they refer in no obvious or simplistic way outside themselves, but rather represent possible or alternative or past worlds, or even refer primarily to other texts and uses of language. Their 'meaning' is typically difficult to pin down more than provisionally and tends to vary for different readers and readings ('discourse'), but this again can be seen as a great educational resource for discussion and further activities. Literature readers learn with experience

that literary meanings ('real' meanings) are usually indirect rather than direct, to be inferred rather than decoded (see Chapter 3). This chapter offers sample research studies of literary language, many of which have been published under the auspices of the field of study known as Stylistics.

Concept 4.1   Stylistics

Characteristic (typical) and distinctive style in language use, not just literary – e.g. the *style of newspaper headlines*. 'Distinctive' is relative to expectations, hence the importance of context and co-text to stylistic studies (and so too the importance of genre, discourse- the creative exploitation of horizons of expectation, deviance from the formulaic).

Stylistics and teaching are often closely allied – investigations into the language of a text as discovery about the language and 'how texts work' as much as about the individual text itself.

(See Glossary.)

Pedagogy and research often approach each other in stylistic research. The relationship can be healthily symbiotic. Stylistics investigates in principled and systematic ways the linguistic workings, features, patterns and regularities of texts, their 'identity' – how they are alike and yet also differ from others. Chapters 2 and 3 have shown that there is more to literature and literary reading than language. Nevertheless, certain features of texts tend to signal and prompt literary reading practices of the kind described in Chapter 3. It is reasonable to expect that the actual language of texts to be read should be of particular interest to language teachers and their students. This is most obvious – and most often the case with regard to literary texts – in the issue of 'difficulty', for example. Difficulty can lie in many areas – plot, cultural references, text world, or others, but is often linguistic too, particularly for second language readers, and may include readers' problems with 'difficult' vocabulary, style or register, syntax, rhetoric, genre, or discourse organisation. Similarly, modern stylistics (sometimes known as 'discourse stylistics') usually aims to move beyond a simple formal description of linguistic features of a text to functional interpretation – linking features identified with interpretations which readers elaborate from attention to the texts in which those features can be found. The basic idea is that there are reasons, *partly* linguistic, for the readings readers construct, both as individuals and as members of 'interpretative communities'. Responsible readings of a text originate and should be constrained by the language of the text, even though readings of literature are certainly not in any way narrowly 'determined' in any simple cause and effect manner by the language in which the text is cast. Reading is an interactive process; readers bring varying knowledge and experience to texts.

4.1 Foregrounding

Literary reading as a set of processing strategies is provoked by literary language/ or literary uses of language.

Foregrounding

A central idea for traditional *stylistics*. 'Ten thousand saw I at a glance' (Wordsworth, 'Daffodils'), foregrounds 'Ten thousand' because normal English syntax would produce 'I saw ten thousand'. The argument is that such unusual uses of language attract the reader's attention, and that efforts will be made to interpret or understand why the unusual (or 'deviant') use of language has come about.

(Further discussion in McRae and Clark 2004; see also McIntyre 2003)

Jakobson, Mukařovsky and other 'Formalists', as we saw in Chapter 1, noted the symmetries, repetitions and other 'parallelisms' typical of literary texts, especially of poetry and song. They suggested that these 'devices' draw attention to the text itself ('foregrounding'), the kind of careful processing of surface linguistic features that has in fact been found empirically, as reported in Chapter 3. Patterning is taken by readers to be intentional and/ or meaningful. 'Deviant' language and language use, in at least some literary texts, reduces predictability and redundancy in a text and also prompts closer and more careful processing by readers. Pausing to ask, 'Why does it say that and in that way?' or 'What does *that* mean?' is a response to such linguistic deviance. Chapter 1 stresses that the presence of such features does not necessarily guarantee that we are in the presence of a literary text; moreover, novels or other less poetic literary texts may lack such features but still be processed in literature reading contexts in an identifiably literary mode of processing. To repeat, there is more, and other, to literature and to literary reading than a simple set of linguistic features, but linguistic features are a salient part of many literature reading experiences.

Van Peer, in a series of studies (1986 and after), has investigated the empirical reality of the nature of foregrounding by having readers comment on surface linguistic features of texts they noticed and found significant as they read and constructed meanings for literary texts. The usual method is to ask readers to underline words they notice or consider 'important' as they read. It is then typically found that certain words/phrases/passages in common are being underlined by significant numbers of readers, though their inter-pretations of why these features mattered will also typically show some variation. (Consistent practices are found in readers of poetry, reported under 'Protocols' in Chapter 6: Kintgen 1983; de Beaugrande 1985.) Van Peer accepts that active readers 'foreground' in contexts – texts do not foreground themselves – but shows linguistic constraints and prompting for the features

which readers typically foreground in a text. Foregrounding is claimed to be a key element in the memorability and pleasure offered by many literary texts.

4.2   Foregrounding: an empirical study

Van Peer (1992) offers a clear and stimulating example of this kind of research into the importance of textual properties of literary texts and readers' interaction with these to produce literary meaning, which could be easily replicated by readers of this book in their own environments.

Six relatively unknown nineteenth-century poems by four authors were read by three groups of undergraduate students at Lancaster University (UK). The three groups consisted of students of stylistics (who would know about foregrounding); students of literature (who would not); and a group from science departments (less socialised into literary reading, and probably reading less literature too). Before any reading, texts were analysed linguistically for examples of deviation and parallelism, and also graded for density of foregrounding (i.e. where both parallelism and deviancy co-occurred (e.g. e. e. cummings' 'love is a deeper season' contains semantic deviance – love is not a season, and would not usually collocate with measure words such as 'deep'; and parallelism –line-internal assonance in 'deeper season'). Once this analysis was complete, students were asked to read, underlining passages experienced as 'striking' or of 'discussion value', 'that is, passages they would certainly discuss with their pupils if they were teachers of English' (p. 143). The analysis predicted very closely the passages underlined by the students, and an additional point of interest was that *level of expertise or training* (the three different groups) *did not make a significant difference to features noticed.* Van Peer further notes that judgements of foregrounding tended to coincide with judgments of 'discussion value', that is, the language was largely being taken by these readers as a signal of meaning or content significance. For teachers, such work would suggest that possibly fluency, but not technical expertise, is necessary to find instances of foregrounding, and that these textual features are likely to repay the attention of students in developing their response to poetry, but also in developing linguistic competence (devices like rhyming, unusual meanings or collocations, etc.).

Further research would seem to be called for to investigate the idea that 'noticeable' features are common to competent readers, regardless of level of expertise or experience in literature text reading. Do all readers notice the same linguistic features (and for the same linguistic reasons)? Are differences between readers more to be found in areas of interpretation than in the substance of what they notice about a text? The claim seems a strong one, and even counter-intuitive, but van Peer's work is good research because it should prompt careful researched responses.

Miall (1988) and Miall and Kuiken (1994; 2002), replicating and extending van Peer's empirical work, have argued that foregrounding prompts readers to focus on and consider more carefully the same or similar features in a story or poem, and then elaborate their own reader meanings ('response')

based on what they bring to the text, including autobiographical experience. Thus literary reading takes place under certain constraints, but is not 'determined' or fully predictable from any purely textual linguistic analysis. These researchers, coming out of a tradition of psychology research, report longer reading times for foregrounded segments (suggesting more careful processing) and greater strikingness ratings and greater affect ratings. In this model, then, feelings and thought develop through defamiliarisation, as the Formalists had proposed, with, again, different readers tending to notice similar or the same features, and more experienced readers more successful at integrating them into a coherent or satisfying model of the meaning of the text. The idea that feelings develop particularly in response to certain linguistic features of a text is again an interesting one for further research. How does a reduced, or at least different, linguistic proficiency level interact with literary response as identified by these researchers who worked with fully fluent English-speaking undergraduates? It is at least an interesting 'variable'.

Finally, as a logical extension of such work, Bortolussi and Dixon (2003) have manipulated 'variables' such as textual features, or population of readers, to observe the effects on processing of literary text. To date such experimentation has tended to raise real questions of 'ecological validity'. More ecologically sensitive work might, for example, allow participants in research to determine more on their own behalf which texts were discussed and how. But then again, much literature reading in education consists precisely of students being told (explicitly or implicitly) that they are reading a 'great' work, and being challenged to find exactly what the value of the work is, with the assumption that it is textual at least as much as cultural. Thus the activities of van Peer's or others' subjects, scrutinising the language, are not as odd as might at first appear, however we might wish to argue that they are determined by larger social and cultural foces rather than somehow innate or natural responses of a human organism.

4.2 Corpus stylistics

Biber

Corpus linguistics was introduced in section 1.2 above, particularly with reference to Biber's research. Biber, it will be remembered, established empirically the relative incoherence of any notion of literature as a distinctive genre or 'super-genre', but also showed sets of overlapping linguistic features contributing to effects such as Immediacy, Situated and Interactive styles, which in turn are more likely to be found in literary genres represented in his corpus such as narratives, fiction, the epistolary novel or lyric poetry, though each specific genre will have its own unique configuration of features which need to be independently investigated. Science fiction, then, can be

differentiated from romantic fiction (say), but both can be seen linguistically to tend to sets of typical linguistic features less characteristic of scientific reports or textbooks.

Typical linguistic features of some literary genres according to Biber (1988) are significant levels of frequency as compared with other non-literary genres.

Findings for:

- romantic fiction,
- mystery and adventure fiction,
- general fiction,
- science fiction,
- humour,
- biographies.

Dimensions

1. *Involved vs. Informational*: medium ratings – telephone conversations or personal letters have more Involved features; official documents or press reportages are more Informational.
2. *Narrativity*: high narrativity of fiction (hobbies, broadcasts or academic prose score low on narrative features).
3. *Explicit vs. Situation Dependent Reference*: more situation-dependent scores than most other genres: Official documents or professional letters highly explicit; telephone conversations or broadcasts much more situation depend-ent. The literary genres (mainly fiction) scored at the same level for these features as face-to-face conversations, which were less situation dependent than telephone conversations or broadcasts.
4. *Overt Expressions of Persuasion*: Some persuasive language, though not as much as Professional letters or Editorials, but more than Press reviews or Broadcasts.
5. *Abstract vs. Non-Abstract Information*: only telephone conversations were less abstract/ more non-abstract than fiction.

Concept 4.2   Dimensions: linguistic indicators

Informational vs. Involved: For example, incidence of:

- nouns,
- longer words,
- prepositions,
- type/ token ratios,
- attributive adjectives

Opposed to:

- that-deletion,
- contractions,
- present tense verbs,
- second person pronouns,
- BE as main verb,
- discourse particles,
- indefinite pronouns,
- hedges and others

(Involved): Involved features are more likely to be found in the fictional texts than Informational features.

Narrativity: third person forms, simple past tenses, etc.

Explicit vs. Situation-dependent: fictional texts contained more adverbials, where more Explicit texts contained more relative clauses, nominalizations, more elaborate constructions, etc.

Abstract vs. Non-abstract: Abstract texts (not typically literary) tend to contain more conjuncts, agentless and other passives, past participial adverbial clauses, adverbial subordinators and others.

Corpus linguistic investigation: metaphor

Partington

Inspired by Lakoff and Johnson's work (briefly reported in Chapter 1), Partington (1998) used a newspaper corpus of texts to investigate use of metaphor in various fields. Sports journalism showed a tendency to report sport as *magic* and in terms of a *fairy tale*. A good deal of data quickly supported the idea as an informing metaphor of the way sport is reported and conceived of in the British press. Another prominent and related lexeme proved to be variations on *conjur-*. Other related terms found to occur significantly frequently were *wizard* and *bewitch*. A comparison across Home, Foreign and Business sections of the same newspapers showed that these 'magic' terms are more often used with regard to sport. A useful cautionary note, however, was that searches in Arts section texts threw up nearly an equally significant number of references to the 'magic' of theatre and cinema. It may be that both Sport and Arts fields draw on an <ENTERTAINMENT IS MAGIC> root metaphor, in Lakoff and Johnson's terms.

   Pursuing his hypothesis that metaphor tends to be genre-distinctive, if not genre-specific, Partington went on to carry out a careful study of business journalism in the *Independent* (1992), *Telegraph* (1993) and *Times* (1993)

newspapers, as well as some issues of the *Economist* at that time. 'The frequency lists showed one vocabulary set to be highly typical of business texts: words relating to "up" and "down"' (p. 112). Up was found to mean 'more', but not necessarily (as Lakoff and Johnson sometimes seem to suggest) always 'better': when *cost, debts, inflation, unemployment* are up, things are far from good. Even here, however, corpus research revealed a distinctive set of terms used to express 'up is bad', including *mount, escalate, spiral* (p. 113). Another common 'orientational' metaphor was found to be *ahead* (especially) and *behind* (business conceived as a race, or competition). Other unusually frequent occurrences were found for *soft/hard* oppositions (*soft prices, hard cash, hard or soft option*, etc.) and below average frequencies of personal pronouns, suggesting with other indicators a typical distinctively impersonal tone to business journalism. Other features were found, but enough has been indicated of how business journalists speak and think according to the evidence of the texts they produce.

Concept 4.3   Dominant metaphors in business journalism

- Business is sport.
- Business is a race.
- Business is forecasting or guessing.
- Business is fear.

(Business is war, an anticipated metaphor, was *not* widely found.)

To outsiders these are metaphors. Partington makes the point that to insiders many of these ways of talking will be quite literal, 'metaphors they live by'. The claim is that learners benefit from systematic exposure to and study of distinctive sets of metaphors in genres they need to communicate about, whether mediated and selected by teachers or in more obviously independent 'data driven learning' explorations on the students' own part. We note again the workings of creativity and the literariness of everyday language, and so the relevance of the literary beyond what are classically thought of as the literary genres.

   Imagery characteristic of an author, genre or topic could similarly be investigated by language learners and their teachers, as is also suggested by the next section.

Corpus linguistic investigation: poetic deviance

Louw

Some teachers and applied linguists are proposing 'data-driven learning' (DDL) – what communicative language teaching always valued as 'discovery

learning' – but now with the aid of computerised corpora (Hunston 2002: Ch. 7) The idea is that learners use restricted or specialised corpora and simple tools to investigate language for themselves, including stylistic choices. Thus Louw (1997) proposes use of corpora to investigate notions of stylistic deviance from a norm in a given text or writer. The argument is that native speaker intuitions can be checked against the corpus, and second language speakers can be compensated for the lack of this native speaker intuition in investigating deviance.

Example study

Louw (1997) reports his students at the University of Zimbabwe suspecting that the phrase 'wielding a guitar' in the poem 'Elvis Presley', by Thom Gunn, was ironic. After much discussion, a check of the COBUILD corpus revealed that 'wielding a *knife*' and other weapons was indeed the most common collocation, but that in fact ironic or humorous collocations with 'wielding a' were by no means as uncommon as might be thought. ('Thatcher attacked by a woman wielding a bunch of daffodils', is one nice example!) The students – and teacher – are claimed to have deepened their understanding of both poem and English language – and creativity in the English language – through this and other exercises reported in the article.

It is not unusual for a reader of literature to consult a dictionary to check their understanding of a word. Louw suggests that consulting a corpus is a natural and more scholarly extension of such a reflex for a language learner, increasingly facilitated by technological advances. Other discoveries reported are the unusual (in the language as a whole) but repeated and gradually elaborated collocation of 'bald' with 'eye' in Sylvia Plath's poetry, or developing collocations with established symbols such as 'ladder', 'stair' and 'dance' in Yeats' poetry. The strong claim of Louw is that such investigations can reveal aspects of literary texts and language use which would not otherwise be noticed. At the least, it can be argued that real insights, with potential for valuable discussion in the language and literature class, can be thrown up by such corpus linguistic investigations, and ruminative traditional literary questions ('Do people usually say x?') can be answered with some authority by a general corpus of 200 million words or more.

Quote 4.1   Louw on the value of corpora

[C]ritics and their students [can] have access, within a matter of seconds, to more text (the equivalent of about 3500 novels) than the average reader is exposed to in the space of a lifetime of dedicated reading.
(Louw 1997: 243)

4.3   Simplification, readability and graded readers

Literature for many language students across the world – especially in a wider sense of 'narratives', or fiction – is experienced most often in the form of extensive reading of graded readers. Researchers such as Elley, or Hafiz and Tudor, discussed in Chapter 3, advocate the benefits for language acquisition of extensive reading programmes. In most such programmes: 'The assumption is that second-language reading development is a matter of moving from easier to more difficult texts' (Alderson 2000: 280). But 'easiness' and difficulty, and simplification, are notoriously not simple matters.

> **Simplification: example study**
>
> In a classic paper on the subject of simplification of literary texts, Davies and Widdowson (1974: 183–5) demonstrated how much is lost when a classic text is simplified. (Their example used extracts from Dickens' *Oliver Twist*). The provocative argument, though well demonstrated in the paper, is that a total sensitive rewriting will make for a more effective and meaningful final text than insensitively applied quantitative readability formulae, dealing typically with word frequencies and sentence lengths. Simplicity is to be preferred over simplification where language difficulty will present an insuperable barrier to understanding.

The argument is further illustrated in Davies (1984), as well as Urquhart (1984). Readability cannot be defined solely in terms of textual features, though traditional formulae were based on syntax and lexical measures (or more usually *samples* assessed for syntactic and lexical features). There are reader variations, as an interactive model of reading would predict, and literary comprehension is not easily assimilated to simplistic linguistic models. If literature is to work, pedagogically, it must engage; and the danger of insensitive simplification is that it becomes too much like all the other texts learners come across, and so of no special interest (and so of no special use).

In any case, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the key linguistic indicator of difficulty is vocabulary rather than any other combination of factors, though even 'vocabulary' difficulty remains an imperfectly understood area. ('[V]ocabulary load is the most significant predictor of text difficulty' [Alderson 2000: 73]). Alderson reports a study by Strother and Ulijn (1987) which compared reading comprehension scores of native and non-native subjects reading original texts and texts which had been simplified syntactically but not lexically: no differences were discovered, and syntax was proposed to be of marginal importance to readability, where vocabulary consistently and reliably predicts difficulty. It is important to note, however, that simplification research, including vocabulary 'simplification', has shown that adjustments to the language of a text often result in making a text *more* difficult to process! (Alderson 2000: 74) There are clearly complex and still imperfectly

understood interactions between textual factors, and again between these and the operations of individual readers.

Fortunately, such research has been generally taken up by most providers of graded readers today, and we have the invaluable Edinburgh EPER guides to support teachers and students in their choices (Hill 1992; 1997), with pride of place given to texts assessed as more or less 'readable' or 'difficult' on their own merits rather than against simplistic formulae (though statistics certainly contribute to rating a text's difficulty). The best single guide to teaching practice is probably Day and Bamford (1998). Chapter 4 of that book summarises research claims and insights into extensive reading benefits well and need not be repeated here, except to note the importance of effects on attitude and motivation of extensive reading programmes, as well as the more familiar claims for vocabulary, spelling and other reading and writing skills already dealt with. (See also Day and Bamford 1998: 53ff.) The whole area of 'difficult' literary texts stands in need of further investigation, and could, for example, be investigated for individual readers or groups of readers against the demands or claims for proficiency or 'progression' of syllabuses and exam requirements.

Quote 4.2   Language and the 'difficulty' of literary texts

The language of texts would seem, *prima facie*, highly relevant to the testing and assessment of reading. The interesting thing about much of the research is that a common-sense assumption proves too simplistic, and that identifying text variables which consistently cause difficulty is a complex task. . . . [T]he interaction among syntactic, lexical, discourse and topic variables is such that no one variable can be shown to be paramount. (Alderson 2000: 71)

A final under-researched area to mention for individual readers or groups of readers remains the transfer to ungraded 'authentic' literary texts from the graded readers, which many advanced learners (and their teachers) report as an extremely difficult bridge to cross. More case studies, including longitudinal investigations, are undoubtedly needed of individuals and groups of readers reading extensively and outside formal classes to begin to identify and disentangle the numerous interacting variables which affect the usefulness and readability of such literature.

Further reading

Stylistics
Short (1996) is the best of the 'toolbox' approaches to stylistics (lists of what to look for, directions for any analysis) and contains many illustrations and exercises.
Weber (1996) is a more critical and socially grounded stylistician, stressing contexts and variation; Verdonk is a sophisticated but very readable short general introduction, up to date and with original examples.

Foregrounding
van Peer (1986) is the key name here; see also Short (1996).
Wales (2001) offers definitions, examples and further reading.
Stockwell (2002) gives a more theoretically elaborated and contemporary account
  from cognitive poetics.

Corpus linguistics and stylistics
Biber (1988) and Conrad and Biber (2001) are accessible accounts by central figures
  Hunston (2002: 129–30) is a good overview from outside.

Stylistics in education
See, for example, *Style* special issue, Pedagogy of style and stylistics, 37 (1) (2003):
  1–104 (which also refers in turn to further resources); also Clark and Zyngier (2003).

Metaphor in ELT (corpus linguistic approach)
Deignan (1997; 1999).
Dong (2004).
Picken (2005) reports an interesting project to improve his Japanese students' reading
  of English language literature through teaching of metaphor (and inferencing).

Corpora used for basic stylistic investigations by students
Louw or Jackson in Wichmann et al. (1997).
Partington (1998).

Readability
Carrell (1987) is a good survey for ESL; see also Alderson (2000: 71–4).
Schulz (1981) is older but sensible.

5
Educational Perspectives

5.1   Curriculum and syllabus

This chapter deals with research into literature in education, under four headings: curriculum and syllabus; assessment; literature in the classroom; and literature and intercultural education. As we have seen in Part 1, a key question in teaching literature has always been: which texts to study, in which order, and what the rationale for the use of literature in education might be. This has tended to be a particularly acute problem for the second language classroom, where the desire to provide motivating material for an individual lesson (the 'springboard' cliché) often seems to override longer-term curricular views, one text following another with possibly thematic coherence, but little obvious or thought through justification in terms of developing language proficiency and/ or literary competence. Thus Brumfit (1981), in an early but still largely unrealised proposal, argues for a more conscious and principled approach to literature use in language classrooms, with sequencing decisions to be based on considerations such as:

- linguistic level;
- cultural level;
- length;
- pedagogical role (linked themes would be included here);
- genre representation (not just short stories!);
- classic status or relevance (could be a motivating factor).

(after Brumfit 1981: 247)

   In Chapter 2 it was noted that a traditional justification for literature had been moral or humanistic: the forming of better citizens and subjects. One reason for literature often being swept away in the early years of communicative language teaching was a perception that it had nothing to offer to a world of 'high surrender' ESP courses and needs analysis. A continuing

tension is noted by Corbett (2003) between state language teaching and the private, commercial sector, where wider educational concerns are more likely to feature in state educational systems, and so the value of literature may be easier to defend than in contexts where narrower and more immediate language learning dividends are looked for. Certainly, it is in state sector educational contexts that we typically find more elaborated rationales and programmes for literature teaching, both because of their longer term views, and because of the demands of accountability to tax payers.

Syllabus document analysis: England and Wales National Curriculum document (1995)

In Britain, a key, much debated, contribution was triggered by a proposed standardised national curriculum, now in place. Brian Cox chaired a government committee which looked into the question of a national curriculum for England and Wales for 'English'. Cox' s (1991) five characteristic justifications for teaching 'English' in English L1 education, quoted in Chapter 2, section 2.1, included 'classics' under the 'heritage' argument, as well as vocational/job market-oriented and critical awareness arguments. Following the work of Cox and others, the England and Wales English 'National Curriculum' (for secondary schools) documents are widely perceived to see literature as primarily 'personal growth' and 'cultural heritage'.

English in the National Curriculum (HMSO 1995), the official government curriculum document, under a broad 'four language skills' approach, discusses literature under the heading of 'Reading', 'in order to develop independent, responsive and enthusiastic readers' (p. 19), emphasising pleasure, interest and motivation. For the secondary English syllabus, specifications are made by genre, and include some very specific requirements, notably the controversial obligatory 'two plays by Shakespeare', which heads a longer list of canonical names (p. 20). Vaguer references are made to 'texts from other cultures and traditions that represent their distinctive voices and forms, and offer varied perspectives and subject matter' (p. 19), as well as 'non-fiction texts, e.g. autobiographies, biographies, journals, diaries, letters, travel writing, leaflets' and 'a wide range of media, e.g. magazines, radio, television, film'. These well-intentioned gestures toward a wider cultural curriculum are, of course, likely to submerge in the hurly-burly of classroom priorities to cover the more precisely specified texts by the end of the year. Practically speaking, the emphasis seems to remain firmly on the primary importance of classics.

In the course of Key Stages 3 and 4 [ages 11–16 approx.], pupils reading should include:

- two plays by Shakespeare;
- drama by major playwrights, e.g. Christopher Marlowe, J. B. Priestley, George Bernard Shaw, R. B. Sheridan;
- two works of fiction of high quality by major writers, published before 1900, drawn from Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, John Bunyan,

Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Henry Fielding, Elizabeth Gaskell, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jonathan Swift, Anthony Trollope, H. G. Wells

- two works of fiction of high quality major writers with well-established critical reputations, whose works were published after 1900, e.g. William Golding, Graham Greene, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Muriel Spark
- poems of high quality by four major poets, whose works were published before 1900 drawn from Matthew Arnold, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, William Blake, Emily Brontë, Robert Browning, Robert Burns, Lord Byron, Geoffrey Chaucer, John Clare, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Donne, John Dryden, Thomas Gray, George Herbert, Robert Herrick, Gerard Manley Hopkins, John Keats, Andrew Marvell, John Milton, Alexander Pope, Christina Rossetti, Shakespeare (sonnets), Percy Bysshe Shelley, Edmund Spenser, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Henry Vaughan, William Wordsworth, Sir Thomas Wyatt
- poems of high quality by four major poets with well-established critical reputations, whose works were published after 1900, e.g. T. S. Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin, R. S. Thomas, W. B. Yeats

One perspective on such a list is to note (after Wilks, in Cox 1998: 144) that during the 1980s, when this list was published, one of the most popular books among London teenagers was Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. How far to accommodate such preferences will always be a difficult question, and certainly education should aim to 'broaden horizons', to introduce previously unknown experience. On the other hand, the list of classic names and authors quoted here seems to allow very little to such pre-existing preferences.

Concept 5.1   Australia: Multicultural syllabus

Bredella (in Byram 2001: 382) reports relevant criteria for an award for children's literature set up by the Office of Multicultural Affairs in Australia (the precise national terms Australia/Anglo can be translated to other contexts). Multicultural literary texts nominated should according to this document:

- include insights into a non-Anglo culture within Australia;
- present a comparison/contrast of an Anglo culture with another;
- depict an active, conscious integration of cultures;
- include insights into racism or clash of cultures;
- include insights into issues of social justice/ social harmony;

And include insights into:

- the immigration experience/ loneliness/ alienation.

Bredella still seems to focus on content rather than language (compare Delanoy 1993, discussed below). Nevertheless, postcolonial writings, it is argued, may be most appropriate if the larger educational aim is to deepen understandings and empathy with various 'others' through reading and study of the literary text.

An interesting alternative, 'bottom-up' perspective to such a programmatic official curriculum documents is broached by Hunt (in Ibsch et al. 1991), who claims to derive the following features of 'the literary' from examination of actual instances of L1 literary education, that is, students who pay attention learn that:

1. Some texts are literary.
2. Literary is good.
3. Literary is not practical or transactional, and thus not rhetorical.
4. Literary is not communicative, but expressive.
5. Literary is formally complex, highly structured and innovative, and thus difficult.
6. Literary appeals to the emotions.
7. Literary is and must be separated from authorial intention.
8. Literary does not observe the 'fact convention'.
9. Literary has many meanings rather than one.
10. Literary must be interpreted.

(Hunt 1991: 276)

There is a need to investigate the degree to which such understandings – reminiscent of Culler's 'literary competence', discussed in Chapter 3 – are also being learned in specific second language classrooms.

What are we teaching when we 'teach literature'?

Another response to that question is to remember the studies of novice versus expert readers referred to in Chapter 3 (Graves and Frederiksen 1991; Nardoccio 1992; Dixon et al. 1993; Bortolussi and Dixon 1996; Schram and Steen 2001). The expert searching for intertextuality, making elaborate inferences, bringing to bear other examples of the genre, producing evaluative readings, etc., arguably learned much of this expertise as and through literary education. We do not at present know how far or in quite what ways such knowledges are learned by the second language reader of literature, or how ideologies of literature associated with English (or whatever is the foreign language) interact with first language understandings of literature (awareness of conventions, literary education, cultural frames).

Second language literature syllabuses

Approaches to English literature teaching overseas are traditionally and still often today, designed for élites, or higher achieving students, often separating language teaching from literature teaching (e.g. for Malaysia, see Edwin, in Brumfit and Benton 1993), just as they had historically become separated in the UK. *Assuming* linguistic competence, rather than attempting to extend it through literature, however, is likely to be even more problematic in these second language contexts.

In terms of content, use of local literatures written in English, or at least of writings dealing with more cognate contexts than England is increasingly common, at least to facilitate initial engagement by students. (For advocacy of use of local literatures, see Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986; Talib 1992; 2002). Thus Banjo, as early as 1985, summarised a report on the literature curriculum in English in Nigerian schools, noting 'the dramatic changes that have taken place within the last fifty years', principally that 'African authors now dominate the classroom', though also noting a problem too, that 'the number of Nigerian or African authors consciously writing for young people is negligible' (Banjo 1985: 203). Similarly, Narayan's (Indian) *The Painter of Signs* is a popular choice of novel in Malaysian English language literature classrooms.

Concept 5.2   Literature in second language education

Case study: Malaysia
Malaysia is a convenient example of a second language context for English literature teaching where aims and content are carefully specified for the national educational system. The overall aim in studying Literature in English (KPM 1990: 1), is 'to develop in students a love for reading literary works, and to develop attitudes and abilities that will enable them to respond to these literary works'. Response and pleasure paradigms in short. The 'abilities' to be developed must to some extent be linguistic, but this is left largely implicit. Literature is defined and described as a moral subject, which conveys values and can contribute to the making of a good citizen (p. 2). A gesture toward clt and more progressive educational ideas is the prescription that methodologies should be 'student-centred'. The selection of texts is not precisely prescribed in this document, as in the UK example, though as always there will be practical limitations on budgets and school libraries, but 'original and unabridged works and . . . of reasonable length' (p. 9), 'and also in keeping with the values and aspirations of the culture and norms of Malaysian society' should be used.
(Edwin 1993 describes the context for this syllabus more fully.)

The Learning Outcomes specified are modest and seem reasonable enough, though teachers will testify that they are not always so easy to achieve. The

syllabus is specified in terms of genre, and within each genre as Learning Outcomes and Contents:

POETRY [example extract]

Learning Outcomes	*Contents*
To identify the subject of the poem	what the poem is about
To understand the literal and implicit meanings of the poem	– denotative meanings – connotative meanings – choice of words
To understand the poet's point of view	assuming omniscience [?]
To understand and describe the attitude of the poet to the subject of the poem	for example, affectionate, hostile, compassionate
To recognise, understand and identify the mood of the poem	for example, serious, gay, sombre
To identify poetic devices that poets employ to achieve their effects	for example, imagery, and figures of speech such as metaphor, simile and symbol. relating sounds to meanings. (onomatopoeia) patterns of sounds (alliteration)
To develop an understanding of the structure of the poem	rhyme pattern, blank verse, free verse meter and rhythm, stanza
To communicate an informed personal response to the poem	reasons to support one's response to the text relating the contents of the poem to one's own feelings and experiences
To recite a poem	choral recitation
To write poetry	for example, limericks.

(KMP 1990: 8–9)

Such aims are easily criticised as perhaps reducing or missing something of the experience of successful literature or poetry reading, but will at least give a teacher or test writer some guidance, and can always be revised, and may be a starting point for action research: how far do these aims describe what happens in classrooms? How useful are they?

Second language curricula which incorporate literary texts have tended in general to be vaguer than this, conservative, over-specified in terms of excessive reading loads of prescribed canonical works, but under-specified in terms of educational aims, as if the value of literature was obvious, or to simply to make assertions which lack clear empirical evidence to back them. The strict 'Beowulf to Virginia Woolf' approach of old-style Oxbridge English study was uncritically exported to the colonies and beyond. Colleagues from (say) Egypt or the West Bank often display detailed knowledge of literary history of this kind, literature as a subject of study for its own sake. Their scholarly erudition is admirable, but is it what their students need? Similarly,

at one stage of my own career I found myself in a Polish university plodding through the history of the English novel, which my students seemed already to know better than I did through their textbooks (or study guide summaries!). We would all have been better off studying some of the texts whose titles and plot summaries the lecturer was reciting. Literature in such situations easily turns into the study of dates, facts and plot summaries which will not in any obvious way support improved use of language, which is the aim of most students on a language course (not even, ironically, those few who wish to improve their language skills in order to read more literature in the foreign language). Nor, it is important to state, will such study encourage critical readings of cultural-linguistic texts.

Turkey

Akyel and Yalçin (1990), in a paper undoubtedly representative of many other educational systems around the world, explore a picture of transition and tension between two approaches in Turkish institutions in questionnaires to students and teachers. Crucially, in this case, a disparity was found between student demands and interests (more 'communicative') and teacher activities and beliefs (transmission of cultural heritage). Literature has always been, and continues to be – like most education – in transition, with different agendas (students and teachers here) often in tension.

A similar, though perhaps gradually changing picture, is suggested for English literature teaching in Turkey ten years on by Timucin (2001).

5.2 Assessment

Syllabus statements obviously impact on assessment aims and means, just as assessment will 'wash back' on to what occurs in classrooms. Explicit, sensible and realisable aims should promote more valid assessment exercises, though this has not always been the case. Spiro also reminds us of the embedded nature of testing and examination, as of all other educational activities.

Quote 5.1   A 'good' test

The question 'what is a good test?' is a question of ideology – because a 'good test' depends on clear identificatin of target competence, and target competence is a composite of goals and ideals.
(Spiro 1991: 16; quoted in Corbett 2003: 191. See also Shohamy 2001 for a critical view of language testing)

Carter and Long (1990) critique the mechanical 'comprehension' exercises which still characterise most testing of literature around the world. These are summarised, with examples.

Typical literature assessment questions today

- Paraphrase and Context questions (Who is speaking in this extract? What is he saying?)
- Describe and Discuss questions ('Describe Snowball and explain what happens to him')
- Evaluate and Criticise questions ('Illustrate from the stories how Lawrence's attitude to his characters is often a mixture of ridicule and compassion')

(Carter and Long 1990: 215–17)

Such questions typically concern literary 'characters'. The key criticism made is that: 'Such questions can be answered if the candidate has read only a translation or even a simplified version of the text' (Carter and Long 1990: 217). Ironically, Urquhart (1987) suggests these more factual questions are the only ones we can confidently mark right or wrong. More elaborated inferences are by their nature more debatable and personal, and we could add, are of the essence of literature reading. Similarly Nuttall (1982) notes that teachers' questions in foreign language classrooms generally test, rather than teach, and test in ways which are rather superficial if not nonsensical at times. Questions, for Nuttall, should not be teacher attempts to expose ignorance, so much as 'aids to the successful exploration of the text' (p. 126), opening up rather than closing down discussion. In place of such invalid or counter-productive testing instruments, Carter and Long propose 'language-based question types' which will require active engagement with the precise wording of the literary text, but extending to discourse level activities too, such as inferencing and the application of personal and cultural knowledge, rather than prepared 'responses' (e.g. pp. 218–20). Alderson (2000: 84) suggests 'a portfolio of readings and responses' as one of the better ways of tackling the problems of literature assessment. (See also Hill and Parry 1994 on 'assessment' versus 'testing' more generally in an international language teaching perspective.)

Only one volume to date has been dedicated to the theme of *Assessment in Literature Teaching* in second language contexts (Brumfit 1991). This is a thin and surprisingly under-researched field, given the centrality of testing and evaluation to much literature teaching activity. One of the more detailed and stimulating accounts of second language literature testing, with proposals for improvement comes from Spiro (1991), who echoes and amplifies Carter and Long. Her examination of UK examinations shows that the most common question type by far is the open-ended 'Discuss' essay question (as Sinfield, Chapter 2 above), where candidates are left guessing at a hidden agenda which in any case seems to have little to do with their actual reading experiences. 'Response' again (compare Chapter 3) seems to be a key to good answers, but again what examiners intend and what candidates provide under the heading often doesn't match very well.

The University of Cambridge's UCLES exams discussed in Chapter 2, are taken most widely in Europe (hundreds of thousands of students in Greece

and Spain), but also quite globally. The aim of literature questions is, as 'washback' to promote student 'extensive reading', assumed to promote, in turn, second language acquisition, but also as a prompt for the oral testing and/or writing components. The discussions around the text are therefore typically vague and thematic and unlikely to concern matters of language in any direct way. Indeed, oral examiners are encouraged to relate the book read to wider contemporary issues which the candidate should be able to talk about in English with reasonable fluency, while written examiners are to mark for linguistic not literary competence.

What seems to be desirable, if also predictably difficult, based on the work of Carter and Long (1990), Spiro (1991) and other reviews, is to assess relative *literary competence* (Culler 1975; discussed in Chapter 3), which is a discourse-level competence (the ability to understand and evaluate, and then discuss narratives, poetry, and other writings), respecting that there can be no final 'right answers' in providing accounts of readings of literature, but that some accounts will be more recognisable or interesting than others, and the grounds for such an assessment (compare Chapter 3 on individual reader variability in the reception of texts; and on Culler 1975 and literary reading). These grounds can be at least partly linguistic or discoursal, to include:

Components of literary competence

- the ability to make connections and cross-references;
- the ability to quote and summarise constructively;
- the ability to balance arguments and reach conclusions;
- the ability to take subjective standpoints and relate them to objective criteria.
- the ability to contextualise

(McRae 1996: 37)

Quote 5.2   Carter and Long on literature assessment

[We argue that:]

a) many literature examinations operate according to somewhat rigid formulae;
b) that such formulae may run counter to and not effectively assess the kinds of capacities and literary competence teachers may want to develop in their students;
c) that typical literature examination questions do not reflect integrated language and literature work;
d) that language-based approaches used in the integrated language and literature class can be adapted to foster more activity-centred examination questions directed towards students' own personal responses to and readings of literary texts.

(Carter and Long 1991: 166)

Carter and Long, or Brumfit (1991), are representative of a broader move at least in second language education, away from testing knowledge of the canon and tradition, toward reading skills (textual analysis, for example) and beyond this, to assessing response. Response, as has already been signalled (e.g. quotes from Alderson 2000, Chapter 3), can be a contentious matter for evaluation. (See also Hall 1999, after Gilbert 1987, arguing that 'response' can easily come down to Eagleton's 'learning to speak and write in approved ways'.)

Examples of more progressive forms of literature assessment

- coursework, ongoing portfolio construction – a range of types of considered or more spontaneous response, produced under less stressful circumstances than exams;
- the use of journals, reading diaries to record and explore response;
- group projects to promote interaction with other readers, as well as with texts;
- textual transformations- turning a short story into a play or script for TV, etc.;
- creative writing as a response.

These more progressive forms of assessment represent attempts to accommodate newer understandings of the personal as well as social and interactive nature of reading, perhaps especially literary reading. There is also a recognition that such assignments can act as preparation for the more polished traditional products which most find difficult to produce more spontaneously. The fight has been to persuade more conservative colleagues that such techniques can be useful at higher levels of study. In Britain, unfortunately, as in many other educational systems, such modes of assessment are still largely distrusted by politicians who continue to prefer the decontextualised unseen test and essay by individual writers in exam halls. Research can contribute to growing understanding of the value of newer, alternative forms of assessment.

5.3   Literature in the classroom

Despite claims that language learners benefit from discussions of literature in the classroom as much as from private acts of reading, there are surprisingly few studies reporting or analysing interactions of L2 learners in literature lessons – perhaps because, traditionally, the main 'interaction' was between teacher and a group of bored, lectured-at learners! We have many more well-intentioned proposals than actual studies of literature classrooms in operation- which, of course, the proposals should refer to. Researchers such as Eeds and Wells (1989), Lehman and Scharer (1996) or Nystrand and Gamoran (1991), for the US, or Benton, and Benton and Fox (1985) have given some insights into what goes on in L1 literature classes.

Quote 5.3   Criteria for evaluation of a literature class

Features of substantively engaging instruction which are part of and promote real learning in the literature classroom] include authentic questions, or questions which have no pre-specified answers; uptake, or the incorporation of previous answers into subsequent questions; and high-level teacher evaluation, or teacher certification and incorporation of student responses into subsequent discussion.
(Nystrand and Gamoran 1991: 261)

Nystrand and Gamoran found more evidence of high-quality interaction in small groups and discussions than in teacher-fronted conventional classroom exchanges, and in students' individual journals, with teacher responses in the margins. Socioeconomic status and ethnicity were found to contribute to success in literature classes ('literature' conventionally taught in secondary school may be a middle-class white Anglo phenomenon). Engagement in high quality interaction – 'authentic communication' – correlates positively with achievement across a school year in this large-scale study (58 classes).

The question once again is how far such research applies to L2 classrooms (communicative classrooms aim at just such 'authenticity'), but also what distinctive features might be found.

Boyd and Maloof (2000), in a qualitative and quantitative study of a small multinational adult class, note the 'potential' of literature in the second or foreign language classroom, but emphasise particularly the importance of teacher interventions in optimising that potential for language learning in personally meaningful active thinking and engagement: 'literature has the potential to engender a kind of quality talk that is characterized by reflection and exploring intertextual connections' (p. 166). Five kinds of 'intertextual link' were used by students interacting in a literature ESL class in the USA, which their teacher was seen to build on and extend in promoting valuable student interaction with text and other class participants, with three types of intertextual link made by the students themselves accounting for 78 per cent of student proposed links (in quantitative order of significance).

Types of intertextual links proposed by the students in the class

[1.] Literature-based: These included facts, quotes, or questions about the literary work; perceptions of authorial perspctive or intent; opinions about the literary work; and links to other literary works.
[2.] Language and culture: These were connections made to native, target, and other languages and cultures.
[3.] Personal: These related to family, friends, self-experience, and identity.

(Boyd and Maloof 2000: 171)

Typical teacher responses were to ask for clarification, to affirm the value of personal contributions, often by taking up a word or phrase used by a student, taken from the literary text under discussion in some cases, but not always. The study shows students using the language and thought of the literary text to develop their own language and thought in what Boyd and Maloof term 'exploratory transformative talk' (p. 178), for example, comparing their own and their classmates' migrant experiences, or developing extended personal narratives with the collaboration of classmates as a response to the literary texts. Students reported finding this class valuable and useful.

Kim (2004), investigating an L2 class consciously operating in the 'reader-response' paradigm of Rosenblatt et al. discussed in Chapter 3, and aware of Boyd and Maloof's work, addresses three questions:

1. What evidence is there in literature discussions that students do in fact 'emotionally and intellectually participate in the text more fully', as reader response theory claims?
2. What features of literature discussions especially promote language development?
3. How do students perceive their learning experiences in literature circles? (p. 147)

Kim studied a group of nine advanced students (six males and three females, aged between 18 and 30, five Koreans, and one each from Katar, Mongolia, Venezuela and Indonesia), who met for two hours a day over seven weeks in a US higher education English programme. They read and discussed a short story and a novel, chapter by chapter, preparing for class by using a personal reading log, and responding initially in class discussions to teacher-prepared questions. Literature discussions took place three days a week. Twenty-two hours of lessons were participant observed, fifteen hours of discussion audio-taped, field notes taken, and follow up interviews held to investigate Question 3 in particular.

Analysis of transcripts of the discussions of fiction suggested five major headings of activities coded as:

- literal comprehension discussions;
- making personal connections;
- interpretation discussions;
- evaluation (characters, plot construction, literary value);
- cross-cultural themes.

Quantitatively, on the data analysed, the most frequent discussions revolved around the first heading, literal comprehension discussions (the actual language of the text causing problems) and, second most frequently, interpretative work. The last heading, cross-cultural themes is also claimed to have been important and may be particularly characteristic of second language

contexts for literature reading. (Kim notes that Eeds and Wells also report the first four headings for their L1 learners but not the fifth.)

Findings from Kim (2004)

- Learners collaborated actively to clarify meanings both at literal and more interpretative levels (Vygotsky's ZPD). They focused on particular forms and practised them even as they discussed them, but also inferenced and made judgements collaboratively.
- Learners took expressions from the text and appropriated them for their own expressive purposes (compare Kramsch arguments, e.g. the Crickets lesson below).
- Extensive discussions of the culturally exotic (e.g. kissing on a first date) were particularly engaged, with unusually extended turns (for a classroom), and meaningful interactions.

Kim concludes, therefore, that she finds evidence for engagement (her first research question) and that the activities in which students engaged are likely to promote second language acquisition (her second question) in the light of research that shows the value of meaningful extended discussion and focus on forms for language learners, all of which came about through these literature discussions. The interviews revealed negative previous student experiences of literature in the second language classroom with teacher lectures and monosyllabic responses unlikely to promote language acquisition, as opposed to enthusiasm for the 'literature circle' discussions under study here which students felt were enjoyable, motivating and valuable for their learning.

Quote 5.4   Research questions for literature discussions and learning

Student in interview

I think I had a great, rich experience of reading this time. Thanks to the deep engagement, I still remember important words and sentences I read in the book . . .

   I can remember many words and expressions of the book we read in this session, but I cannot remember anything about other books I read before without literature discussions. (Interview of 4 February 2002; quoted Kim 2004: 162)

This is a suggestive study, if small scale and in certain particular circumstances – as all classrooms always will be (Macintyre 2000). Also, for example, the study lacks longitudinal perspectives, or more objective validation of claimed or apparent language learning. Nevertheless, it highlights, as Kim herself suggests, the importance of appropriate activities for the literature in language education classroom, and the importance of the teacher's role in

successfully promoting this kind of interaction. At the very least, researcher and students shared the perception that these were interesting and educationally valuable literature lessons.

5.4   Literature and intercultural education

The role of culture in reading literature is already inevitably touched on in the previous 'classroom' research section. Beyond precise local references to cultural features easily glossed, that wider cultural questions are inescapable in developing understanding of literary works is an idea closely associated with Bartlett's psychological research and ideas of 'schemas', reported in Chapter 2. Later classic studies of the difference cultural presuppositions or expectations make to literature reading include Kintsch and Greene (1978) and Steffensen and Joag-Dev (1984). More recent work, including Shore (1996), attempts to move beyond the rather static and idealised notion of 'schemas' which informed this earlier research, to more dynamic ideas in which agents (people) and structure (schemas) interact more creatively and with more variation, and 'Otherness' is not simply a possession of 'others' but understood more reflexively.

Quote 5.5   Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence involves an awareness of difference and a consequent reflection on one's own culturally specific socialisation and limitations.
(Byram et al. 1994: 152)

Byram and his colleagues argue for the wider educational potential, to be handled sensitively, of 'the feeling of being disconcerted' (Buttjes and Byram 1990: 24) which the language classroom and the second language culture offer. Such experiences are to be investigated and interrogated rather than simply observed or suffered. Cultural documents, literature in the broad sense argued for in this book, could play a major part in such projects: 'literary texts embody the relationship of all linguistic texts to cultural meanings but do so in a more concentrated, and therefore more accessible and rewarding form' (Byram 1989: 100).

Byram has been involved in several projects in which larger educational perspectives are subsuming narrower concerns of established second language acquisition research (SLA) such as 'attitudes' or 'motivation' (e.g. Byram and Fleming 1998), including use of ethnography and role play or drama activities.

'The Ealing Project'

Ethnography can be described as 'the study of a group's social and cultural practices from an insider's perspective' (Byram 2001: 3). The funded Ealing

Ethnography Research Project was taught at what is now Thames Valley University, Ealing, as a required component of modern foreign languages degree study.

- A 45-classroom-hour course introduced second year students of a four-year undergraduate degree to basic anthropological and sociolinguistic concepts and ethnographic method.
- Ethnographic study abroad required in third year over four or five months' residence.
- Writing up the project on returning to the UK from abroad, including assessing the value of the project.
- The aim was to make the year abroad required element a more active and valuable learning experience for students, to assist them, partly, to participate in another group's way of looking at the world.

A fuller account is to be found in Roberts et al. (2001).

The Ealing teachers and researchers encouraged and enabled student to investigate culture for themselves rather than being force fed a largely imagined or partial and dated fixed cultural syllabus, developing intercultural understanding and tolerance rather than, considered unrealistic, in some way 'acculturating' as 'going native' (e.g. Byram, in Buttjes and Byram 1991).

Kramsch, 'Crickets' (in Lantolf 2000)

Sociocultural perspectives (Vygotsky) – L2 'acculturation'. A classroom study of language learning as appropriation, using a short story.

Twenty-six students from Asian and Latin American countries in an intermediate ESL writing class at University of California Berkeley read 'Crickets' by R. O. Butler (1992). One class was born in the US of migrant parents, another included more recent migrants. The story is told by a Vietnamese American (called Thieu in Vietnam, now 'Ted' in the US). Ted tries to interest his son Bill in a game he knows from Vietnam (involving crickets) but fails.

The students are asked to summarise the story individually and then to present their summaries aloud, transferring their original summary to the blackboard, with changes and revisions being discussed.

Summaries, of course, always involve interpretation, and these interpretations seem to tell us about the students' own interests and feelings as much as about the plot.

> *Although Ted tries to teach his son Bill his culture and life in Vietnam (w/ fighting crickets), Bill, the son, is unable to learn anything because of new culture attitude.*

The name of the main character prompted a lot of revising and discussions. Ted/Thieu/Mr Thieu were all used, 'I' in one original draft. It was obviously

recognised that naming conveys an attitude and relationship. Is he American? or Vietnamese? or to be treated with distant respect?

As summaries were presented on the board, it became particularly clear, through the insertion of extraneous material, that these summaries were meaningful to the students:

> *This is a story about the transitional phase that a typical immigrant goes through ... This story is about an immigrant from Vietnam. He struggled in his native country and now he struggles in the US. However these struggles are very much different. In Vietnam he str- fought struggled for his life, for his freedom. Now in the US he struggles to try to find a balance between cultural values ... He's confused and continues to struggle.*
>
> *A man named Ted (Thieu) moved to United States as a chemical Engineer after leading a tough childhood in Vietnam ...*

> *It was hard for Bill to attain the values and attitude from his father's culture. I was glad that Ted realized it, because I've seen a lot of foreigner parents who don't.*

Kramsch argues that the story and the classroom discussion of the summaries offered these students some relevant and meaningful language through which they could explore or construct in the classroom their own identities and feelings through English. They were 'appropriating' the language, in Bakhtin's terms, as much as passively 'learning' it. The story offered what ecological approaches to second language teaching have called '*affordances*' (G) (Kramsch 2002; Leather and van Dam 2003).

Delanoy (1993) 'Come to Mecca' Germany

'Crickets' was a relatively familiar topic area for Kramsch's students, but their classroom activities helped them appreciate the significance of the story and its personal cultural and linguistic relevance to them. Delanoy (1993) reports an example from Germany of students's difficulties, claimed to be productive, with a more culturally strange text, Farrukh Dhondy's 'Come to Mecca', in which, in a relatively advanced class of future English teachers, the cultural and linguistic difficulties of the text drive the teaching and learning. ('[T]he text presupposes reader abilities which students of a foreign language, culture and literature do not necessarily possess', p. 276). The subject matter of the story is itself a record of an Asian migrant's experience of London as culturally strange, which narrative perspective tends to reduplicate the experience of strangeness in the reader. Thus this experience of reading literature is proposed to be itself a form of intercultural learning, requiring active learner-/ reader-participation. Thus, for example, Delanoy's learners shared the puzzlement of Betty over Shahid's use of the terms 'blacklegs' and a 'sweatshop', in the East End

of London. Shahid's explanation in terms of (metaphorical) 'sweated labour' doesn't help much, but is precisely the kind of difficulty new cultural practices-and-language raise for all learners. Delanoy's German readers reported: 'it took a while to find out what was going on'; 'I thought it all happened somewhere in India' (p. 285). Literature offers a mediated but valid cultural learning experience for the readers which is discomfiting, even initially bewildering and has to be worked at to be overcome. Language practices such as code switching are part but not all of the comprehension problem as the teachers realised in working with annotations developed by Delanoy and his students in successive uses of the story. 'Culture' here amounts to much wider areas of new experience than just a few words which can be glossed and translated. Delanoy began using the story expecting it to be sufficient in itself as a cultural learning experience, but came to realise how difficult it was for even his relatively advanced learners to understand without much support: 'literature per se does not necessarily provide a master key for understanding a foreign culture' (p. 278). This is an important point on which to conclude this short summary, because, once again (compare Kim 2004, reported earlier) Delanoy's paper shows the *potential* value of the literary text, but also makes clear the crucial role of the teacher and carefully designed activities and educational structure. A text like 'Come to Mecca' could easily misfire into at best being boring and a waste of educational time, but at worst counter-productively confirming rather than challenging preconceptions and biases about others' 'strange' ways of life. Jackstädt and Müller-Hartmann (2001) report just such difficulties and misfires in their study of international language learner exchanges stemming from reading of controversial young adult reading (Northern Ireland conflict, ethnic conflict in the USA and Canada). Mutual enlightenment is not easily and invariably achieved. There are risks as well as potential rewards and it is creditworthy of these researchers and teachers to report their difficulties and misgivings.

The section on literature and culture can conclude by noting that there is much potential for replicating/applying L1 studies (compare, e.g., Grabe and Stoller 2002 on reading) in the area of culture in literature teaching. On the face of it, there would be strong expectation that considering attitudes, beliefs etc. of other cultures, nations or speech communities could be particularly valuable for students.

Thus Naidoo (1992; 1994) reports participant observation of teaching literature dealing with racism from South Africa, southern United States, England and Germany to English L1 secondary students (13–14-year-old) over a year and resulting changes – or mainly lack of changes – in attitudes to racism. The research was qualitative in orientation, by reference to reading logs of students, observations of small group discussions and interviews with selected students, but is filled out with an attitudes questionnaire administered at beginning and again at the end of the year. Prevalent – and continuing – ideas

that racism is elsewhere – the 'some of my best friends are black so I'm not a racist' syndrome, seem to confirm van Dijk's (1987 and after) more social scientific studies in the discourse of racism. A particularly intriguing but important point raised by Naidoo, and recurrent in many such studies, is whether her efforts may even have misfired, so as to confirm, and even deepen, rather than challenge attitudes. Even where students were genuinely prompted to empathise and resent injustices they read about, how far do such righteous liberal feelings ever translate into effective action in the world? Expectations should not be naive. Interventions in these complex cultural areas will never be simple or entirely predictable, and can even be counter-productive, though ignoring or tolerating racism should not be seen as an option either. Among Naidoo's conclusions of special interest here, is a need for language and literature to be taught together if racism is to be effectively challenged. The study as a whole is a stimulating one for any language teacher.

A final important L1 study of literature teaching with wider implications to notice is Moss (1989), who reports girls in an English secondary school using literature and discussions of literature in English lessons, to explore questions of gender and identity close to these young teenage women- how to present yourself in public, what is acceptable behaviour, morality etc. (See also Zubair 2003a discussed below.) The method is ethnographic, using observations and interviews to explore the contexts of the lives brought to reading activities in and out of school, including uses of non-canonical literature (romances and others) and magazines.

Its value is in demonstrating that reading (of literature or of anything else) amounts to much more than a decontextualised exercise of psycholinguistic 'skills', but rather involves a whole person, with an ongoing history and identity in construction.

Sarland (1991) also reports research on the value of using popular literature and comics to engage less literate learners in an English secondary school context, here with particular reference to boys, traditionally viewed as particularly problematic (non-) readers of literature. The quality of the interaction between text and reader is stressed in such research, as opposed to standard ideas of autonomous self-evidently valuable-for-all literary texts.

Further reading

L2 literature syllabuses
Brumfit and Benton (1992).

Literature in classrooms
Nystrand and Gamoran (1991): how to research the extent to which a literature lesson (L1) is 'working' by studying classroom interaction.
Isaac (2002): ESL students discuss value of literary cloze exercises for their language and literature learning.

Assessment
Brumfit (1991).
Alderson (2000).
Carter and Long (1990).
Henning (1992).
Spiro (in Brumfit 1991).

Literature and culture
MacDonald (2000) reports overseas learners in the UK exploring their own changing identities and beliefs through literature as part of their English programme in a Scottish university.

6
Readers Reading Literature

In this chapter examples are given of significant investigations into the reading of literature, including:

- the activities and processes involved in literary reading (reading poetry; reading short stories);
- possible distinctive features of reading of literature (as opposed to reading of non-literary texts);
- relative successes and failures in reading literary texts, and possible reasons for these;
- the special circumstances of reading literature in a second or foreign language.

Nardoccio (1992) and later researchers (see Chapter 3) show that readers with advanced literary training and/or extensive experience of reading literature do indeed read differently. This chapter begins by considering studies of expert literature readers reading, but goes on to look also at less expert and second language readers of literature. This information should be of interest to educators in itself, but is also intended to prompt readers to further investigations of their own circumstances of literature reading and their own students' practices and problems.

6.1   Researching the reading of literature: cognitive studies

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Quote 6.1   Ecological validity in research

As soon as we begin attending to reading, it stops, or becomes something else. This seemed even more true of 'literary reading'. Our attempts to measure it seemed to cause it to evaporate.
(Hunt 1996: n.p.)

Consider next the condition in which an individual is reading pointless, incoherent, experimenter-generated text for no particular purpose. Unfortunately, this has been the typical state of affairs for the majority of the published experimental studies during the last twenty years.
(Graesser and Kreuz 1993: 156)

In a useful overview of research methods used in empirical studies of literature reading Steen (1991) notes the predominance of verbal reports research and strengths and weaknesses of this. It is self-evidently impossible to study reading itself, directly. Even 'hard science' methods from psychology or neuropsychology such as eye movement detection, or scans of electrical brain activity, blood flows, etc., are not studying 'reading' as such. They are studying activities involved in the reading process. Even these are subject to the kind of criticisms made in quote above. Research into reading has too often taken the form of insensitive experimentalism, which, in the jargon, 'lacked *ecological validity*'. Whatever was being studied, it was often not 'real reading' ('ordinary', 'normal', natural reading). Usually, therefore, reading has been studied as mediated or responded to, notably verbally (oral or written reports, questionnaires), or sometimes in another medium (music, dance or film inspired by a story, drawings, diagrams of poems, etc.). Increasingly, the preference has been for qualitative investigation, though in principle, as Steen rightly argues, more quantitative testing could have been used to follow up more exploratory qualitative findings. 'Comprehension' of a literary text, it was suggested under 'Assessment', is not a straightforward construct. Other methods, as used by Zwaan, or Bortolussi and Dixon, described above, have included study of the effects of deliberate linguistic transformations of texts, or the effects of priming readers with different frames or levels of relevant knowledge before they begin to read a text, though again, the manipulations risk loss of the desired object of study. Hanauer (1997b), for example, finds better recall of surface linguistic features of the same text when presented in verse lines, than when presented as a prose paragraph. In terms of effective processing of literary text, studies by Nardoccio (1992) and others discussed above, show that experienced or 'expert' readers of literature read differently and gain more from their readings of texts as a result. Again, the work of Miall and colleagues represents interesting attempts to supplement more ethnographic reader response studies into affect ('feelings' aroused by literary experience) with more psychologically informed empirical research.

   With the background of such studies largely established in Chapter 3, we turn now to consider some stimulating reports of research into the study of poetry reading, and of the reading of stories, to see what can be learned both directly (findings) and more indirectly too, in terms of research methods and approaches, including the reading of literature in a second language.

6.2   Reading poetry: protocol studies

Richards' (1929) pioneering work was mentioned at the outset of this book. Since then a number of classic studies have further established and extended the case for protocol research into literary reading. Obviously, protocol studies tell us most about the cognitive aspects of reading. They focus on individuals interacting with text in an unusual or at best undefined context. More contextual studies would involve, for example, examining classroom inter-action around literature texts (Kim 2004) or wider studies of cultural attitudes to and understandings of literature and literacy as they impact on literature reading (Zubair 2003b; journal *Changing English*) (see Chapter 7 below).

Kintgen (1983): Expert readers of poetry

Kintgen (1983) remains an important book-length study of six relatively experienced American literature graduates (PhD candidates) reading three English poems. Verbal responses while reading were recorded in an attempt to capture the process of developing comprehension through perception, 'noticing' linguistic text features, as it occurs in time, 'the constructive processes themselves' (p. 17). Earlier research (such as Richards) was seen as flawed to the extent that it relied on written responses or retrospective reflection. Two conclusions perhaps stand out from the fascinating detail of the study: there is significant variation between the graduates in the features (language) they notice and seize on to elaborate, and in what they find puzzling. ('[R]eaders differ greatly both in the organization of their activities and in the types of elementary processes emphasized', p. 102). Second, this undoubted range of responses nevertheless occurs within recognisably 'trained' limits, learned from their literary education (Fish's idea of literature as an 'interpretative community' with norms of behaviour and ways of talking and taking meaning from text). Cultural schemas (sets of cognitive expectations) with regard to 'Shakespeare', 'a sonnet', 'a poem' are clearly observable and employed in reading in these protocols. (Compare 'Connect: Literature', and 'Connect: world' moves, in Kintgen's codings.)

Kintgen detects several typical groups of 'moves', or 'elementary processes' in reading a poem, not completely sequential, but tending to move from more concentration on the surface features of the text to freer interpretative and cognitive activity. Interestingly, Kintgen's subjects all begin 'with what almost seems a ritual disclaimer of understanding' (p. 134): poetry reading is hard and is expected to be hard. Reading a new poem tends to confirm this schema.

Operations of readers reading a poem

1. READ, SELECT, LOCATE
2. COMMENT, NARRATE
3. PHONOLOGY, FORM, WORD, SYNTAX, TONE

4. PARAPHRASE, DEDUCE: WORLD, CONNECT: POEM, CONNECT: WORLD, CONNECT: LITERATURE, CONNECT: FIGURE, GENERALIZE
5. TEST, JUSTIFY
6. RESTATE, ILLUSTRATE, QUALIFY, RECALL.

(Kintgen 1983: 38)

In more detail:

Group 1 Moves

1. READ: a poem or section of a poem is read. Most readers in this study read through the entire text once at the outset before returning to more detailed operations. Re-readings of the whole recur as an interpretation is gradually constructed.
2. SELECT: the reader chooses a word or line to concentrate on.
3. ILLUSTRATE: the reader reads aloud a part of the poem to illustrate a point.
4. LOCATE: the reader searches for a feature in the text or specifies where it is to be found.

Earlier stages of reading a poem are observed to be more text-driven, where later stages are demonstrably affected by earlier reading as much as by features of the text currently being attended to.

Group 2
COMMENT increasingly occurs. Comments may be cognitive or affective. ('It's a strange poem'; 'It really is hard to figure out', 'Has some great lines').

Group 3
Poetry reading is seen also in these protocols to prompt increasing attention to:

LINGUISTIC features, at least for these trained and experienced readers:
PHONOLOGY ('The rhyme scheme is . . .')
FORM ('It's a sonnet . . . The syntactic division is into an octave and a sestet . . .')
WORD dictionaries are consulted by some readers, synonyms are aired aloud.
SYNTAX anaphoric reference, for example, prompts some attention in these protocols (' "their" . . . others? . . . they?')
TONE readers identify possible sarcasm or irony, for example.

Group 4
Again, as the reading progresses and a developing understanding of the poem is being constructed by a reader, Kintgen records a set of more obviously interpretative 'moves':

PARAPHRASE readers attempt restatements in their own words
DEDUCE ('so presumably . . .')

CONNECT: connections can be between sections of the poem, between this poem and other works of literature or other world knowledge, including historical and cultural knowledge in these cases. 'Expert' studies reviewed in Chapter 3 suggest this Connect move is characteristic of more experienced literary readers. These literary readers also liked to connect non-literal uses of language in their search for coherence (metaphors, symbols)
GENERALISE attempt to stand back and make a statement of larger significance ('something very different is being talked about [in these lines]').

Group 5
TEST and JUSTIFY operations are concerned with the validity of the developing interpretation. Can that be right? Is that what happens in Shakespeare sonnets? Or, where in the poem can I find more evidence for this interpretation?

Group 6
A relatively late stage seems to be concerned with presenting a more polished and coherent response, and is here moving closer to the written 'essay' which may eventually be produced in educational contexts:

RESTATE (more elegantly)
ILLUSTRATE, QUALIFY (greater precision now searched for)
RECALL (going over previous operations, now marshalling as part of a more developed argument about what it all means, what is 'going on'.)

Obvious reservations about Kintgen's data, leaving aside the unusually highly trained sensitivities of the participants, would be the 'naturalness' and completeness of protocols recorded (see discussion of protocol method in Part 3), and the fact that these readers read the poems alone, recording their responses into microphones, where a more typical educational experience of poetry reading is in a group in a classroom, with a teacher leading. Nevertheless, readers of poetry and teachers alike will recognise many of these features as processes that readers in a wide variety of situations typically go through. Indeed, I would suggest that groups in classrooms are able to achieve interactively much of what these more expert readers did for themselves alone. Arguably, teachers should support increasing meta-linguistic facility with the kind of operations outlined here. I would also suggest, though this requires more formal investigation than I am aware of, that the second language reader will be particularly sensitive to the linguistic operations in this schema, ('bottom-up' processing) which will be an advantage to a point, but could also be a potential cause of 'bottleneck' or 'short circuit' in constructing a more meaningful interpretation and response.

De Beaugrande: Ordinary readers of poetry
De Beaugrande (1985) offers a simpler, less in depth study which tends to confirm Kintgen in outlines, (though no explicit reference is made to Kintgen's

work), but may be more immediately serviceable for first research efforts in protocols of poetry reading. Also, while the subjects of the study are still first language speakers and readers, they are now non-expert undergraduates 'ordinary readers', as the title of his article suggests.

De Beaugrande worked with a group of first-year freshmen students in the USA, taking an 'Introduction to Poetry' class with him, which can be taken to indicate some interest or commitment, but no advanced level of expertise. Some successful students regularly selected a 'difficult' poet to study (Richard Eberhart), which prompted de Beaugrande to present them with an unidentified poem by the same author to see what they made of it. Again, we note that the students liked other works by this poet, but also that the work is not immediately comprehensible as (say) a traditional ballad might be. Typical stages identified from these protocols were as follows, using de Beaugrande's own terms.

Poetry and the ordinary reader

FRAMING/ STAGING
HEDGING
CITING
KEYWORD ASSOCIATIONS
PARAPHRASING
NORMALISING
GENERALISING

STAGING seems to represent an effort to think, and to break down the poem into more manageable proportions. (Students were asked first to read the whole poem through once.) ('The first thing that I got from it was . . .'; 'when you look at the title now . . .').

HEDGING was prevalent throughout, particularly in earlier parts, as would be predicted, that is signals that statements were provisional, inexact or uncertain ('I think', 'it seems', 'maybe', 'perhaps'). De Beaugrande notices also frequent uses of vague expressions such as 'someone', 'something'.

CITING is used to label students quoting word for word from the text, and suggests the effort is to have a phrase or word present in working memory as it is commented on.

KEY WORD ASSOCIATION Certain lexical items were seized on in an attempt often to name a topic, and synonyms and associations from memory explored around them. The title, for example, prompted much of this kind of work. The operation obviously lends itself to classroom exploitation. It is

striking too (my own observation) that the key words seized on by these student readers consist of a very limited set, which would seem to offer more support for the 'foregrounding' arguments of van Peer and Miall, discussed in Chapter 4.

PARAPHRASING Noticed, like citing, by Kintgen as well. De Beaugrande divides his respondents' paraphrasing into NORMALISING (bringing closer to everyday expression the unusual or poetic expression) and GENERALISING, which is understood as developing less specific but more recognisable ideas from the precise words of the poem. ('*thrush song piercing human ills /*OK / this/ the thrush song is a reminder that um / that life goes on around and that there's still beauty despite all of the things around you').

   Notable differences from Kintgen's expert readers would seem to be less tendency to test and validate, and, perhaps most noticeably, referring to language only on the level of lexis rather than form, rhyme, sound system or syntax, though this would need to be pursued further against more comparable poems (Shakespearean sonnet, etc.). Interestingly, the poem does use a rhyme scheme and regular form. However, the effort of these 'ordinary readers' seems to be to 'translate' the poem into more everyday terms at an early stage rather than dwell, as the more expert readers did, on formal aspects and their possible significance (though undoubtedly the class they were following would have been referring to such matters.) Arguably, these 'ordinary readers' are downplaying the distinctively literary aspects of the poetry reading experience, expressing their uncertainties and lack of confidence, but nevertheless seem to have found the difficulty of the poem worthy of more concentrated attention than would normally be given to a non-literary text. The paper as a whole gives an interesting snapshot of a stage in the development of literary competence, and of course many readers will never even achieve this level of appreciation. Certainly, more studies of 'ordinary readers' are needed to inform educational practices, as argued in Chapter 3, and more attention to more naturalistic contexts of literary reading. Second language researchers will be particularly interested in the 'talk around task' features of such data.

Hanauer: Second language readers of poetry

Hanauer (2001) specifically set out to investigate the value of poetry reading in second language learning, using a 'focus on form'/ 'task-based learning' hypothesis (Skehan 1998; Doughty and Williams 1998), i.e. that the classroom 'task' of poetry reading would raise linguistic as well as cultural awareness and so could promote learning in desirable ways. Where much language is experienced as meaning, with rapid loss to memory and attention of the precise forms, evidence of the kind reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4, shows that the surface linguistic forms of poetry are typically noticed more and

retained for longer. The study is of additional interest because it shows how quantitative information can usefully be gathered and analysed to support and extend more qualitative findings.

   Protocols were derived from ten self-selected pairs (dyads) of female Hebrew learners of English in their twenties in a teacher training college in Israel. Methodologically, it is proposed that this dialogic method is less exhausting and distracting and likely to result in more 'natural' protocols than traditional sole think aloud exercises (as in Kintgen, though de Beaugrande used more of an interview technique). The students were not literature specialists, but classified as 'advanced' readers of English as a foreign language. They were asked and prompted to verbalise aloud in English (see discussion of protocol methodology in Part 3). Together, they read Leonard Cohen's poem 'Suzanne'. The careful methodological development of a coding system is described including the establishment of inter-rater reliability. A typical progression through nine categories of response emerged from this careful work, bearing much comparison with the native speaker operations identified by Kintgen and de Beaugrande (though again, neither of these previous studies is explicitly cited: one aspiration of this book is to support workers in these areas becoming more obviously aware of each others' work).

Hanauer (2001): Responses of second language poetry readers

NOTICING
QUESTIONING
INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS
RESTATEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS
COUNTER-STATEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS
ELABORATIVE STATEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS
WORLD KNOWLEDGE
INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE
GENERAL STATEMENT

NOTICING Participants direct each other's attention to specific lines, words or phrases; repetitions and/ or differences are noticed, or unusual grammatical usage ('look here it says "you've touched her perfect body" but here it says "he touched your perfect body" see').

QUESTIONING Asking questions relating to the specific meaning of a sentence, line, clause or word in the poem, or larger 'content of the poem' questions ('Is there another meaning of "mirror"?' 'What is "Salvation Army"?')

INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS An understanding is proposed, sometimes in response to a Question (previous heading), often involving inferencing beyond

the information given, but in any case typically dealing with a section or aspect of the poem.

RESTATEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS Confirmation of a previously stated hypothesis, but usually paraphrased rather than in the same words.

COUNTER-STATEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS A challenge or negation of a previously stated hypothesis.

ELABORATIVE STATEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE HYPOTHESIS A new idea or new information added, or strength of an original statement modified.

WORLD KNOWLEDGE Long-term world knowledge is brought in to help develop an interpretation, triggered by the text but not in the text (e.g. here a wider discussion of 'Jesus').

INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE Two previously stated utterances are connected and a new and more comprehensive interpretation is produced.

GENERAL STATEMENT A personal comment prompted by the poem or discussion of the poem, but not directly relevant to its interpretation (e.g. a participant began to discuss aspects of her relationship with her boyfriend with her poetry reading partner).

Like Kintgen, Hanauer stresses variation in response, but again, as we constantly find in literature reading, there are also striking common areas of response in what is noticed and discussed and how much attention is given. Noticing and Interpretive Hypothesis were the most common categories used (nearly 60 per cent of utterances). Once again (compare discussion of de Beaugrande), what was noticed were words and phrases rather than poetic features or graphic form (61 per cent vs. 7 per cent). Further analysis of the temporal relations of categories leads Hanauer to posit a typical progression in poetry reading in a second language (for his dataset).

Hanauer (2001): stages of poetry reading in a second language situation

1. Collecting data.
2. Constructing a local interpretation
3. Developing a local interpretation
4. Redirecting an interpretation
5. Constructing global interpretations.

Initially, a series of features are noticed. Noticing then becomes interspersed with (a) Question(s). An Interpretation is then developed using world knowledge and inferencing. A local interpretation is formed, then elaborated and confirmed. However another typical stage is later (4), Redirecting an interpretation, using world knowledge and/or further noticing. Counter-statements are made. (Hanauer's own discussion is more subtle and precise than this brief account suggests.) More coherent Global interpretations of the poem emerge (finally) through integration of earlier interpretations and of world knowledge. Again, quantification is of interest in showing the predominance of Developing Interpretation and Local Interpretation (stages 3 and 2): 'Overall the data show that the participants used mainly the first three functions. The central characteristics of the dyad poetry-reading task involve[d] collecting data, proposing interpretive hypotheses, and then developing these interpretive hypotheses' (p. 315).

Hanauer's study shows poetry reading involving close attention to linguistic data in constructing meanings. While this study cannot demonstrate 'second language acquisition' occurring, it does show that 'focus on form' was promoted for these relatively advanced language learners in reading poetry, as well as practice in meaning construction in discourse processing. '[L]anguage learners extend[ed] their understanding of the potential range of uses and meanings of an existing linguistic structure' (p. 319). Hanauer finally feels justified in concluding that: 'the study supports the position that poetry be used in the second language classroom with advanced language learners as a task that can enhance linguistic and cultural knowledge of the target language' (p. 320).

Additional observations that can be made, are first – consistent with much of the argument of this book – that the second language variable did not seem to change behaviours of poetry readers, at least if, presumably, past a linguistic 'threshold'. Second, however the fact is viewed, the second language readers, like de Beaugrande's less expert 'ordinary readers', do not obviously notice the more 'literary' features of the poem, though they do tend to converge on the same lexical areas. The main relevance of the fact that a 'poetry' schema, 'frame' or genre was invoked, was the demonstrable close attention to surface linguistic features.

6.3   Reading stories

Vipond and Hunt: 'point-driven' reading

The starting point for various studies pursued separately but often jointly by Hunt and Vipond have been the classic founding research on oral narratives of Labov and Polanyi (Labov and Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972; Polanyi 1979; Vipond and Hunt 1984; Hunt and Vipond 1985; Hunt 1991). Hunt and Vipond extend the idea that a narrative is an interactive event between listener and

teller, to the reading of a short story as an interactive event between reader and story writer. The key feature in successful story-telling, according to Labov and Polanyi, is that the listener 'gets the point' of the story. 'So what?' on the part of a listener is the mark of a failed story-telling event. Similarly, Hunt and Vipond propose, on the basis of empirical investigations, that a successful reader of literature looks for – and generally finds – a 'point', where less successful readers 'Don't get it'. 'So what?'

This proposal may seem uncontroversial enough, but is supported by empirical investigations (e.g. Vipond and Hunt 1984), which suggest that *point-driven reading* is a strategy adopted by better and more experienced readers of literature, where *information-driven reading*, or even *story-driven reading*, is less appropriate to the processing of literary texts, though they may be more efficient with other text types, and that these less effective strategies can be shown to be adopted by some less successful readers.

A further proposal is that the types of reading identified are associated with typical cognitive strategies, in the case of literary 'point-driven reading', a search for *coherence, narrative surface markers* and *transactional* strategies. In oral narratives, in particular contexts, 'the listener's central task is not to infer the 'meaning' or 'gist' of a speaker's narrative, but rather to determine what the speaker might be 'getting at' (p. 262). The argument is that, by contrast, less experienced readers of relatively decontextualised written stories, authored by someone unknown, probably from a relatively unknown social or cultural group, and placed in front of them by a teacher or the demands of an education board syllabus rather than more 'naturally', may not trigger the appropriate 'point-driven' strategies. There are, then, social-pragmatic as well as psychological-cognitive dimensions of story reading in this account, which must both be attended to by readers and their teachers.

It is hypothesised that successful point-construction will require a number of appropriate settings.

Point-driven listening to a story

- The listener's model of an author: 'who' is telling me this story, and why?
- Cultural expectations: socially and culturally relevant or salient points are easier to identify (e.g. Polanyi identifies North American story concerns as typically: the individual; friends; problems; understanding each other; and more).
- Generic expectations: tall tale, ghost story, parable, etc.: relates to the kind of point likely to be expressed as well as how, and at what stage (e.g. explicitly, at the end, or indirectly, throughout).
- Context: physical and social settings – e.g. time of day, one listener or many, relationship between listener and speaker, etc. – all affect the kind of point likely to be made.

- Context: what prompted this story? (e.g. a previous story by another, or an event).
- Text: linguistic, paralinguistic, kinesic and other signals (winks, nudges, etc.) will help communicate the point.

(Vipond and Hunt 1984)

Reading, of course, is not the same as listening, as reflection on the above characteristics will indicate. The important idea, however, is that most of us are very competent listeners to stories, and so this kind of list of conditions for successful story listening may be a way into investigating less successful story *reading* events and dispositions. For example, readers are likely to have less context. Or, a narrator of a written story must be imagined or constructed with more imaginative effort than simply looking and listening. In short, a successful story reading experience will require significant interactive activity from a reader – as of course, Rosenblatt, Iser and others discussed in Chapter 3 suggested from a more literary and theoretical perspective. Successful story readers are proposed to need:

- *Coherence strategies*: if a story includes, for example, a flash-back or a sudden new topic, successful literary 'point-driven' readers suspend judgement or closure, because they are looking to construct a global speech act ('what's this all about?'), where story- or information-driven readers will tend to operate more locally, and reject or forget information which does not immediately contribute to a developing understanding, or suppress apparently contradictory details, which, may actually be crucial to a more successful literary reading. The assumption is that any evidence given will somehow be seen in due course to contribute to a larger meaning. It is noted, too, that point-driven readers also tend to defer *evaluation* until later in a story, where others give up more quickly.
- *Narrative surface/discourse*: surface linguistic features are likely to be expected to be more important by the point-driven reader. A story-driven reader, for example, is unlikely to find significance in non-standard speech, because only events are of interest, where the point-driven reader expects there to be a reason for deviance. Motivation is attributed to an author, and meaning reflected on. Second language and/or less experienced literary readers, for example, tend not to notice or hold as important, the source of information, the speaker, where matters such as 'point of view' are shown by narratologists to be central to narrative meaning.
- *Transactional strategies* as earlier discussion may have already suggested, point-driven readers are proposed to be more subtle readers because they are looking for intentionality. For example, Vipond and Hunt suggest that point-driven readers are more likely to detect irony (e.g. mismatches between what a character says and does) – 'reading between the lines' – or

to distinguish between 'author' and 'narrator'. A narrator may be sexist, but that does not at all mean that the author is, but information- or story-driven readers will not be interested in such fine distinctions. (Compare responses to Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*.)

Quote 6.2   Point-driven readers

[P]oint-driven readers [should] keep seemingly irrelevant textual elements in working memory longer; and second...they [should] make more effort to integrate disparate and apparently unrelated details.
(Vipond and Hunt 1984: 274)

Point-driven readers also tend to have more accurate memory for linguistic surface. Empirical evidence clearly shows that readers with different goals read differently, notice different features, remember differently and evaluate the same text differently (Vipond and Hunt 1989). As we have seen, as with several of Vipond and Hunt's ideas, they may well be identifying wider and even defining characteristics of all literary reading, and, to repeat, such characteristics are of particular interest to language educators who want their students to notice and retain precise linguistic forms, as well as to develop strategies for successful meaning making in difficult circumstances.

While space does not afford the possibility of further exploration here, it should be noted that the work of Dixon and Bertolussi is in many ways consonant with that of Hunt and Vipond, and supports their findings, because of their basic working model of literary communication as a 'conversation' between narrator and reader (e.g. Bortolussi and Dixon 2003).

Reading a short story in a second language

As often in this book, I am suggesting that study of problems of first language readers of literature can be very suggestive for second language reader studies in the absence of much work in this area, and even though it is fully recognised that a specific feature of second language reading is precisely the language variable. It is appropriate nevertheless to turn at this point to a study of literary story reading in a second language to show the apparent relevance of an approach like that of Hunt and Vipond, though certainly other factors than basic reading strategy are involved.

Goh (1991) – itself a replication of an earlier L1 study – showed precisely a sharp difference in less experienced and less effective readers between basic literal comprehension and 'point-driven' understanding, or 'higher-order reading comprehension skills' in his own terms. Three short stories, one by a local author, were read in six government schools in Singapore by between 77 and 127 students in the course of ordinary 'English' lessons. It should also be noted that roughly equal numbers of these young teenage

students were in 'Normal' and 'Express' streams. Express students, as the name suggests, are identified as particularly promising students, and follow an accelerated curriculum route (four years rather than five to complete secondary education). Factual questions like 'Who did Mathilde marry?' or 'What was Sim's main interest in life?' were easily answered by reference to text. Questions which required more elaborate inferencing or imagination, by contrast, are shown to cause much more difficulty whether for Normal or Express students. ('What general conclusions about human nature does the author want us to draw from this story?' 'Why was Sim close to tears when he spoke to Bob Thropper for the last time?')

Once again, teachers will hardly be surprised to see that questions of the second type caused more difficulty than those of the first, though empirical validation of such intuitions is always valuable in itself. For our purposes here, it should be emphasised that for many the essence of the literary experience and even the value of literature reading lies precisely in those 'higher-order' questions these students were unable to answer, even when raised by their teachers. (Good literary readers, of course, would be raising such questions for themselves – the development of autonomy in literary reading is a further question.)

What this conscientious piece of research seems to point to, however, is the need for much more research into the reasons why this literary/ 'higher' mode of reading is so difficult to achieve for so many. To some extent, Goh's study may be confusing lack of linguistic fluency with reading weaknesses: the inability to answer a more essay type question is not on the same level, clearly, as answering a factual question where words can often be lifted one for one from the text.

Other issues which the study raises would be cognitive: whether L2 processing (less automatic) renders more elaborate inferencing more difficult. But equally, further studies could look at maturity and relative levels of real world experience with older, more experienced readers, which could facilitate more 'top-down' processing work. Cultural differences may also have a part to play, even though a local story was deliberately used to try to neutralise this variable. Again, relative levels of previous experience of literature reading may well be a relevant factor. Finally, given literary understanding as the outcome or achievement of a successful interaction of reader and text, textual features could also be investigated to explore how these results came about. Aside from the specifics of the following illustrations, of course, the point is that these are the kind of factors always likely to enter in to the study and reading of literature texts.

First, then, Goh himself notes that non-standard dialect English demonstrably caused problems for these student readers:

Question: *Why was Sim not allowed to play in the final for the Mayor's shield*?

Relevant passage for required answer (*Bob Thropper nurses animosity towards Sim*):

> 'What, sir!' interposed Bob Thropper.
> 'A cracky school lad play for us? Ee, sir, that would be out of order.'
>
> (quoted p. 38)

The combination of dialect and idiom from which an inference has to be made apparently confused all but two Express students – hardly surprisingly.

Another instance of textual signals being missed or ignored as unimportant details (compare again Vipond and Hunt's characterisation of good literary reading) would be a passage (quoted p. 37) which quotes from a formal invitation without explicitly saying that it is doing so. Good readers make this inference because the husband returns 'holding a large envelope in his hand', and the next paragraph is set within quotation marks, as representing the contents of the envelope. Such inferences are by no means easy for less fluent readers. (This invitation example is also probably a cultural problem.)

Again, higher-order questions on Guy de Maupassant's 'The Necklace' were answered poorly or wrongly because students clearly failed to understand that the story was being told from the particular point of view of one of the two women at the centre of the story. Thus, when this older woman sees her rival as 'still young, still beautiful, still charming' (p. 39), a more proficient literary reader will notice the resonances of 'still', but also know that this is not an objective factual recount, but rather one interested participant's perspective. (Again, note that a complicating further factor here could be the youth of the students and relative inability to empathise with the perspective of an ageing nineteenth-century bourgeoise.)

Finally, notice repetition in 'The Goalkeeper's Revenge' of 'I can buy them and sell them' (commented on, p. 40: 'them' = players). An information-driven reading will tend to take the statement literally, find it rather empty and be uninterested in its repetition. The words will be similarly discarded by a story-driven reader, who simply wants to know 'what happened'. The words are easily understood literally, but their importance far exceeds their apparent literal triviality. (This is very characteristic of literary discourse of all kinds. Often memorably simple phrasing encapsulates profound or very complex thought.) The 'point' here of course, and it is the *literary* point, is that this rather meaningless phrase, especially through its repetition, signals the power and triumph of its speaker over the victimised Sim – which is in fact what the whole story is about.

What this discussion should indicate is the relevance of Hunt and Vipond's work to second language story readers (my own extension of Goh's paper), but also that linguistic matters are not easily distinguished from wider cultural and cognitive issues in investigating literary incomprehension.

6.4   Affect in literary reading

Interestingly, Mattix (2002) criticises Hanauer (2001, discussed above), for his neglect of affect (feelings, emotions: see Arnold 1999). We are not told, Mattix complains, whether these learners enjoyed reading the poem or disliked it. In other words, a claimed distinctive feature of literature supposed to render it of value in education is marginalised in this study. Mattix further objects to the terminology of poetry reading as a 'task'. While this is to some extent a technical piece of language teaching methodology terminology (e.g. see Skehan 1998), Mattix is not the first to suggest that metaphors of language learning as 'work' ('class/group/pair work', etc.) may be symptomatic of a weakness in dominant approaches to language teaching of particular relevance to the use of literature in language learning (compare Lantolf 2000). Elsewhere in this book we have seen survey evidence that learners may often take less pleasure in literature than their teachers would like and than their 'reader response' training would have prepared them for, perhaps especially in public national educational systems. Readers of literature seem to appreciate being involved in text selection and more flexible modes of study and assessment. Much more remains to be learned about the role of feelings and the emotions in literature reading, for all situations, but it may be at least suggestive to close with a brief consideration of the role of affect in literary reading.

Quote 6.3   Affect and language

What is generally overlooked by philosophers, cognitive scientists and even linguists is that language causes feelings, produces emotions and moves people. When we read a work of literature, for example, it is not some mental representation that enables us to feel the way we do, it is the power of words. We may need some sort of mental representation to orientate ourselves around the world of the text, but something else is going on in terms of more complex cognitive activities. If words are only prompts for the construction of meaning, how is it that they can affect me even if I do not 'understand' them?
(Green 2000: 66)

Feelings develop and change as we read, and then again as we discuss and reflect on a literary work we have read, with others and alone. Feelings are at the heart of 'response', discussed in Chapter 3. For many, literary reading is of particular value for the feelings it arouses, and some educationalists like Mattix have suggested that the feelings literary works can arouse are a prime reason for using literature in education, and perhaps also that we do not always sufficiently recognise and exploit what might be termed this 'affective potential'. Readers can feel violated when a work they personally value is derided by critics or others. Likewise, we may feel we gain new insight into

a friend or acquaintance on learning of a book or poem or writer that they value. Teachers will urge literary works onto their students because they have aroused such strong feelings in them – and feel particularly aggrieved and disappointed when the students seem indifferent to the work. (Compare Hunt 1991 on the problems of imposing literary texts on readers, and the importance of studying readers reading literary texts they actually like before we begin to generalise about 'literary reading'.)

Consistent with research reported earlier under the heading of Foregrounding, Miall has consistently argued that feelings are evoked in literary reading by foregrounded stylistic elements, that a striking innovative metaphor or alliterative phrase signals emotional investment and involvement. Empirical support for such a view could be found in, for example, Corts (2002), a study of metaphorical 'clustering' in sermons and in other emotional speech. Miall's further proposal is that readers of literature notice and themselves respond emotionally to such emotional linguistic signals- and presumably to the extent that the second language or second culture reader misses such signals, they miss something of the experience of literary reading. After all, arguably, response is a 'higher-order' form of comprehension, when many second language readers will still be battling with the more literal levels of sense-making of this strange discourse. Certainly Miall's own work (for example, Miall and Kuiken 2001) shows again, as with foregrounding, significantly shared perceptions of certain story segments as emotionally foregrounded, and similar interpretations. The further argument is that a progress could be traced in the readers studied, whereby narrative developed feelings of empathy in readers particularly at focal points, where both meaning and feelings about narrative meanings come together in what is claimed to be central moments of literary experience.

The details of Miall's work are not given here, however interesting, because this is a relatively under-researched and poorly understood area, but one which will gain more attention in the future. The second language literature reading research student will want to relate such research to work like Arnold's (1999) or Byram's, which argues for the need for foreign language teaching to recognise and address the importance of feelings, attitudes and the affective in general, for language learning and wider educational purposes. Minimally, as already suggested, attitudes and feelings will affect the value and likely utility of literature lessons perhaps even more than other areas of the curriculum.

It is likely that affect will be a live area of research in the near future, though only in its first stirrings now.

Further reading

Researching the reading of literature
Alderson (2000) makes useful methodological observations and alerts readers to the difficulties of this area.

Zwaan (1993) is the most extended and one of the more interesting investigations of literary reading, and discusses issues of ecological validity.

Hunt (1991; 1996) approaches the same theme from the angle of his own methodological reflections on a decade of investigating literature reading.

Protocol studies

See Chapter 7 below.

As well as the studies examined in this chapter, which illustrate the method well, see Pressley and Afflerbach (1995).

Cohen (1996) considers second language research applications of protocol studies.

Other good example studies using protocols with methodological reflections are Andringa (1990) and Davis (1992).

Protocol research is a useful illustration of how teaching and research can support each other, and do not have to be in tension.

See also Chapter 7, Further reading.

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Part 3

Researching Literature in Language Education

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Introduction

In Part 3 I identify systematically, with examples:

- the main methodological approaches relevant to research in LLE, and their relative strengths and weaknesses (Chapter 7);
- some areas of LLE suitable for small-scale research projects (Chapter 8);
- basics of how to get started and to pursue such projects successfully (Chapter 8).

Part 3 is intended for those who wish to pursue their own research in order to extend or apply issues raised in Parts 1 and 2, or – even better – to bring new perspectives to the study of literature in language education. Fuller introductions to research already exist, and are referenced in what follows, as well as in Further Reading, here and at the end of Chapter 7. These chapters are addressed in particular to those new to research or with limited experience who want to get on with it, but also to researchers looking to develop different approaches to work they have done in the past.

Parts 1 and 2 have outlined the main issues that have been addressed in past research, and some of the unresolved questions still insufficiently investigated, particularly with regard to second or foreign language education. Part 3 is a more methodical overview of the relevant research methods themselves than the examples in Part 2 give, with examples of areas which might be investigated or where previous research could be 'replicated' in new contexts – for example, seeing how far findings concerning L1 contexts can be transferred or need modifying in L2 contexts. This Part is presented as two chapters. Chapter 7 offers an overview of potential methods of research that could be used, and have in the past been used to research language and literature questions, with references to specific papers as examples of each such method. Chapter 8 closes Part 3 by taking you through the stages of designing your own research project, with possible projects suggested by way of example.

Quote III.1   Aims of research in LLE

Setting an agenda for a 'society for the empirical study of literature' is a problematic issue, but cannot be evaded...so I shall offer my own viewpoint. First, we should develop theories and models of literary communication that are sufficiently explicit to be compared with actual activities of literary readers. Second, we should derive from those theories and models hypotheses and predictions subject to empirical tests which in turn generate evidence for preferring one theory or method over another. Third, we should investigate how far current practices serve the interests of the participants and how far literary communication has been expropriated as a means for asserting the interests of a privileged elite. Finally, we should contemplate alternative practices which can forward the interests of general participants and encourage a free use of literature as a mode of creativity and self-realization rather than a mode of conformity and alienation.
(de Beaugrande 1989: 10)

Parts 1 and 2 have addressed the first of these questions, the 'theories and models'. In Part 2 and now in Part 3 we turn to empirical tests, and educational researchers must always be interested in the third of de Beaugrande's areas, 'how far current practices serve the interests of the participants', the students and their teachers. This last issue will tend to be the major prompt behind *action research* and other forms of practitioner research which Chapters 7 and 8 intend to prompt readers to engage in, rather than the higher level theories and model building de Beaugrande refers to. Chapter 7 concludes with ethnography and critical pedagogical studies which seem best positioned to articulate student needs and perspectives, de Beaugrande's third area, with implications for practice (area four), which amounts to a statement of 'action research'.

To begin, two general research orientations informing all of Chapters 7 and 8 are now outlined before the more practical details of methods and techniques with examples which follow. An *orientation* is intended here to refer to basic understandings of what knowledge and understanding are, and how research can advance our understanding. The two general orientations I single out as particularly relevant to applied linguistic and educational research are the ideas of qualitative research and of action research.

Methodological approaches

Qualitative research

Quote III.2   Qualitative research

The contrast is between the breakdown of questionnaire responses of 472 married women respondents who have had affairs with men other than their husbands and the novel *Madame Bovary*.
(Stenhouse 1985; quoted in Holliday 2002: 91)

'Research' is a broad idea, with many manifestations, though generally aiming at better understanding of some phenomenon. The methodological approaches recommended in Chapters 7 and 8 are mainly qualitative in orientation and selected for their practicality and real possibilities for implementation by less experienced and often less well- supported teacher-researchers or practitioners ideally situated with regard to opportunities to collect relevant data, but with many other obligations to meet thus limiting the time and commitment possibly available. Qualitative research is likely to be a particularly effective approach to social and affective issues in LLE. Brown and Rodgers (2002), in their recent introduction to research for teachers and novice researchers, explore three types of qualitative research, all discussed in Chapter 7: case study research; introspection research (verbal protocols); and classroom research (interaction analysis).

Educational research today is increasingly qualitative or 'naturalistic' in orientation. Unfortunately, research based on ideas of language learning as an individual's psychological achievement still tend to dominate research in second language acquisition (Davis 1995). A fundamental shift needed, is to move from dominant metaphors of language 'acquisition' to ideas of language 'socialisation'. *Qualitative research*, sometimes known as *naturalistic research*, may be understood broadly to refer to an interest in nuances and detail of particular individual cases and situations, and a reservation about what could be premature or over- generalisation. Qualitative research seeks to study things so far as possible in their natural settings, rather than out of context or in contrived or possibly distorting experimental settings. Qualitative research also understands that perspectives and interpretations are the conditions for all knowledge claims, and inescapable in investigating non-trivial questions.

Naturalistic inquiry (qualitative research)

1. Realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic.
2. The knower and the known are interactive and inseparable.
3. Only time-bound and context-bound hypotheses are possible (in contrast to the positivist desire for time-free and context-free generalizations.)
4. It is impossible to distinguish causes from effects since "all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping."
5. Inquiry is value-bound (in contrast to the experimentalist notion that legitimate inquiry must be value free, which is, in itself, a value statement.)

(Bailey and Nunan 1996: 2; after Lincoln and Guba 1985: 36–8)

It follows that qualitative research is flexible and not dogmatically tied to any single method. Nevertheless, certain methods are likely to be part of such 'naturalistic inquiry':

Qualitative research typical methods

- observation (participant observation, e.g. of classrooms)
- interviews (open-ended 'exploratory')
- analyses of texts and documents (conversation analysis, discourse analysis; diary studies)
- interest in narratives, e.g. life histories
- conversation analysis and discourse analysis (of classroom interaction, protocols, interview transcripts)

Concept III.1   Triangulation

The idea that qualitative research will be more valid and reliable – or at least can throw up new issues – if conclusions can be supported by appeal to different sources of understanding. Interviews, observations, documents will each have their own stories to tell but can also be more compelling if they point in some similar or overlapping directions. Different researcher's' analyses of the same data can be compared, for example, presenting findings to a group of teachers of those students. A 'multi-method approach' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 113).

Part of the reason for the growing preference for qualitative research in education, then, is a recognition of the irreducibly local and situational nature of educational interactions – between students, between students and teachers, between teachers and students and books and materials and other resources, and all of these in particular institutional and cultural contexts.

Following on from this, it is widely felt that educational understanding is often best reached by those with a full understanding of the local conditions, the participants. Varieties of 'participant' or 'practitioner' research, as in this book, will therefore often be in favour among educationalists themselves. (See Action Research, below.)

Concept III.2   emic- etic

Concepts basic to qualitative research
An *emic* view is that of a participant in a situation or process. An *etic* view, that of an outsider, will necessarily be different. While expertise is not devalued in qualitative research, it is recognised that participants 'on-site' often have 'richer' and thicker, more longitudinal understandings of a situation ('emic') than an outsider such as a

professional university researcher can have ('etic'). On the other hand, insiders may take features for granted that are notable to a newcomer. Ideally, 'insiders' and outsiders will co-operate to produce a larger perspective than either alone could do.

While politicians may still be found who insist on blunt tests and quantification as the only way to see what learners may have understood or learned, and be suspicious of 'interested knowledge', there is a growing recognition by better informed commentators that much of the processes and the fine detail of learning are lost to view by an insensitive insistence on hard numbers and neglect of context. ('Just because you can't count it, doesn't mean it doesn't count' – van Lier 1995) Reduction and simplification in the interests of 'clear answers' may result in distorted pictures of inherently complex educational realities, centrally involving people interacting. Thus, for example, the best of the cognitive psychological research I reviewed in earlier Sections of the book (e.g. Zwaan 1993) increasingly recognises the importance of more nuanced 'ecological' studies of literature reading. Qualitative research recognises that there is no refuge from interpretation and theory: 'interested knowledge'. All human activity, including classrooms, teachers and students, and research on all these, is inevitably interpretative, partial, and selective, even though there is always in this tradition too a striving after the larger 'picture', for example, through attempting to reconcile differing perspectives of different participants.

Concept III.3   Member checks

Qualitative researchers should always attempt to gain insider 'participant' perspectives on data and interpretations they are developing. Research notes as they are written up can be shown to participants, or transcripts, tapes or videos discussed with them. Insider- participants will not necessarily have a full view or understanding of events they are involced in, but will certainly have perspectives that might otherwise be missed or under-reported.
(Compare emic-etic distinction above.)

Action research

Quote III.3   The relevance of action research

There is a continuing widespread disposition [sic] among teachers generally (not just those in SL education) that conventional research findings (at least as normally presented) are insufficiently relevant to their day-to-day problems.
[I]n action research it is accepted that research questions should emerge from a teacher's own immediate concerns and problems.
(Crookes 1993: 135 and 130)

Quote III.3   (Continued)

Classroom research generates hypotheses about teaching from the experience of teaching, and encourages teachers to use this research to make their teaching more competent.
(Hopkins 1985: 1)

Consistent with a commitment to qualitative research, is an interest in Action Research (AR), since AR involves participants, values participant perspectives, and accepts the importance of local circumstances and contexts which an outside researcher can never be as aware of, or aware in the same ways. A philosophy informing the writing of this book has been a belief among action researchers, broadly conceived, that teaching should be a critical and reflective endeavour and that teachers and educational researchers using this book should want to learn not just abstractly about literature, language and education, but with a view to more effective interventions and practices in the field. 'Research which produces nothing but books is inadequate' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000:226, paraphrasing Lewin, a founder of AR).

AR has traditionally been thought of as a spiral of activities.

The action research spiral

In practice the process begins with a *general idea* that some kind of improvement or change is desirable. In deciding just where to begin in making improvements, one decides on a *field of action* . . . where the battle (not the whole war) should be fought. It is a decision on where it is possible to have an impact. The general idea prompts a *'reconnaissance'* of the circumstances of the field, and fact-finding about them. Having decided on the field and made a preliminary reconnaissance, the action researcher decides on a *general plan* of action. Breaking the general plan down into achievable steps, the action researcher settles on the *first action step*. Before taking the first step the action researcher becomes more circumspect, and devises a way of *monitoring* the effects of the first action step. When it is possible to maintain fact-finding by monitoring the action, the first step is taken. As the step is implemented, new data start coming in and the effect of the action can be described and *evaluated*. The general plan is then revised in the light of the new information about the field of action and the second action step can be planned along with appropriate monitoring procedures. The second step is then implemented, monitored and evaluated; and the spiral of action, monitoring, evaluation and replanning continues.
(Kemmis and McTaggart 1981: 2)

AR, more or less prescriptively defined, has been a key to much effective educational practitioner research. There are sometimes tensions between demands of academic instutitions or funding bodies and the imperatives of

AR, but they should not be irreconcilable. The proposal here is that mainly AR, qualitative in orientation, can be pursued using the kind of methods and techniques outlined in Chapter 7.

Further reading

Qualitative research
Richards (2003: Ch. 1 'The nature of qualitative inquiry').
Davis, in *TESOL Quarterly* 29 (3) (1995) (special topic issue: 'Qualitative research in ESOL').
Bailey and Nunan (1996) for contributors to *TESOL Quarterly* (e.g. 29 (3): 622–3 – principles of 'good' qualitative research).
Erickson (1986) is a very useful if more theoretical introduction to ethnographic research in education.
Edge (2001) Action Research for TESOL contexts, with examples.
Burns (1999).
http://www.uq.net.au/action_research/art/arthesis.html (web pages of   Bob Dick, a psychologist, but useful introduction for all) (reference owed to   Richards 2003).

Action research
Crookes (2003).
Duterte (2000).
Edge (2001).
Freeman (1995).
James (2001).
Thorne and Qiang (1996).
Wallace (1998).

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7
Research Methods for LLE, with Examples

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Quote 7.1   Need for research on LLE

Given that literary texts are the principal form of instructional text for almost all of foreign language instruction, it is critical that there be better understandings of the *interactions of students and text* within this context.
(Bernhardt 2000: 799)

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This chapter outlines features, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of, the research methods used to study literature in language education, using example studies. Ethnographic and qualitative studies of literature in language education are advocated because of the relative neglect to date of student perspectives on LLE. This chapter therefore proceeds broadly from the more controlled and experimental to more qualitative, 'naturalistic' and action research-oriented methods, which are more likely to engage with and be more practical for teachers who have access to relevant situations.

A chosen research approach will tend to entail certain methods rather than others – cognitive interests typically call for think-out-loud protocols rather than questionnaires, for example. Questionnaires in turn will be more suitable for a survey to gain general information about a larger population. The best research often uses several methods in *triangulation* to try to get different perspectives and a fuller overall picture of the object of research interest. Protocols may prompt interviews or observation, or more qualitative exploratory work may suggest the need to test a precise hypothesis experimentally. Researchers will often want to analyse a text for themselves as well as seeing what other readers make of it. Researchers need to keep their minds open! Some likely methods for investigating various aspects of literature in language education are listed below for researchers in this area to consider. Most are considered in more detail with examples in the chapter.

Methods of data collection

- Think-out-loud protocols, or 'free writing'
- diaries, journals
- verbal or written recalls (summaries)
- cued recalls (e.g. discussing a lesson transcript with participants after the event)
- interviews (students, teachers, parents, fee payers, governors, other stakeholders – anyone who may influence what occurs in the learning situation):
    - structured/semi-structured/'free'
- questionnaires
- observation:
    - of classes, individuals (students and teachers and others), places (libraries, book use; staff rooms, cafés, public transport users), activities (reading, teaching, studying)
- field notes
- individual reading behaviour: timings, eye movement studies, other physical behaviours
- controlled experiments – e.g. with transformations or manipulations of texts (e.g. Dixon and Bortolussi), or variations in 'priming' of readers (e.g. Zwaan, Hanauer 2001); or to investigate effects of teaching interventions, etc.
- case studies
- triangulations of some of the above.

7.1   Experimental research

Experimental research, strictly conceived, is difficult for most of us to carry out in the ordinary course of duties because of the need for strict controls (see a balanced discussion in Nunan 1992, which nevertheless emphasises the practical difficulties in educational contexts of strict experimentalism; see also Duff 2002). Normally experimental purity is bought at the expense of the *ecological validity* on which qualitative research places a high premium. For example, you may want to see how the 'same' group reads two versions of the same story with a research question like: Is first person narrative easier to read than third person for these groups? Or, What are the effects of vocabulary simplification on comprehension? The problem is that the group is unlikely to be the 'same', however defined, from day to day; moreover, the very fact that they have seen version 1 may have an impact on how they read version 2. You could try to neutralise this effect by having four groups, with some seeing version 1 before 2 and vice versa, but things are already spinning out of the realms of practicality for most of our timetables. In any

case, what is the ultimate validity of reading a version of a story that was never written except by the experimenter and has never been read by anyone else? There will probably be knock-on effects of these changes. 'Simplification', as already discussed, is a very complex matter.

Reservations such as these are serious. The experimental heading is nevertheless included here more as a reminder that there are times when it can be at least suggestive to quantify, and to try to isolate the effects of changing single or combined variables on a situation. On a common-sense level, you may well have already observed for yourself, say, a student preference for later twentieth-century literature over early nineteenth-century, or a dislike of modernist poetry.

Experimental research example

Hafiz, F.M. and Tudor, I. (1990) Graded readers as an input medium in L2 learning. *System* 18 (1): 31–42.

Summary

A class of foreign language learners of English in Pakistan are shown to have made both real and relative gains in fluency and accuracy of expression after a 90-hour extensive reading programme using graded readers. The argument is that extended and enjoyable exposure to natural language in context promoted language acquisition.

Aims

In a specific test of Krashen's ideas on the value of input for second language acquisition, Hafiz and Tudor set out to find what advantages, if any, were gained by subjects of an extensive reading programme in a situation where natural exposure to English would otherwise be very limited and where traditional dominant methods of teaching were teacher-led, word-by-word grammar translation.

Methodology

Twenty-five secondary school students in Pakistan, with five years of experience of learning English, were matched with a similar group of 24 students as the control population. The key difference between the two groups was that the experimental group was in a rural area and the control group in an urban area. Normally, urban students do better at English language learning in Pakistan than rural students.

Results

A comparison of essays written before and after the experiment period showed gains in fluency and accuracy for the rural group, who had been encouraged to read extensively texts appealing to personal interests. A more

negative finding, however, was that these advantages came about partly through a slight narrowing in the range of syntactic structures and even of different vocabulary items being used. Readers showed a marked preference for titles well within or below their language proficiency levels, and some of these simplified or restricted structures seem to have been enthusiastically and creatively taken into their own 'interlanguage'. The value of extensive reading is endorsed by this as in other studies, but the experiment also seems to point to the need for materials and activities to encourage acquisition of more demanding language.

Commentary

The reading classes were taught by Hafiz (the researcher), who is probably a more experienced and better qualified teacher than usually found in these schools, and who also has a previously declared belief in the value of such programmes. The reading programme of six weekly 40-minute sessions had to be added to the normal English lesson load, so that the experimental group received double the English instruction. Factors like these can be said to prejudice the 'experimental', controlled nature of the research project.

Further research

As in most good research studies, the strength and the weakness lie in the small group in a specific context. The results for these 25 seem interesting and relatively robust, but how well would they extend to other groups in other circumstances? And how long did these relative advantages last? A revisit may reveal that relative advantages were quickly lost. There may have been novelty effects of being an experimental group, with a respected teacher. The researchers themselves say that the experiment should be repeated with other groups and over longer periods of time.

7.2   Protocols

For the most part, research methodologies outlined with examples in this chapter, are qualitative. An important exception, or partial exception, is the use of verbal protocols, 'think out louds' (ToLs) or sometimes other less direct and immediate methods, to investigate reading processes and strategies of individuals. This methodology arguably uses 'unnatural' means or intervention, but to access more ecologically valid mental processes. It could also be argued that the individual differences in processing highlighted by such a methodology is a qualitative interest. (This is the case of Andringa 1990, for example, using protocols to research L1 literary understanding.)

Nevertheless, protocols are not quite naturalistic. They border on the qualitative, but are taken out of usual contexts. The subject thinking aloud will be doing a slightly strange thing for the benefit of an investigator.

Quote 7.2   Introspection as a method to investigate reading

Introspection, through think-aloud protocols or verbal retrospection in interviews, is an increasingly frequently used method of investigating the reading process and researchers have identified different strategies that good and poor readers appear to use when reading; they have investigated the parts of the text that cause problems when reading; and they have also looked at the affective issues that arise when readers are processing particular texts.

(Alderson 2000: 4)

The single term 'reading' is misleading to the extent that it seems to refer to a unitary and homogeneous activity. 'It is not easy to define L2 reading as a single notion or a unitary ability' (Grabe 2002). As the quotation from Alderson suggests, protocols can be a useful way to identify which parts or features of a text being read are noticed by different individuals and/or cause difficulty. It may even be possible to extrapolate such analyses to discuss where the reading *process* (beyond a particular single text encounter) seems to be breaking down. To the extent that a subject is an expert at a given task, the processes gone through to achieve a task will be automatic and so unlikely to be noticed or verbalised. Thus ideal subjects for this kind of research are precisely less expert learners. What is looked for is not that the learner should try to articulate how a problem (e.g. reading a passage in a foreign language) is being solved; rather, these cognitive processes should be deduced from a researcher from less self-conscious utterances ('protocols'). 'By seeing what subjects do when things are not working well, we obtain a clearer picture of the kinds of strategies subjects are trying to employ while reading' (Olson, Duffy and Mack 1984: 267). The information verbalised should be information which would have gained attention even without the requirement to verbalise. Higher-level processes can be studied, and there seems to be a role for pedagogical intervention where such processes are initially carefully and consciously elaborated, only with growing expertise becoming more automatic. A protocol is a transcript of utterances showing what information was attended to in solving a problem, rather than a direct record of what was done and how, which are internal cognitive processes.

What has reliably been found is that while individuals vary in the quality and extent of the protocols they produce doing the same task, protocols of learners at similar levels of competence will share features.

Examples of protocol research were given at some length under Chapter 6, 'Reading poetry' (Kintgen, de Beaugrande, Hanauer) and so no further examples are offered here.

Despite the possible reservations, the methodology potentially reveals rich information about individuals as well as groups, and could be explored more than it has been for literature reading.

Quote 7.3   A positive review of protocol research

The think-alouds were extremely revealing about the dynamics of comprehension difficulties and how understandings of text shift in reaction to comprehension difficulties and surprises in text.

(Pressley and Afflerbach 1995: 9; L1 secondary school age students)

A particular issue for a researcher to be clear about with regard to second language learner protocol elicitation is the language(s) in which the protocol will be carried out, and whether, for example, bilingual analysts will be needed to code and interpret the data. The basic rule should be the ease and the comfort of the subject, and that language issues are not unduly distracting attention away from immediate thinking out loud.

Variations such as transcripts of pairs of learners discussing a literary text represent departures from a pure protocol approach, since the pair will be interacting with each other and influencing each other as much as interacting with the text. Nevertheless, again, such conversations can be very revealing and could complement, for example, research into classroom interaction around literary texts in groups, and often involving a teacher (Boyd and Maloof 2000; Kim 2004, etc.). Similarly, interviews could follow up a protocol recording session, to explore retrospective interpretations or memories of the reading event, though the protocol transcript should be analysed in the first instance for what it says rather than what can be read into it. Green (1998), for example, distinguishes 'concurrent' from 'retrospective' protocols. Both can be useful, but will tend to complement rather than strictly confirm each other. Note also that transcripts may well need to include silences (perhaps timed), hesitation pauses or fillers, or other non-verbal aspects of communication such as gesture, facial expression, posture, etc., in so far as these are thought to be revealing of what was 'going on' during reading. Coding choices for analysing the transcript will be determined by the interests of the researcher, influenced in turn by knowledge of the research area and expectations based on experience. Coding is a first move towards generalisation, but should also try to respect the specificities of the transcript being studied.

Brown and Rodgers (2002) include a very useful chapter on 'Introspection research' (Chapter 3) with an example of a set of instructions and an edited short story text marked up for cued think-out-loud activity (Appendix 3.1, pp. 264–5). This could act as a model and/ or be used for practice in an actual research project to ensure subjects have 'got the idea' before proper data collection begins.

Principles for sound protocol research

1. time intervening between mental operations and report is critical and should be minimised as much as possible;
2. verbalisation places additional cognitive demands on mental processing that requires care in order to achieve insightful results;
3. verbal reports of mental processes should avoid the usual social conventions of talking to someone;
4. there is a lot of information in retrospective reports aside from the words themselves. Researchers need to be aware of these parallel signal systems and be prepared to include them in their analyses.
5. verbal reports of automatic processes are not possible. Such processes include visual and motor processes such as the social chat of native speakers; and
6. research should be based on a model of mental processes that allows predictions about how mental operations will be organized under various conditions.

(Brown and Rodgers 2002: 55)

To ensure that the potentially distorting effects of the methodology are kept to a minimum, rigorous procedures are recommended, though they are not difficult to follow once a researcher is aware of them. To reprise some of the key points in Brown and Rodgers:

- There should be minimum intervention from a researcher once a task is under way ('keep talking' may be used if long silences are occurring, but 'Would you mind telling me what you are thinking?' would distract from the task and its verbalisation).
- There always seems to be a benefit from practising this speaking aloud on other materials. That 'thinking out loud' has to be practised may again suggest it is not entirely a natural thing to do, but analysis ensures the utterances are not necessarily taken at face value (see next point).
- Protocols should be taped and transcribed. This is time-consuming, but as always with the study of language, close study reveals significant detail and patterns that would escape notice on a single on-line hearing, however attentive.
- Clear and unambiguous instructions are particularly necessary in this kind of quasi-experimental research.

Quote 7.4 Ericsson and Simon instructions for talk-aloud

In this experiment we are interested in what you say to yourself as you perform some task that we give you. In order to do this we will ask you to talk aloud as you work on the problems. What I mean by talk aloud is that I want you to say out loud everything

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Quote 7.4   (Continued)

that you say to yourself silently. Just act as if you are alone in the room speaking to yourself. If you are silent for any length of time I will remind you to keep talking aloud. Do you understand what I want you to do?

   Good, before we turn to the real experiment, we will start with a couple of practice problems. I want you to talk aloud while you do these problems. First, I will ask you to multiply two numbers in your head. So talk aloud while you multiply 24 times 34!

   Good!

   Now I would like you to solve an anagram . . .

(Brown and Rodgers 2002: 58; based on Ericsson and Simon 1993)

Protocol research is primarily cognitively oriented and has often been used to investigate 'strategies' in second language use and learning. Thus Hosenfeld offers a still classic list of behaviours with which to code protocols collected from her team's second language reader subjects. Such a list offers the opportunity to both work with individuals (time-consuming, but likely to yield 'rich' data), and to see if individual behaviours are more widely shared across a population of readers investigated, where more quantitative work might be useful.

Interviewer Guide for Reading Strategies

                                                                  Name:

GENERAL READING BEHAVIOUR

- rarely translates; guesses contextually
- translates; guesses non-contextually
- translates; guesses contextually
- translates; rarely guesses

OBSERVED STRATEGIES   COMMENTS

1. Keeps meaning in mind
2. Skips unknown words (guesses contextually)
3. Uses context in preceding and succeeding
   sentences and paragraphs
4. Identifies grammatical category of words
5. Evaluates guesses
6. Reads title, makes inferences
7. Continues if unsuccessful
8. Recognises cognates
9. Uses knowledge of the world
10. Analyses unknown words

11. Reads as though he or she expects the text to make sense
12. Reads to identify meaning rather than words
13. Takes chances in order to identify meaning
14. Uses illustrations
15. Uses side glosses
16. Uses glossary as last resort
17. Looks up words correctly
18. Skips unnecessary words
19. Follows through with proposed solutions
20. Uses a variety of types of context clues

From 'Second language reading: a curricular sequence for teaching reading strategies', in Hosenfeld et al. (1981)

The danger, of course, is of an abstraction of 'strategy' (cognitive) away from context: 'researchers need to observe not just what *types* of strategies readers use, but also how particular readers use particular strategies in particular ways in particular contexts' (Kern 2000: 318).

Diaries, reading logs and journals etc. can be mentioned here too (more introspection)

(For L1 research on journals writing, see Corcoran and Evans 1987, including Gilbert 1987; also website of the English Subject Centre, Roehampton (see Part 4).

7.3   Survey research

Survey research will be used to find out about relatively factual information about a situation; some numbers and statistics seem inevitable in such work. It may be termed 'descriptive', though we should always be cautious about claims, implicit or explicit, to have evaded interpretative work. Governments and employers may require surveys. Surveys in language and education have often looked at attitudes and motivation. Questions like: What books are being read, how, by whom? How many hours of teacher preparation courses are devoted to literature or preparation for teaching literature to others?

Surveys can inform policy-making and planning decisions, allocation of resources including time and money and to inform everyday teaching decisions.

Typically such research will involve collection and study of documents such as timetables, syllabus statements and reading lists; interviews with participants and stakeholders such as students, teachers, heads of colleges or Education Ministry officials; and questionnaires. The design, administration and processing of questionnaires can be advanced arts (see Dörnyei 2003), but for initial practical purposes teachers could consider using critical adaptations of relevant published work as discussed in this book, here and

elsewhere (e.g. Hirvela and Boyle 1988: questionnaire for teachers; Grabe and Stoller 2002: 242, questionnaire for students), with full and proper acknowledgements. In any case the principle of 'piloting' questionnaires wherever possible before fully administering the real thing, or at the very least circulating a draft for comments among informed colleagues, should always be remembered. The preference more recently in survey work seems to be for more detailed and qualitative local investigation rather than wide and crude figures which may mislead (Baker 1997).

The documents analysis, interviews and questionnaire results can be triangulated to give a fuller picture of the situation under study.

Survey research example

Martin, A. L. and Laurie, I. (1993) Student views about the contribution of literary and cultural content to language teaching at the intermediate level. *Foreign Language Annals* 26 (2): 188–207.

Summary

A study of intermediate undergraduate foreign language students' attitudes to the use of literature texts in their classes through a questionnaire and follow up interviews confirming findings elsewhere that students often at best remain to be convinced of the value of reading literature in another language. These students of French did not rate literature highly in relation to their aims of achieving greater oral fluency.

Aims

To explore reasons for consistent findings of surveys across different teaching situations, that modern foreign languages students are not convinced of the value of literature, even though their teachers apparently are. To test a hypothesis that students' 'pragmatic' interest in oral proficiency for travel or casual conversation makes much literature work (written text) seem of secondary importance to them. The effort was to gain a better understanding of student attitudes.

Methodology

Subjects were 35 women and ten men, in South Australia, enrolled on an intermediate course in 1991, aged 16–64, but mostly around 18–20 years. Typically, they had two years' or so experience of learning French, including exposure to one or two literary set texts in previous courses. Two questionnaires were completed, one before the course began; a second several weeks into the first semester. The first gathered background information; the second was designed to explore motivation in terms of reasons for enrolling on the course and learning goals. Expectations of how elements of the course would contribute to learning were also explored. Follow-up structured interviews in semester 2 with a schedule of 12 questions were carried out

further into the course with ten students. These students were selected as four extreme 'pro-literature' students, as indicated by questionnaire responses, and six 'anti-literature' students, also bearing in mind their representativeness in terms of age, gender and other background information.

Results

These students very clearly signalled an interest in everyday speaking skills in French, though also interested, for example, in writing skills and vocabulary development, which literature could contribute to. They felt that the best way to improve speaking was by speaking, and were sceptical of the relative value of grammar instruction and literature reading to their goals. 'French culture' was a medium-rated priority, but felt to be partly accessible through literary texts. Similarly reading, though not the highest priority, was seen to be possibly helped by reading literature.

Quote 7.5   Foreign language students' attitudes to literature

Foreign language students do not rate literary study very highly because they have reservations about its relative contribution to their four skills, and particularly oral proficiency. However, the results also indicated that students were more receptive to literature than we had supposed.
(Martin and Laurie 1993: 199)

What emerged from follow-up interviews in particular was that students were willing to be convinced of the value of literature, and could see its *potential* relevance (compare Boyd and Maloof 2000), but often reported negative earlier experiences with literature in other classes, and doubts about their own competence to read literature in a foreign language and from foreign contexts and cultures. Literature was seen by 'antis' as an advanced option. There are clear directions to teachers who wish to use literature in findings like these. The authors of the study themselves point to the need for more student-centred, less prescriptive uses of literature especially at these less secure levels, recognising the students' interests in current culture, vocabulary, and the spoken language, rather than in some high cultural canon.

Commentary

The study provides findings very consistent with others from other global teaching situations and across the twentieth century and beyond, but with some very specific variables to consider too (see Further research below).

The students were prompted and asked to give ratings on a scale to prompts, such as 'Goal: Improved speaking skills in French . . . Very/some-what important, Not very/Not at all important'. The advantage of such a

questionnaire is relative clarity of results, but it is gained at the expense of more 'illuminative' results which interviews or more ethnographic observation might reveal, though this would be more time-consuming and labour-intensive. Research always involves trade-offs, shortcomings and compromises. This does not need to be an issue, so long as real claims can nevertheless legitimately be made, and provided too that clear awareness of shortcomings and ways forward are clearly signalled in reporting results.

Further research

The research could obviously be extended on a larger scale. Another interesting feature is the question of levels: how far do these findings represent *intermediate* students' perceptions rather than those of more advanced students, or those who have elected to specialise in a foreign language at high levels, and may have other motivations? (compare Davis et al. 1992 study).

Another issue to pursue further might be to address weaknesses of traditional attitudes research. Attitudes change, attitudes are contextual, as commentators like Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out. Here, for example, even the authors concede in passing that the attitudes displayed in interviews several months after questionnaires had been carried out were in a sense those of 'other' people, people who had nearly completed the course which included literature elements. A more dynamic understanding of attitudes would want to study the dialogic formation of attitudes in activities in class or in responding to researchers.

A final issue that could be pursued would be to ask whether French students and students of Italian, German, English, Russian, Japanese, Malay or Urdu may not have distinctive patterns of preferences and interests. Is literature more central to learning Chinese than to students of English, or relevant in different ways? Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies are needed. Even the 'culture' of different language teaching departments in the same college or university can differ widely and be argued as a relevant factor (e.g. sceptical views of literature in mainstream TEFL/TESOL as opposed to more reverential views in many higher educational centres for the study of Romance or Hispanic languages).

7.4   Case studies

Case studies examine a 'bounded' phenomenon in depth and in a 'holistic' manner (*TESOL Quarterly* 'Research Guidelines', p. 163). 'Bounded' means a single individual or limited group of individuals, a classroom, a single national curriculum, etc. There needs to be an obvious defining feature which makes the individual or group ultimately of possible wider interest. The point, however, is that, initially at least, only the bounded phenomenon is being studied to get a detailed in-depth understanding, and no larger claims are necessarily or too easily made for typicality or generalisability.

Case studies can be useful for longitudinal research (e.g. skills development, professional development, implementation of language planning or policies in a state or institution). Case studies have long been used in second language acquisition to study areas such as syntax or vocabulary development, with names such as Wes (Schmidt 1983) or Alberto (Schumann 1978) well known to students of language acquisition courses. Literacy case studies have also been valuable (e.g. Bissex 1980), including collection of samples of writing. Diary studies of individuals in language learning situations have also been used to highlight areas of affect, such as anxiety and competitiveness (Bailey 1983; Schmidt and Frota 1986), or with wider interests in learners' and teachers' identities and aspirations in relation to language learning and competence. Diaries and journals are obviously useful tools for studying responses of literature readers too. Norton's (2000) five case studies of migrant women ESL learners in Canada are widely respected as bringing new social aspects of language acquisition to the notice of a community which still too often thinks of language acquisition as a bloodless mental process rather than as involving human beings, each with their own unique set of circumstances and histories, who are trying to lead worthwhile lives. Case studies are qualitative in that they are typically exploratory, seeking patterns and themes which emerge, rather than seeking to test precise a priori hypotheses. Triangulation is likely to be used in a full case study. Internal validity should be particularly convincing because of the difficulty of establishing external (referential) validity for readers. Discussion 'should ideally link these themes [which may have emerged] explicitly to larger theoretical and practical issues' (*TESOL Quarterly* 'Research Guidelines', p. 166). Generalisation should not be premature or too hasty but, as with all good qualitative research, readers/audiences should be given sufficient information to be able to judge where this case may or may not apply to their own situations or research sites. It should be clear from an early stage, why this case was chosen, from the point of view of the interests of the field of research, not just because of convenience!

Strengths and weaknesses of case study

Strengths

1. The results are more easily understood by a wide audience (including non-academics) as they are frequently written in everyday, non-professional language.
2. They are immediately intelligible; they speak for themselves.
3. They catch unique features that may otherwise be lost in larger scale data (e.g. surveys); these unique features might hold the key to understanding the situation.
4. They are strong on reality.
5. They provide insights into similar situations and cases, thereby assisting interpretation of other similar cases.

(Continued)

6. They can be undertaken by a single researcher without needing a full research team.
7. They can embrace and build in unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables.

Weaknesses

1. The results may not be generalisable except where other readers/ researchers see their application.
2. They are not easily open to cross-checking, hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective.
3. They are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity.

(Nisbet and Watt 1984; in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 184).

Case studies were used from the earliest days in child language acquisition studies. A kind of case study – or at least the data for one – are found when a parent who decides to keep a diary with photos, notes, documents, perhaps even a video recording from their child's first year. In defence of case studies, Deuchar and Quay (2000), offering a case study of a single bilingual child's language development as a way of engaging with an influential model of bilingual language development (itself based on a case study), suggest three distinct values for case study research.

Positive features of a case study

(a) it shows what features are possible, and need to be taken account of in any generalisation;
(b) it may be used to refute a generalisation, as only one case is necessary for this purpose;
(c) it may be a useful source of hypotheses.

(Deuchar and Quay 2000: 2)

Quote 7.6   Attractions of case study research

[C]ase study research is one of the most attractive styles of research for the first-time researcher, in that organizational and reporting style tend to be less formal than in other kinds of study, and case study researchers always have ready participants in themselves, their children and their friends.
(Brown and Rodgers 2002: 51)

Studies published by Elley and Manghubai, or Hafiz and Tudor, mentioned above, are basically case studies of a particular educational situation, but with an experimentalist interest in measuring or trying to ascertain the effects of introducing an extensive reading scheme, rather than a qualitative interest in specifics of the teaching situation in Fiji or Pakistan. A survey might also be represented as a case study to the extent that it is related to wider and/ or more theoretical issues. A more qualitative case study, however, will tend to move towards the ethnographic (see section 7.5), and will typically deal with a single classroom, perhaps through a year's study, a teacher, or an individual learner, as a 'whole person' trying to learn a new language. English language teaching, for example, is carried out over a vast range of different conditions and circumstances across the world. Investigating what is special about one of these sites, as well as attempting to see if any larger resonances with other sites are to be found, is a worthwhile undertaking. Richards (1989) offers a case study of a 'good' reading teacher in one classroom. Readers are not meant to apply uncritically this teacher's ideas and methods to a very different set of circumstances, but they should consider what they can learn from this detailed description of one 'good' reading teacher's lesson, as well as large issues raised in, for example, identifying a good reading teacher.

What are needed now are case studies of varying literature in language education situations both to understand and appreciate that very variety, but also to look for possible emerging patterns in how literature is used, and what may be gained (or lost) by using it. Brumfit and Benton's *Teaching Literature: A World Perspective* is a valuable early attempt with sketches of English literature teaching at that time across Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Kenya, the UK, Spain, Uruguay, Austria, Poland, Bahrain, Brazil, Turkey, China and Hong Kong. Nevertheless, however interesting, the sketches are very brief, necessarily partial, and very much top-down, taking a teacher or institutional view. The student perspective is largely missing from these accounts, and we know (compare survey research) that students may see literature in language education very differently from their teachers. Norton and Vanderheyden (2004) offer an example of a case study which very much attempts to take a student perspective on 'literature'.

Case study example

Norton, B. and Vanderheyden, K. (2004) Comic book culture and second language learners. In B. Norton and K. Toohey (eds) *Critical pedagogies and language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., pp. 201–21.

Summary

Part of a larger study of 55 12- and 13-year-old students in a Canadian elementary school selected for its culturally diverse students. Twenty-five of these students were English language learners speaking another language

at home. Thirteen of the second language learners were found to be keen readers of 'Archie' comic books. Interviews revealed that these students felt the comics taught them useful English language but also gave them cultural insights. (Those unfamiliar with Archie comics can find specimens and more information at archiecomics.com, a website which receives up to 14 million hits a month. The story concerns a group of white middle-class American teenagers.)

Aims
- to gain insight into the appeal of Archie comics to these learners
- to consider the literacy development of the Archie reader
- to understand the social networking of Archie readers.

Methodology

After distribution of questionnaires to all 57 participants, ten of the Archie readers were interviewed at the school. Interviews were tape recorded and lasted about thirty minutes each. Interviewers (the authors) used a set of prompts for a semi-structured interview:

- Do you think Archie comics are helpful in learning English?
- Do you read comics in your home language?
- Should you be allowed to read Archie comics during silent reading?
- Do you talk about Archie comics with your friends?
- Do Archie comics tell you anything about Canadian society?

Students are reported to have talked at length in the interviews, and were rewarded with a recent edition of Archie! Researchers later returned to the school and presented findings to the students and their teachers (p. 208).

Results

Archie comics appeal because they are funny and entertaining, including puns and jokes. Students also found that they gave insights into Canadian society. Thus 'Dustin' (Korean); 'Yeah...Like when they go to the swimming pool or restaurant...the beach' (quoted p. 209). Students insisted that the stories were fictions but felt much could be learned from them.

The comic stories were valued for their accessibility, because they are short, have useful illustrations when the dialogue is not clear, and are easily picked up and put down, unlike more traditional story books. The students seemed attracted too by the fact that the comics were looked at slightly disapprovingly by teachers and parents. A notable finding was the sharing of actual comics and discussion of them across L1 and SL students who often otherwise tend to move in their own separate groups.

Commentary

These findings do not necessarily translate directly into teaching strategies: it is notable that part of the appeal of the comics is their border line of acceptability status. Norton and Vanderheyden also note that traditional ideologies of literacy are already being internalised by these students who often did not feel they should be allowed to read such texts during school hours, that difficult reading (like 'literature', presumably) is 'good' reading. Nevertheless, the authors point out that Manghubai and Elley also observed the popularity of comics in their extensive reading programme on Fiji. (Norton also reports anecdotally the popularity of Archie comics in English in Thailand and Pakistan.) A common cry of teachers globally is the decline of reading among their students, but what scholars such as Kress (2003) have claimed is that it is not so much that less is being read, but rather that new kinds of texts are now being read in different ways by new generations of readers. Archie comics (and heavy interest in the website) would be an example of this. The language of the Archie comics is not simple on any conventional linguistic measurement, and the evident enjoyment of jokes and puns point to real cognitive and linguistic sophistication on the part of these readers. They are also teaching their teachers to reconsider how 'extensive reading' might work.

With respect to questions of 'affect', it should also be noted that students just like these regularly complain that literature is 'too serious'. Their teachers have imbibed an ideology of literature that tells us tragedy is more worthwhile than comedy, that life is a serious matter, and so on. I have often, as teacher, been asked if there are no 'funny' stories in English. Reader response claims to address issues of enjoyment, and popular literature and other new media may just address these issues.

We could add that this is typical case study research in the sense that it is suggestive for further work, and brings new aspects of the literary to the attention of many of us, but is in no sense definitive.

Further research

The case is nevertheless a suggestive one, and deserves follow-up, as the authors themselves promise in part, with research, for example, into the use of comics, the field of 'new literacies', including the uses by young people of fanzines, magazines, and so on to other manifestations of popular culture such as the soap opera stories of TV and popular press. At the time of writing, TV shows like *The Simpsons* or *Friends* could be revealing art forms to investigate with learners. Another field suggested by Kress's work would be the investigation of new literacy practices and multimodality (website use, visuals, co-ordination of multiple sensory sources of information in everyday modern life).

'Literature', in short, needs ever broader understandings from educators, if they are to keep up with their students, and to support their students in preparation for the literacy demands of modern life.

Ethnographic study

For many there will be no strict divide between case study research and ethnography, although it might be argued that ethnography is distinguished by features such as extended participation in the research site, reflexivity, and the over-riding compulsion to understand and report faithfully participant understandings of meaning events. Events in the world are seen as necessarily social events, and social events come about largely through linguistic and other communicative interactions.

Quote 7.7   The need for ethnographic L2 research

L2 studies focused on individuals, with little attention paid to the complex social context that interpenetrates individual functioning, reap contradictory findings . . .

   Who can say what to whom, for what purpose and in what manner, is shaped as much by the local social system as it is by individual psycholinguistic processes, which are the focus of the second language acquisition literature.

(Willett, in Davis and Lazaraton 1995: 474, 477)

Heath (1983) remains the most widely cited and highly regarded example of an applied linguistic ethnography. Heath's central concern was with literacy, for example, different communities' ways of telling stories, or of taking meanings from texts, and relations to relative educational advantage or disadvantage. The relevance of wider lives outside school to what goes on in school is an important sub-text of her work (compare Norton and Vanderheyden 2004, discussed above). But while ethnographies concentrating more narrowly on the school or classroom are still rarer, they are also much needed. The strength of ethnographic work is to take nothing for granted in investigating participants' construction of meanings together in specific interactions. Teaching is memorably described in this tradition as 'a linguistic process in a cultural setting' (Cazden 1986).

Quote 7.8   Interaction analysis opposed to traditional psychological approaches

The interactional line of research recommends person-context relations as a basic unit of analysis as an alternative to isolated individuals . . .

   Analyzed interactionally, 'ability', 'intelligence', 'learning disability' and 'incompetence' are no longer what they are. These are not the states or traits of an individual person. They are a dynamic, mutually constitutive and reflexive relation between individual and environments populated by other people, and may change from moment to moment, situation to situation.

(Mehan 1998: 254)

Quote 7.9 Van Lier on classroom language discourse

[focus] not on language as a body of content matter which can be transmitted piece-meal to an audience, but rather as a living thing which shapes our existence and which we use to make sense of our world and our work.

(van Lier 1996: 89)

It is in this perspective – a discourse perspective – that ethnography's concern to include lengthy quotations may be understood, as well as in the light of a kind of advocacy research, that interests of students as well as of other participants are best represented if they are allowed to speak as much as possible for themselves within the researcher's report. We return shortly to this 'critical' (advocacy) aspect of ethnographic research in education.

Ethnographic research also has natural affinities with literature- culture connections as sketched in Chapter 5. A characteristic educational ethnographic question might be: What knowledge or expertise do members of a given group need to display to those in power to be ratified as competent? (after Mehan 1998). (This may also remind us of Fish's 'interpretive communities' of readers in Chapter 3.) Kohn (1992; discussed in Kern 2000: 122ff), a North American teacher in China, was surprised when students, asked to write 'their own' analysis of a chapter from Nabokov's *Pnin*, copied passages directly from a textbook introduction or took extended passages word for word from the story itself. Ways of taking from a literary text valued in western contexts – individual response, critical interpretations, discussion – were at odds with a dominant culture of teachers lecturing to classes who were then expected to reproduce those notes for success in an examination. The point of this study was that Kohn's expectations were as strange to the Chinese students as theirs were to him: both parties needed to realise the cultural nature of literacy, here what constituted 'competence' in writing about literature.

Because of these cultural perspectives, the work of Bakhtin and Vygotsky once again becomes relevant, the notions of learning as appropriation, of literature and language as discourse, that literature and language learning take place always necessarily in differing and often hostile or contradictory social contexts. Pennycook's (2001) 'critical applied linguistics' refers to the need to investigate resistance and appropriations in postcolonial contexts, which necessarily foreground a relative and historical understanding of language use, themes of appropriation and hybridity (Kramsch's and Bhabha's 'third cultures' and 'third spaces'), and a focus on local contexts of language use. Elsewhere Pennycook (1994: Ch.8) has written on Malaysian and Singaporean uses of English and English literature by local writers, as has Canagarajah (1994) for Sri Lankan writings in English as 'resistance', against the pessimism of Phillipson's 'linguistic imperialism thesis (1992) or

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986)'s appeal to write only in local languages and give up English language creative writing altogether. Canagarajah's (1999) ethnographic work on English teaching in Sri Lanka can and should be extended to the use of literature in language education, as he himself suggests. '[T]o really study how linguistic imperialism is carried out in the periphery and, in particular, how it is complexly experienced in everyday life, one must undertake work in the periphery. Library research in Britain will not suffice' (p. 43).

Zubair (2003a; 2003b) deals with just such resistance and appropriation in the postcolonial situation of English literature teaching in a university in Pakistan.

7.5   Ethnography of LLE: critical literacies

Zubair, S. (2003a) Women's critical literacies in a Pakistani classroom. *Changing English* 10 (2): 163–73 (and Zubair 2003b).

Summary

Constrained by a conservative English literature syllabus which requires them to read the high canonical 'classics' of English literature, Zubair and her largely female (42 out of 63 in 2000), 18–22-year-old students nevertheless find relevance through feminist readings of texts of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Austen and the rest that were unlikely to have been intended or desired by the authorities or families of the young women. English language and literature are here found to be a potential, if still problematic site for resistance rather than reproduction, which would be difficult for these young women to find elsewhere.

Aims

Zubair (2003a) reports a feminist critical pedagogical attempt to open up the researcher's literature classrooms to less conventional but arguably more relevant readings of the English classics through which her students could explore their identities and aspirations. Zubair (2003b) will also be mentioned, which explored why her students studied English literature at advanced levels and what they got out of it, as well as the discomforts involved.

Methodology

Tapes were made of class discussions, and interviews held after the course was finished. Pedagogical methodology included group and pair discussions as well as code-switching into home languages to encourage student contributions, unusual in the educational context. Initial reluctance to contribute and go along with the new approach to teaching was gradually largely overcome.

Zubair (2003b) used a combination of unstructured in-depth one to one interviews out of class and participant observation, including out of class observation.

Results

Increasingly, as the course went on, there was evidence of real engagement in discussions prompted by the literature of issues of close personal importance to the students. Thus, for example, in teaching *Hamlet* students were asked of Ophelia, 'Is she a good and obedient daughter?' because this is a pressing question for many women in Pakistani today (obedience to fathers, loyalty to the family, consent to arranged marriages). Francis Bacon's essay 'Of marriage and the single life' was deliberately introduced into another class to provoke discussion.

Data extract 1   Female student in class discussion

this is what is being implanted in our minds through the media....we are being trained from the very beginning to please men, either a father or a brother or a husband or a son...I mean what I want to do for myself I can't, father won't like it, son would think what my mum is up to...Why? This is the training. I'm talking about the training we're given from the very beginning...look at the media advertisements...from every side family life, social set-up...this is the training (p. 169)

Data extract 2   Female student in interview at the end of the course

I am beginning to form my own identity at university...I'm known as [A----] not as somebody's daughter...at college all my decisions were foreshadowed by my mother. (p. 170)

Data extract 3   Female student in interview

I like *Tess* [*of the Durbervilles* – Hardy novel]...that girl...that girl sacrificed *so much* all her life...It is a *wonderful* novel. I mean...like I haven't read anything else as *powerful* as that...she is portrayed as a *typical Eastern woman* she was...her husband has rejected her *in spite of that* she is constant and above all *what I like* about it is the scene which I like most in the entire novel is that of their wedding night...she talks to her husband about her past and *a similar incident* has occurred in his life too and he admits that he has had relationships...she forgives him but when she tells her story her husband leaves her there and then...
(2003b: 26; spoken emphases italicised)

Researcher comment

In [examples like these] competing views regarding women's and men's roles emerged, where young men and women are debating, challenging, redefining the societal norms and expectations, a renegotiation of gender-specific norms of behaviour is under way in the entire discourse, and the role of the teacher is that of a moderator. . . . (p. 170)

We [teachers] do not need to clone ourselves, but to enable our students to think and reflect on their social worlds through a reading of texts; reading and writing should lead to reflection and creative thinking; promoting a classroom culture of questioning, and contesting the existing power dynamics in our everyday discourses. (p. 171)

Zubair (2003b), in some ways a follow-up study, notes uneasiness and suspicion of English as a colonial language and literature, which nevertheless seems to allow young Pakistani women some space to discuss and reflect on their identities, positions in society and aspirations. The values of this alien language and literature are not uncritically swallowed, but can be seen as being used to think and talk through new, rather unconventional, but undoubtedly still contradictory positions. The author observes that as these students progress through their English education they experiment with looks, hair, slimming, dress, make-up and so on in ways which confirm that they are experimenting and thinking about their identities, as they partly do through their English studies, (though no doubt they would have experimented anyway! – see Eckert 2000 on American high school students). In some ways, this confirms the worst fears of protective and conservative families and guardians, but Zubair argues that this is not an uncritical assimilation of values or 'westernisation' going on.

> A few days ago I made an effort to read Islamic books because I felt distanced from Islam after studying English literature that's why I read Islamic books (*laughs*) to clarify the concepts.
>
> (23-year-old female, choosing to speak in Urdu)

Others reported wearing the veil or head scarves after becoming more aware of male attentions and to make a statement about their religious identity.

The students report that English at university is seen in the larger society as a kind of safe 'finishing school' for girls who want more education before settling down to marry.

Commentary

Literature *can* engage and deal with important issues in our students' lives even in what initially seemed rather inauspicious circumstances, as these transcripts show. Those who feel such discussions would be beyond their own students might note the code-switching which went on (and was carefully noted by the teacher-researcher) between English and Urdu. Byram and colleagues, whose work is discussed in Chapter 2 above, argue that 'intercultural competence' as an educational aim (rather than communicative competence) requires just such switching and reflection on different languages and cultures. Language and literature learning are clearly having profound effects on the lives of at least some of these students. The teacher has in depth participant knowledge of this situation, and can also act as action researcher.

Much of the discussion of the dangers and excitement of English literature reading for these Pakistani women is reminiscent of the anxieties around young English women first reading extensively in literature in the 19th century reported in Chapter 2 (Flint 1993).

Further research

Suffice it to say that ethnographic research of this kind is time consuming and requires conscientious and systematic attention to detail and a search for patterns, evidence and counter-evidence, but also that teachers are eminently well-placed to offer further examples of such research from their own particular circumstances. Such research will give individual teachers better understanding of their own contexts, as well as entrants coming to similar contexts, but can also contribute to a developing picture of LLE across multiple sites.

Further reading

Survey research

Brown and Rodgers (2002) is a brief but intelligent introduction.

Robson (1993) is a very stimulating full-length book study, though not particularly concerned with any one field such as language and education.

Brown (2001) and Baker (1997) offer a second language acquisition focus for survey research design and procedures.

Questionnaires

Dörnyei (2003) is a sensible, readable and fully illustrated recent discussion of questionnaire research directed at second language researchers.

Protocols

Ericsson and Simon (1993) is the key publication.

Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) is a sophisticated and stimulating discussion of protocol study of reading.

Faerch and Kasper (1987) remains the key work for second language protocol research; see also Cohen (1996).

Case study
TESOL Qualitative research guidelines include guidelines on case study research. *TESOL Quarterly* 29(3) (1995), pp. 163–6.
Yin (1994), Bassey (1999) and Gomm et al. (2000) are all commented on by Richards (2003). See also Robson (1993: Ch. 6, Designing case studies).

Ethnography and qualitative research
See references for Part 3, Further reading, above.

8
Carrying out Your Own Research Project in LLE

Advice for qualitative researchers

1. First, find your Indians (don't study the wrong group by mistake).
2. Pads of paper and pencils are very useful.
3. Be sure to take a frying pan, but don't loan it to anyone; you may not get it back.

(Erickson 1986: 140)

8.1 General considerations

This chapter aims to help readers design and implement their own research project in LLE (literature in language education). The basic orientation assumed is that of Action Research (AR), as outlined at the beginning of Part 3. A teacher-researcher, in the AR perspective, wishes to understand better in order to transform an existing, less than satisfactory situation, in collaboration with other participants, and will then reflect on the effects of the transformation in order to go on improving practices in the interests of all participants. Traditionally, it was said that qualitative research was an orientation, essentially unteachable, learned by experience and apprenticeship only. An advisor, said to have been consulted by a doctoral student about to study native American society somewhere in California, is supposed to have produced the advice at the head of this chapter! Of course there is no substitute for experience, but this is a reason to begin observing, thinking and writing, not to feel disabled and intimidated.

Richards (2003) prefers the notion of 'enquiry' to that of 'research' because, he suggests, queries – thinking, questioning – naturally come up in teachers'

minds all the time, where 'research' seems a more forbidding object to contemplate:

Quote 8.1   Getting started

Keep a small notebook or piece of paper handy and jot down anything that occurs to you as interesting about your teaching: questions, puzzles, insights, even moans and grumbles. Then make the decision to read through these and think about them when you have some free time at home. Ask yourself if there's anything particularly interesting or puzzling, or if there's a common theme connecting some of the comments. Try to identify an area that you would like to know more about in your work.
(Richards 2003: 233)

Notes, diagrams and doodles can gradually build up to research diaries, proposals and research writing. The need is to translate first ideas into a do-able and worthwhile project, and this cannot be expected to take place without time and effort, thought and research activity.

In the context of literature in language education, the start point for research may be issues like:

- 'My students are bored in literature classes'.
- 'Students are not doing extensive reading at home'.
- 'Students say the reading texts are too difficult'.
- 'Is this stuff really relevant to the students' needs?'

Such issues – not confined to your classroom! – can be the starting point for informed enquiries into more appropriate methodologies, or syllabus specifications, or teacher preparation or much else besides. What needs to be established first is who says or thinks what, and what that might mean in the specific situation ('bored', 'difficult', 'not relevant'). Even where the solutions may ultimately seem to lie way beyond the remit of any single classroom or teacher – imposed syllabuses, exam set books, or composition of classes, for example – individual teachers in single classrooms must work with these challenges, and the driving idea of AR is that current practices can always be improved on: teachers and education can make a difference. McDonough and McDonough may be articulating a rather idealised view, but it is at least a practical response to the undoubted 'realities' Robson insists on.

Quote 8.2   A research question

To formulate a researchable question means finding a way of expressing a problem of general interest in terms of a feasible method of gathering and analysing data in a particular situation.
(McDonough and McDonough 1990: 108)

Quote 8.3   Research and the real world

One of the challenges about carrying out investigations in the 'real world' is in seeking to say something sensible about a complex, relatively poorly controlled and generally 'messy' situation.
(Robson 1993: 3)

Qualitative researchers recognise that the way to address general problems will be, in the first place, by close attention to specific detail of a particular educational situation. Grabe and Stoller (2002) propose a useful twelve-step basic plan for action research into reading which can easily be applied to LLE research situations, though again ethnographers would probably want to be more cautious and exploratory, and AR too is generally conceived as cyclic and subject to ongoing revisions:

Basic steps for action research

Step 1:   Establish a purpose and decide on a topic.
Step 2:   Pose a specific question (narrowing the focus of enquiry).
Step 3:   Anticipate outcome(s).
Step 4:   Specify the type of data to collect.
Step 5:   Determine ways to collect data.
Step 6:   Consider issues related to time.
Step 7:   Collect data systematically.
Step 8:   Examine and analyse data.
Step 9:   Reflect on results.
Step 10:   Generate practical solutions.
Step 11:   Experiment with solutions.
Step 12:   Share insights with colleagues.

(Grabe and Stoller 2002: 160)

Initial formulations of a problem or research questions are very likely to be imperfect and need revision, but until you have something in writing, you can't start to revise and improve on it. A common problem for new researchers, as for many writers, is to expect perfection and to become discouraged at a stage when the best that can be hoped for is a rough start. There is nothing wrong in beginning by considering a replication of someone else's study for your own circumstances. This is a perfectly acceptable way of beginning to build on the knowledge previous investigators have proposed, a kind of apprenticeship. Where the previous study doesn't quite 'fit' your situation may be exactly where you can develop your own original contribution to this field, but there is no point in reinventing the wheel for the sake of some misguided notion of originality. Rather, you show your expertise in moving

on from what is already known, as outlined in this book, to what is less well known.

Anticipate outcome(s)

You must keep an open mind, but nobody goes into any research project without some background of expectations. Much of this book is designed to inform your expectations, and would ideally be read before a research project begins in earnest, or at least in tandem with it. Qualitative researchers realise that it is better to be as explicit, open and reflexive as you can be about your expectations and presuppositions and to try to see what is wrong with them. This is not unlike the experimentalist seeking to confirm or disconfirm a hypothesis. Knowing what is not (quite) true can be a helpful as trying to see what might be true. Moreover, some ethnographers suggest that it will be a sign of plausibility for a report of research to indicate how the thinking of the investigator changed during the course of the investigation.

Why do you use literature in your classes? Is it a self-indulgence, or 'done because it is there' in a syllabus or as exam set books, or can you articulate more valid possible reasons which research could investigate? If literature is valuable in language education, why are your students or colleagues not convinced? If some at least seem to share your convictions of the value of literature, what evidence do you have that real learning is occurring as a result of using literature with these students? Having fun is certainly of interest in an educational context, but is not necessarily evidence of learning taking place. What exactly is being learned? The willingness to entertain sceptical doubts about teaching and learning is the basis for action research.

Likely sources of information ('data') informing qualitative action research will be:

- observation
- interviews
- analyses of texts and documents.

I close with some brief general pointers to good practice in these areas.

Method 1 Observation

Observing a literature lesson raises many useful teaching questions (I mean designed to ensure a more pragmatically 'successful' lesson), which are easily seen also as legitimate research questions (in the sense that they could lead to better understanding of what might be going on in a literature lesson).

Observing a literature lesson

1. What evidence was there that the students found the text interesting and relevant/ boring and irrelevant?
2. What evidence was there that your [i.e. teacher's] tasks and activities helped students to understand and enjoy the text?
3. Did you notice any examples of students responding personally?
4. What linguistic problems did students seem to have with the text? Were these anticipated?
5. How did students respond to difficulties (linguistic or otherwise, e.g. cultural)?
6. How were meanings and interpretations arrived at in the classroom? What role did the teacher take?
7. Observation could concentrate on a particular student or group of students rather than the whole class. (e.g. participation patterns and issues).

(after Lazar 1993: Ch.8)

Lazar raises other useful questions around the literature lesson: for example, why was this exact text introduced into the classroom anyway? (Compare Syllabus and materials, Chapter 5).

Observation may be considered 'purposeful looking' (Richards 2003: 110), just as interviewing must be remembered to be talking with a purpose. Similarly, careful listening and listening again (to tapes, probably for transcription purposes) applies to observation. Observation succeeds, an ethnographer would say, when it makes the ordinary strange, and again re-viewing of videos can be helpful for this. Look more carefully at what may not at first have been salient. Experienced teachers may think they know what to look for in a classroom; but what you don't usually see (because it is not obvious or too obvious, or not 'relevant', etc.) may be what you should be looking for. Take photos, draw a diagram of the room, ask for others' comments, especially those who are not 'experts'.

Key features for observation

SETTING	space objects	SYSTEMS	formal (e.g. book borrowing records) informal (classroom/teacher variation)
PEOPLE	actors relationships interactions feelings	BEHAVIOUR	times routines processes events

(Richards 2003: 130)

Observation seems to give direct access to the world; at the same time, it must be remembered that observation is always necessarily from a certain perspective, none of us can take a 'God's eye view', or put differently, bear in mind the nature of your participation in the event: 'outsider' or 'insider'? marginal? respected or resented expert etc. Who you are and who you are conceived by other actors to be, will of course affect what you 'see'.

However hard we try, we cannot 'just look', nor is that likely to be a good use of time. Remember also that the presence of an observer will affect what happens. Begin by making as explicit as you can what you are looking for, or at least why you have decided in the first place that it will be useful to observe this class. Reasons could include an interest in teacher behaviour, in student behaviour, in interaction between teacher and students, or between students, in materials use, and so on. You may be looking for evidence of learning, or evidence of interest and engagement at least. You may wish to look at specifically linguistic matters, the language used by participants, or how the language to which the learners are exposed in their reading and classroom activities is taken up or not, or the language prompted by discussion of literary texts. Or the interest in interaction may be more along the lines of who talks, with who, how much and in what ways. A wider 'social practices' interest would prompt investigation of expectations and norms in the classroom. 'How do people here talk about literature?' What is it appropriate to notice or not? and What should be valued in literature, from the evidence of talk and activities observed?

Finally, consider whether you will use a highly structured observation scheme, ticking categories as you watch and listen, and/ or analysing tapes later for interaction, or perhaps typically something semi-structured, with prompts, but open to noticing other aspects too. You should in any case take 'field notes' as you watch or as soon after the event as you can.

Method 2 Interviews

Some ethnographers believe in the value of interviews to follow up observation; others are more sceptical, arguing that to understand what is going on in a classroom, you need only look carefully at the detail of interaction. For this second position, post-observation interviews could well be distracting and introduce irrelevant considerations. A more open position would be to argue for the value of additional perspectives, even if it may be admitted that asking someone 'what happened' after the event will only elicit a version without necessarily privileged truth status. Again, more qualitative interviews may helpfully follow up more impersonal questionnaires, which are however good for tapping into responses of a larger population (quantitative) (see Norton and Vanderheyden 2004, discussed in Chapter 7, section 7.4).

Note again that an interview, however well prepared and designed, conscientiously taped and transcribed, is first and foremost a unique and specific interaction between interviewer and interviewee, a 'conversation with a purpose' (Richards), but all the same a conversation between human beings, and 'findings' need to be contextualised and understood as mediated in just these ways (Mishler 1986). Stories and other interpretations of the world are exchanged. There has been a joint construction of meanings, and this is sometimes forgotten in the rush to code or quantify and aggregate findings from various other interviews. Richards (2003: 88) suggests researchers treat 'all interview responses as accounts rather than reports'. Richards' Chapter 2 includes much useful and practical advice as well as checklists and could usefully be consulted by interviewers with different degrees of experience. Cohen, Mannion and Morrison suggest *trust*, *curiosity* and *naturalness* will be qualities found in good interviews. It can also be noted here that there is a growing interest in group interviews and 'focus groups', the argument being that the dynamics of such interactions are very different and can be revealing in different ways for researchers. (The silent member of the group can perhaps be interviewed individually later; or then again, silence 'talks' in its own way.)

Finally, remember that most interviewers need to talk less and listen more-the primary object of the exercise is to deepen your understanding of the interviewee's ideas.

Method 3 Analyses of texts and documents

You may be analysing:

- written documents
- spoken interaction (transcripts)
- non-linguistic data

You need to:

- keep careful records (facts but also impressions and ideas)
- analyse as you go along (don't keep amassing unanalysed data, or you may find you have been collecting the wrong things)
- remember that two analysers (researchers) are always better than one.

Again, I would point to the usefulness of ethnographic approaches to data, which are always reflexive and critical. Thus, for example, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) remind researchers that, while documents can be fascinating sources of information, basic questions in literacy research need to be asked

of them e.g. syllabus documents, teacher guides, textbooks, reports on student performance, even tests:

Documents

How are documents written? How are they read? Who writes them? Who reads them? For what purposes? On what occasions? With what outcomes? What is recorded? What is omitted? What does the writer seem to take for granted? What do readers need to know in order to make sense of them?
(Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 173)

Documents are written for specific uses and audiences, sometimes multiple and conflicting and analysis will need to identify these as closely as possible by being aware of the history of production of the documents. Why was this document produced? How was it produced? and under what circumstances? In my experience these questions are likely to be as important as any more intrinsic analysis of the actual words and format of the document itself. Finally, never forget that in increasingly bureaucratic societies, many a document will never be carefully read by many people, not even those it was intended for. Usage is a separate subject for investigation.

8.2   Some possible projects for literature in LLE

There follow some suggestions for projects which would be of wider interest to the LLE research community, together with ideas for methods and analysis. Of course, as already argued, in the first instance action research will not necessarily assume generalisability of findings, but will concentrate on the specificities of a situation, which may well also lead to questions like these being modified in the light of more local concerns. These brief outlines are to encourage your own research in areas discussed in this book, so that those larger discussions can be referred to as you design and pursue your project. Chapter 7 discussed relevant research methods, with example studies. These can now be referred to as we take another perspective, and consider head-on some possible 'issues' you might wish to investigate, and the methods that might be employed in such investigations. The projects are organised in a sequence following that of this book so far, moving from language and text, through classrooms and more central educational topics, to readers and reading, though it should be emphasised that these are overlapping and interacting areas, with investigations into culture, for example, involving issues of language, education and readers in all their interactions. An individual project necessarily needs to simplify away from all this complexity at least in its initial design and procedure, but reporting needs to show awareness of all these complex interactions.

The following projects all assume access to relevant populations and activities. This may be an issue in itself sometimes, I appreciate, but will depend on individual circumstances, and so is difficult to address here. You may, for example, wish to investigate something your school or department doesn't do, but perhaps should. You will then need to spend time with those who first gave you this idea, or go back to investigating what does happen on your own site, or introduce an innovation and monitor its effects – which is in the best AR tradition! Sub-headings under which these projects are discussed are adapted from Grabe and Stoller (2002). They usefully highlight the importance of defining a research question, rather than just a vague area of interest, and of recognising that you will have expectations about your findings which should be made explicit from the outset, and carefully examined as you proceed. A further key issue these headings remind us all of are the issues of resources needed for a project, especially that most precious and scarce of resources for most: time.

Project topic	*How to collect data*
1. Syllabus; testing/assessment	Textual analysis, documents
2. A literature lesson	Observation
3. Case study e.g. culture	Observation, interviews, journals
4. Reading literature in s.l.	Protocols study
5. Attitudes to literature	Questionnaire (and interviews)
6. Literature as a social practice	Ethnography (participant observation, interviews and other triangulations)

Project 1 Syllabus testing and assessment

Analysis of documents:
e.g. syllabus documents, materials, tests.

Purpose

Educators concerned with language classrooms are necessarily interested, and usually particularly well qualified in linguistic and textual analysis. If reading the literary texts specified in the curriculum is intended to contribute to language development, what language is actually needed to succeed in this course of study?

Key question

What language forms (vocabulary, style) and skills (reading, speaking and listening, writing) will be learned through the course of study outlined in this syllabus document, or tested in this testing document? If this course of reading literature is intended to assist language development it is important to be able to answer these questions, particularly since, as discussed earlier in this book, literature syllabuses have often been put together in rather

ad hoc and unprincipled ways, and since testing often seems to neglect the experience of literary reading.

Anticipated outcome(s)

Results are likely to be reported in terms of vocabulary and topic areas, but could also cover syntax, style or others, not excluding functions (discussing, arguing a point, making concessions, appealing to written evidence or quoting come quickly to mind as likely functions learned by literature readers in educational contexts). Reading skills might cover areas like inferencing, or guessing unknown vocabulary, integrating information across extended text into a situation model. Knowledge of genre or register, or perhaps narrative competence might come into the reckoning. The investigator will need to be clear which aspects or levels of 'language' are of primary interest for the investigation. In any case, experience suggests that texts will have been chosen and specified before language aims, except perhaps impression-istically, and that any specified language aims have arisen retrospectively from texts being used, rather than being specified as desirable before texts were selected and activities developed.

A very different kind of investigation (compare Chapter 2) would ask what official documents seem to indicate of official attitudes to literature and the benefits of teaching literature (moral, social or political concerns etc.: this is more the sphere of Project 6 below).

How to collect data

Textual analysis of documents can be assisted increasingly easily by corpus studies (compare Chapter 4), especially to establish questions concerning vocabulary to be found in the texts to be studied, or recurrent linguistic patterns or stylistic tendencies. Complete literary works are increasingly available on line. Features of these texts can be compared with those of other (non-literary) databases.

Revisions of official documents may be of interest. How were they revised over time and why? Assessment investigations will benefit from looking at answer papers of candidates in relation to the questions set (or tapes of oral discussions if assessment takes this form: compare discussion of Cambridge exams in Chapter 5).

Data collection

Official bodies and institutions will be the main sources for this kind of investigation: libraries, schools, examining boards, education departments and so on. It may well be useful to cultivate a friendship with a head of department, and you should also be prepared for defensive attitudes by those with an investment in these documents being accepted and respected. As often, it will be easiest to begin at least close to home with your own students and teaching situation, where issues of confidentiality and the like are easier to deal with (though no less important).

Analysis

As well as specifying what is in the documents examined, you may wish or need to compare them with other specifications, for example of the language learning expectations of non-literary syllabuses (Council of Europe or national school syllabuses, say). Analysis can be quantitative (as with corpus-based investigations) but also qualitative (discourse analysis of an official education document, for example).

Time allocation

Reading and analysing conscientiously and systematically take time of course, but remember also to allow an equal amount of time to writing up the analysis. The analysis and the writing up cannot in any case be completely separated, one will influence the other.

Resources needed

Time and privacy for reading and analysing. Highlighters, photocopiers and other such technical aids to help in the examination of documents. Corpus-based investigations will obviously necessitate hardware, software and other appropriate knowledge and resources. Access to a good library or library databases may well be a relevant consideration.

Project 2 Observation of a literature lesson

Purpose

It is sometimes valuable to stand back and observe rather than always being intimately involved in educational activities oneself. What can be seen that is not otherwise normally noticed? Or, if already noticed, what can be learned by looking longer and harder at the phenomenon? Are perceived 'problems' with materials, or with the demands put on students arising from those materials?

You may wish to focus on a particular person or group in the classroom, a type of activity, or 'stage' of a lesson (see general notes on Observation at the beginning of this chapter). If you know what you are looking for, prepare notes beforehand or an observation schedule to be sure you concentrate on the object of observation. It is easy to be distracted in such a rich environment, with so much going on.

Key question

What interactions occur around literary texts in class? Who talks with whom about what and how? Literature classes are often reported as being particularly teacher-dominated. Is this the case in the class you are observing? What are the consequences if so (not necessarily negative)? Could alternative interaction patterns be encouraged?

If the students in this literature class are not as intimidated as they are reported to be in some others, what seems to promote their confidence and

performance? How far do they engage with the language of the text, and to what extent are they just 'responding' to a text as 'springboard'?

Anticipated outcome(s)

It is not uncommon to observe real student difficulties with literature classes. Difficulty is not necessarily a bad thing in education, but it will be important to try to observe where and how difficulties arise. If the class seems to be proceeding more smoothly, again this may not be without its own problems, but the quality and extent of student contributions, and how these are facilitated, may be a useful focus.

How to collect data

Perhaps arrange to teach a colleague's class in exchange for her teaching yours. Or video/ tape your own class. If you are lucky and diplomatic it may be possible to attend others' classes. There are also some videos of literature classes available (e.g. from the Bell Foundation, Norwich, England), but normally it will be better to observe a class you know or can find out about to avoid misunderstandings.

Data collection

Record the observation if possible because of the weaknesses of human memory and of selective attention. Consider whether you wish to rely on predetermined categories or a check sheet, or to observe with a more open mind. (You may move from the second mode to the first as you observe successive classes and define your research interests more exactly.)

Analysis

Analysis can be very systematic, even quantitative and there is certainly a value for example in timing contributions of different participants, or counting the number of contributions of different contributors, perhaps according to categories. At the same time there is also a real value in narrative and qualitative analysis of 'what happened', particularly where a literature class may involve issues of identity or affect (like, dislike, annoyance or pleasure).

Time allocation

Watching an hour long lesson even once takes an hour, but of course that is only the start. Restrict analysis to one or two classes to keep the project manageable, although you may wish, if possible, to observe more than the instance you choose to analyse.

Resources needed

Recording equipment, access to classes, goodwill of those to be observed, including formal permissions in some cases.

Project 3 Case study: An individual reader or readers, reading the same text or texts, across time

Purpose

Case studies, as already discussed, can never be definitive and are of limited generalisability, but can be at least suggestive for both researcher and researched. A good case study will inspire confidence that at least this 'case' is now better understood in its particularity. SLA and much applied linguistic research has been dominated by numbers and abstract models. Case studies can contribute to a more nuanced picture if not shake up conventional understandings more fundamentally, and may well suggest new or further research areas. Note here too the need for more longitudinal studies.

Key question

What can be learned of the reading of s.l. literature from this case? (The approach is open, but could well be a way to approach intercultural learning, for example.)

Anticipated outcome(s)

Will depend on the individual case and the researcher's knowledge of it, but the principle remains, that there will always be anticipated outcomes, and it is good to make them as explicit as possible from the outset.

How to collect data

Triangulation is needed for qualitative depth and multi-perspectival sensitivity of understanding. Protocols, for example, can be complemented by interviews, observations, examination of written texts, including the subject's reading logs or diaries and so on. Texts, observation, interviews.

Analysis

A strong case here for developing findings in collaboration with others, including the subject(s) of the study. Rich data needs to be shaped into a coherent and convincing account.

Time allocation

How/where to draw the line? A 'natural close' is reached in much qualitative research, when the researcher feels that is little new being discovered, but a longitudinal study will by definition be more open-ended, and could be revisited. Development doesn't stop when the researcher leaves!

Resources needed

See notes on Observation, Interviews, and Analysis of texts and documents at the beginning of this Chapter.

Project 4 Difficulties in reading literature in a second language: protocols study

Purpose

Students, teachers and others often point to the difficulties of reading literature as an important factor if not an argument against its use. At a minimum, conscientious teachers will want to know what difficulties texts cause their learners – linguistic, cultural, cognitive, or some combination of these. At a local and individual level problems can be identified and points taught or strategies developed. More generally, shared difficulties can be expected to emerge across readers and student populations which can inform teaching decisions regarding selection of materials, sequencing, and appropriate or helpful activities.

Key question

What difficulties do second language readers of literature experience with literary texts?

Anticipated outcome(s)

Difficulties likely to be more linguistic at lower levels, including vocabulary. At higher levels difficulties may be more cognitive-inferential or cultural, probably extending to attitudes to literature reading or a relative lack of experience (world knowledge or text knowledge).

How to collect data

Collect individual protocols, possibly pairs (see Hanauer 2002 for good practice). The key is a good recording with some contextual notes to help you interpret the recording. Frame or introduce the recording with factual data (name, date recorded, text). Voice-activated tape recorders, if available, may keep recordings shorter unless it is felt silences and pauses are themselves revealing (which they can be). Clear instructions, modelling of the procedure and a practice protocol, minimal prompts if necessary. (See notes on protocols in Chapter 7, and examples in Chapter 6). You need a quiet room with no interruptions, and some students will inevitably provide richer data than others. Willing volunteers are more likely to be found if participants can see benefits linked to individual teaching and feedback in return for their time and effort (and public articulation of 'weaknesses'). Normally (Bernhardt) best to collect protocols or summaries in the L1 rather than L2 which may introduce confusing issues not directly relevant to the investigation. Code mixing and switching will occur, and can inform the analysis in interesting ways. Clear texts need to be marked up as appropriate (see example in Brown and Rodgers).

One technique often reported as successful is to ask subjects to read a text silently, underline any words or passages they feel uncertain about and then discuss these with the researcher. More than about 5 per cent of the words

on a page underlined is likely to result in passages being reported as difficult to understand. Again, the extent to which readers realise they are not understanding fully can also be a worthwhile topic of investigation. ('meta-cognitive abilities', which need to be encouraged in many learners, and which such research might help to develop.)

Data collection

Transcripts need to be developed from tapes. Try to use different texts and students to widen the investigation if possible, though analysis will tend to be more qualitative and perhaps longitudinal. Longitudinal studies are useful in the study of learning, revisiting the same student over some months or even years. We still have too few such studies of reading development.

Analysis

Develop codings to enable analysis of individual transcripts and comparison across tape scripts. Try to get others to confirm the validity of your codings independently. Some counting and quantification, but qualitative analysis likely to be at least as important.

Time allocation

Time consuming, likely to be restricted to a few individuals, but can be very revealing. Allow several hours to transcribe ten or fifteen minutes of transcript. Transcription will require you to clarify what you are particularly interested in studying. (See Cameron 2002: Ch. 3 on transcription practicalities.) *Don't* go on collecting tapes and thinking you will do the transcription later! The very act of transcribing will force you to clarify your interests and reveal possible features to investigate more widely. Even a single carefully collected and transcribed protocol can be very revealing, with clear patterns of difficulty types usually quickly observable.

Resources needed

Tape recorder (see above), good microphone, easy to control for reader. Transcribing devices can be useful, including playback facilities such as slowed playback or quick recap button. A memory stick device can be used, which facilitates transfer of data to a PC. Back-up copies are always advisable. Clearly printed texts and instructions, no distractions, appropriate room. Time to listen, encode, analyse and then write up and feedback, incorporate into teaching.

Project 5 Attitudes to literature

Purpose

This outline focuses on student attitudes, but of course another useful project would be to examine, and perhaps compare, teacher beliefs and attitudes

towards literature. Attitudes, understandings and feelings affect students' learning experience and achievements. A more learner-centred, negotiated approach to syllabus design and materials choice will be informed by an investigation like this. Previous experiences with literature, often a problem, and wider preferences can be discussed with the class on the basis of these findings. Making explicit the reasons for activities and choice of materials is likely to promote a more co-operative and committed classroom environment. Good teachers always need to understand student perspectives better, just as students need help to puzzle out what their teachers may be up to. All participants in learning need to talk to each other.

Key questions
- Do my students like literature?/What kinds of literature do they like?
- Do they believe literature will help them achieve their learning goals?

Since attitudes change over time, it may be worth asking these questions before the teaching begins and then again mid-way through or at the end of the course.

Anticipated outcome(s)

Students are likely to be unconvinced, even antagonistic. Short stories probably preferred to poetry or other forms; modern literature preferred to older texts. Doubts about communicative and oral relevance likely.

How to collect data

Questionnaire. Possibly follow-up interviews and discussions as well. With a small group, semi-structured interviews may be prepared for the richer information they can yield, but they are more time-consuming, and the anonymity of a questionnaire may encourage doubters to say their worst, where face to face situations would inhibit such responses. Questionnaire design can be adapted from surveys like Martin and Laurie (1993), discussed in Chapter 7. It is always a good idea to pilot a questionnaire with colleagues, or even better with a comparable group to the one you are interested in.

Data collection

Design of a questionnaire should anticipate the ease and usefulness of collecting and analysing data. Consider if you want quantitative responses, qualitative, or (probably) a mix of both. Are Yes/No responses enough or is a scale more useful? An item like 'Name a literary work you have enjoyed reading' could be followed up by prompts to comment on what was enjoyable or memorable about it. A small scale project is assumed, but allow time anyway for data collection. Think about issues like use of L1 or L2 (probably L1 is preferable), or possible practical problems that could be involved in use of handwritten responses, rooms used to administer the questionnaire, time of

day, and so on. (Useful guidance in Dörnyei 2003: *Questionnaires in second language research.*)

Analysis

It is possible to lose sight of original research questions and interests in over-analysing data or collecting too much detailed data, especially with the help of some statistical packages and software now readily available for use on PCs. Certainly look for evidence for and against your original anticipated outcomes (especially against), but also look for any indications that your anticipations missed some important questions. Find an answer to your original question, but hopefully find a little more too, which will keep you enquiring!

Time allocation

Design of questionnaire, piloting, administration, collating results, analysing and interpreting, follow up interviews, discussions, feedback, consultation with colleagues or superiors, and then implementing modifications to the programme and monitoring them – without which there is not much point to the project – will all take your time. Start by allowing 100 hours.

Resources needed

Clear printing and copying facilities, word processing (including some familiarity with non-verbal design), ideally software to translate figures into statistics and non-verbal representations of findings (charts, graphs). Colleague to check your counting and analyses (e.g. codings of more qualitative responses). Classrooms and classroom resources (pens, writing surfaces, seating...) BUT remember that successful questionnaires have been designed and administered with only the barest technology too.

Project 6 Literature as a social practice: ethnography

Purpose

To consider literature as a social practice is to ask, after the 'new literacies' research of Street (1993) or Barton (1994), what is the role of literature in the social lives of those who read and interact with and around literary texts? What does it 'do' for them? What, beyond the story, does someone learn by reading a novel? Or, What, beyond rhyme schemes, themes or metre, does someone learn from reading poetry? In what ways does it help or obstruct someone in living their wider lives? These may seem large questions, but instances have already been given in discussing Heath (1983), Zubair (2003) or Qualitative research (Part 3) of how such questions can be given worthwhile answers. See also Hall (2005). It will also be noticed that such large questions go some way to address some of the loftier claims made for literature in education, as outlined in Chapter 2 (the development of citizens, of morality, of the feelings and sensibilities). The large issue of 'culture' in LLE is also

obviously addressed by such research. Such research may impact on what texts are selected, or how they are to be read. Such research also links closely to newer understandings of language 'acquisition' as involving whole, real people with wider lives and interests, learning to participate in their own ways in new groups and alliances of people who habitually speak and think in relatively unfamiliar ways.

Key question

What is being learned in the largest educational sense by this reader/this group in reading this book/these literary texts?

Anticipated outcome(s)

Qualitative research tries not to anticipate outcomes too closely, though expectations or certain interests are likely to prompt or pre-exist the study (e.g. in gender, or power imbalances in society, in globalisation or in literacy research).

How to collect data

Triangulation will be the key, along with good access to data, and an insider's understanding of the research situation. Journals, diaries or interviews can be valuable, or focus groups – anything that gets the researcher a better understanding.

Data collection

The object is 'rich' data, in-depth qualitative understanding – hence, the 'triangulation' concerns already mentioned. Note that this can include photos, or other non-linguistic artefacts.

Analysis

Analysis is necessarily primarily qualitative and will take the form of a convincing narrative of the situation.

Time allocation

In principle this will be the most exhausting and exhaustive kind of research, necessitating extended exposure to the situation being investigated. A less discouraging way to look at the project, however, is that it must necessarily be closely tied in to your everyday work and life, since you cannot easily do ethnographic research on somebody else's situation. It takes time, but will also be relatively natural to write and reflect on a situation so close to you, and to discuss it with others (*member checks*).

Resources needed

Indians, pads of paper and a pencil, possibly a frying pan too (you may be able to borrow one).

Further reading

It is difficult to recommend a specific text here. This book is the first to address specifically issues of language, literature and education, with special reference to second and foreign language education. I hope it will prompt more work in an under-researched area and in due course a better guide! In the meantime, it can be read in conjunction with some more general guides to research methods and approaches.

You could usefully begin with:

Richards (2003: Ch. 5, 'Planning a Project'; note also Richards on Interviewing (Ch. 2), Observation (Ch. 3) and Analysis (Ch. 6).

Brown and Rodgers (2002) is the most useful single introduction I have seen for beginning second language researchers. To follow up ideas in this book, look in particular at the more qualitative Part One.

General guides to research

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) is a basic book in educational research, including action research, case studies, questionnaires, observation, interviews.

Nunan (1992) A useful basic introduction to second language research. Ethnography, case study, classroom observation and research, introspective methods and more.

Johnson (1992) An Experienced author, gives examples, North American orientation, and educational rather than second language acquisition (case study, survey research, ethnographic research, verbal reports (protocols)).

Faerch and Kasper (1987): still the best introduction to 'Introspection in second language research'.

Miles and Huberman (1994): stimulating writing on qualitative analysis.

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Part 4
Resources

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9
A Guide to Resources for Research in LLE

Access to a good library, probably a university library, will always be a good supplement to or even substitute for more direct professional contacts, and is assumed in much of what follows. Your institution or employer should help you with any fees or charges. At the same time, a remarkable amount of useful information is now available to even unaffiliated internet users, and so, again, use of a computer with internet access is increasingly necessary for a researcher at all levels.

In addition to the extensive list of references to books and articles which have been referred to through the whole book, and which should be consulted according to interest, this chapter lists key information resources to support research into LLE, briefly described with references under four headings:

- journals;
- internet sites, discussion groups, etc.;
- professional associations and associated resources;
- other resources.

As you develop your project, and investigate approaches and resources introduced in this book for yourself, you will find your own favourites, and indeed discover others unnoticed here or yet to appear. Try to share them with the rest of us!

9.1 Journals

Journals are increasingly widely available through online subscriptions of institutions such as universities. Individual articles can often be ordered by non-subscribers. Many journal articles are discussed in the course of this book and the journals in which those articles were published may well be worth browsing for your own interests. In journals you will find specialised and up to date research studies reported which can inform and complement your own thinking and findings.

Major publishers of educational research journals include Taylor and Francis www.tandf.co.uk/ and Pearson www.pearsoned.co.uk/.

A brief alphabetical listing of the most readily available LLE journals follows, but be prepared to look further afield too – for example at relevant regional publications such as JALT (Japanese Language Teaching Association) for those in Japan.

Applied Linguistics (Oxford University Press) – http://applij.oupjournals.org/ journal of BAAL (British Association for Applied Linguistics) – leading journal of applied linguistics – language issues in education and beyond.

College English (National Council of Teachers of English: NCTE) – Research in English in Higher Education particularly from U.S. perspectives and authors.

Critical Quarterly (Oxford: Blackwell) blackwellpublishing.com/journal – influential literature-into-cultural studies journal which tries to avoid inaccessibly academic style for its articles.

Discourse Processes – http://mnemosyne.csl.psyc.memphis.edu/discourse-processes/ – official journal of the Society for Text and Discourse. Includes research articles from a psycholinguistic or cognitive orientation on reading comprehension, processing of non-literal language and other discourse level language use, such as narrative comprehension.

ELT Journal (English Language Teaching Journal) http://eltj.oupjournals.org/ practical journal aimed at English language teachers globally. Some relevant references in Ch. 2.

English in Education (Birmingham: National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE)) – focus on secondary school English from a British perspective.

European Journal of English Studies (Routledge) – http://www.tandf.co.uk/ journals/titles/13825577.asp – perspectives from Europe on the study and teaching of English literature and language, and English cultural studies.

Foreign Language Annals – www.actfl.org – official journal of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) at all levels. Has often historically concerned itself with the teaching of foreign language literatures and culture.

Forum (*English Teaching Forum*) (US Department of State Information Agency) American journal aimed at EFL and ESOL teachers. Practical tips and reports. Past articles have dealt with uses of literature in the SL classroom.

Journal for Language and Intercultural Communication.-www.multilingual-matters.com/multi/**journal**s/**journal**s_laic.asp – journal of IALIC (International Association for Language and Intercultural Communication) (Multilingual Matters). Emphasises the importance of language in inter-cultural communication.

Journal of Literary Semantics (Mouton de Gruyter) www.degruyter.de – investigates literature and the workings of literary language as central to the concerns of linguistics.

Journal of Pragmatics (Amsterdam: North Holland Press) www.elsevier. com – from time to time includes articles on literary pragmatics – readers making sense of literature – also on pragmatics of non-literal language (e.g. metaphor comprehension and use) and on intercultural pragmatics.

Journal of Research in Reading (published by Blackwell for the Reading Association, Leeds, Kent) http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal – high quality papers from a range of theroetical and research orientations on mainly L1 literacy.

Language Awareness (Multilingual Matters) – Journal of the Association for Language Awareness – www.multilingual-matters.com or via www.catchword.co.uk

Language and Education (Multilingual Matters) – investigates implications of language issues for education www.multilingual-matters.com or via www.catchword.co.uk

Language & Literature (Sage) – www.sagepub.com – Journal of the Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA). Leading stylistics journal with international contributions on literary and non-literary stylistics, relations of language and literature, including some articles on educational questions.

Language and Style (Carbondale, IL) stylistics journal ceased publication with volume 24 in 1991, but worth checking old bound issues if you can find them.

Linguistics and Education (Norwood, NJ: Ablex) – not particularly interested in literature, but useful examples of sound qualitative educational research, including discourse analysis and classroom interaction).

Literary and Linguistic Computing (Oxford University Press) http:// www3.oup.co.uk/litlin/contents/ – corpus studies, author studies and stylistics.

Metaphor and Symbol (formerly Metaphor and Symbolic Activity) (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum) – www.erlbaum.com/Journals/journals/MS/ms.htm – mainly cognitive research on the use and comprehension of figurative language.

MLN (originally *Modern Language Notes*) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) – studies in modern European languages and literatures, European comparative literature.

Modern Fiction Studies (Purdue University) – http://www.sla.purdue.edu/ academic/engl/mfs/ – twentieth-century fiction studies.

Modern Language Journal (Madison, WI: National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations) http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/mlj/ research into study and teaching of modern European foreign languages and literatures.

Narrative (Journal of Narrative and Life History) (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press) – http://www.ohiostatepress.org journal of the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature – studies of the genre in English, European and American fiction, film, non-fiction and more.

Poetics (previously *Poetics and Theory of Literature*) – generally cognitive emphases, experimentalist research articles by leading international figures.

Poetics Today (Duke University Press) – state of the art, sometimes demanding academic essays by leading authorities on areas like narrative, poetics, and relations of semiotics and linguistics to literary study and literary theory.

Reading in a Foreign Language (University of Hawaii) http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/ – free on line subscription and access to back issues. Pedagogic and more theoretical artices on this topic.

Reading Research Quarterly (Newark, Del.: IRA International Reading Association) – http://www.reading.org/publications/journals/rrq/ – central, wide-ranging and high quality publication for this field, often dealing with literature reading in and out of schools. (Mainly L1 focus).

RELC Journal (SEAMEO – South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation-Regional English Language Centre, Singapore) www.relc.org.sig – articles primarily with reference to SE Asia, but of wider interest, including LLE, stylistics, translation, culture in ELT.

Style (Northern Illinois University) – www.style.niu.edu/ – leading stylistics journal for the USA.

Teaching English Language and Literature (*TELL*, Ministry of Education, Singapore) – practical secondary level English teaching focus for teachers in Singapore, but of wider interest.

TESOL Quarterly (Washington, DC: TESOL Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) – http://www.tesol.edu/pubs/magz/tq.html. Key North American journal for TESOL, practical focus but more research-oriented than ELT Journal.

World Englishes (Oxford: Blackwell) – http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/ journal English language study and teaching in a global perspective, often including style, variation and creativity, including in literary writings.

World Literature Written in English (WLWE) (Austin: University of Texas) – http://oldweb.northampton.ac.uk/ass/cul/wlwe/index.htm – studies what it says on the label.

Research methodology journals

In addition to references given in Chapters 7 and 8, you might want to look at some issues and examples from current debates:

Educational Action Research (Wallingford, Oxfordshire: Triangle Journals), journal of the Classroom (later, Collaborative) Action Research Network – useful example studies, though without any specific LLE reference.

Qualitative Inquiry (QI) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Periodicals Press).

9.2 Websites

http://www.virginia.edu/cla/english.htm

Literature is particularly well served by the internet, and education increasingly so. As with any form of reading, though perhaps more so, it is important to maintain a critical stance in exploring internet sites – there is much nonsense and rubbish on the web as well as much work of the highest quality.

The usual disclaimer concerning out of date websites, etc. must also apply here – references were correct and live at the time of writing but may have moved or ceased to exist. If in doubt, try Google, or a similar search engine. A valuable addition as I complete this manuscript is Google Scholar, a search engine for researchers and academics: http://scholar.google.com/ though biased towards 'science' research.

Action research: http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/art/arthesis/html or http://www.uq.net.au/action_research/art/arthesis.html

Area Studies (UK resource for teachers of modern foreign languages, literatures and cultures): http://www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/as/arealinks.html#interdis (includes, for example, www.languagesresearch.ac.uk – summarising and providing a focus for research in modern languages in the UK).

Bakhtin: US college professor's Bakhtin website: http://www.brocku.ca/english/courses/4F70/bakhtin.html

The Bakhtin Centre, based at Sheffield University: http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/A-C/bakh/online.html

Bubl gateway to Language, literature and culture resources: http://bubl.ac.uk/link/lan.html

European History of English Studies: http://www.mshs.univ-poitiers.fr/esse/ehes/ehesbibl.htm

History of English Studies – useful links and resources and bibliography: http://english.cla.umn.edu/Faculty/RALEY/research/englstud.html

Humbul Humanities gateway: resource for UK higher and further education. Extensive valuable links, on line tutorials on use of internet materials, and much more. http://www.humbul.ac.uk/output/subout.php?subj=english

Iconicity (e.g. sound symbolism) in language and literature: http://home.hum.uva.nl/iconicity/

IGEL – International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature: http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/igel/ Empirical research into literature and Comparative Literature – rich mine of links: http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/clcweb-journal/library.html

International Reading Association (IRA) resources page with links, online articles, notes on controversies, etc. http://www.readingonline.org

Literature study resources – searchable texts, study guides, notes further links etc.: http://lionselect.chadwyck.co.uk; or http://collections.chadwyck.com/ (very useful site, requiring expensive institutional subscription to fully

access) – includes full texts of many classic literary works which can be searched and analysed on line (as well as read!)

Literature teaching in second language bibliography: http://babel.uoregon.edu/romance/aausc/archive/prgadmin/lit-read.html

Miall's homepage (empirical research into literature and literary reading): http://www.ualberta.ca/~dmiall/Miall.htm

Norton anthology web links (English literary history): http://www.wwnorton.com/nael/

Open University MA Literature resources and links: http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/artsma/litres.html

Oxford Text Archive. Wide ranging and growing set of complete literary texts, anthologies, articles and more: http://ota.ox.ac.uk/ (See also jisc resource guide for arts and humanities researchers, with special reference to English researchers: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/resourceguides/arthum/)

Oxford University Press literature resources – many useful links: http://www.oup.co.uk/worldsclassics/classic/

Poetics and Linguistics Association (international organisation with annual conferences and proceedings, since 2001, official journal is *Language and Literature* (Sage). Also publishes Occasional Papers http://www.pala.ac.uk/ http://www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk

Reading Dossiers/Study Logs/Learning journals:Research into Best Practice – project report available on line at www.english.ltsn.ac.uk/projects/deptprojects/ index.htm – based on work with second-year English undergraduates (University of Birmingham), including dossiers as a means of assessment, but principles could be applied to other contexts for those interested in this area.

Resources website for modern language studies and teaching in the U.K. http://poetrykit.org Welcoming and well-designed site for poetry resources, discussion list, etc. http://poems.com http://uk.cambridge.org/elt/corpus/cancode.htm CANCODE project home page.

'Teachit' resource site for primary and secondary teachers of English in the UK: http://www.teachit.co.uk/

Voice of the Shuttle – one of the first and perhaps still the best Literature resources site: http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=2718

9.3   Professional organisations

Professional organisations will offer virtual and actual forums for meeting, exchanging ideas with and presenting to others who share your interests. They often have workshops, conferences, discussion lists, newsletters and other opportunities to get involved. For LLE, likely organisations to investigate include:

Association for Language Awareness (ALA) – www.lexically.net/ala

British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) www.baal.org.uk/

British Council British Studies site: http://www.britishcouncil.org/studies/

International Association for Language and Intercultural Communication (IALIC) www.ialic.org

International Association for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) www.iatefl.org, including: Literature and cultural studies Special Interest Group (SIG) of IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language). Mainly practical pedagogical focus: http://www.wilstapley.com/LCS/

Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA) – www.pala.ac.uk/

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) – www.tesol.org/ (with many country-specific TESOL branches, such as TESOL Spain etc.)

9.4   Other resources

Eastment, D. (2002) Web sites for the language teacher: Literature. *ELT Journal* 56 (4): 438–9.

Stephens, C. and Brumfit, C. (1990) *Literature Teaching Methodology for Second and Foreign Language Learners. A Bibliography*. London: The British Council. Dated now, but still of great interest for those seeking a solid grounding in the LLE field.

Videos of literature lessons in ELT – Bell Foundation, Norwich.

Audio tape: Alan Durant, IATEFL conference 1995 plenary address, 'The lyric poem in the classroom'.

Computers in literature teaching:

See Oxford University, Humanities computing sites, including online tutorials.

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Glossary

Action research   'A form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out' (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 162).

Aesthetic vs efferent reading   Rosenblatt's terms, not starkly opposed, but representing different tendencies in reading, where an 'aesthetic' reading is more concerned to develop pleasurable or meaningful personal response to a text, and an 'efferent' reading is more oriented toward a knowledge outcome – 'what do I learn from reading this?' Reading a Shakespearean tragedy in order to reflect on life's difficulties or unfairness, for example, which we are all familiar with, as opposed to considering it 'efferently' as an example of Shakespeare's middle-period writing, revealing much about early modern concepts of honour, shame and guilt.

Affordances   The idea adapted from psychology by van Lier and others that learners select from their environment features and elements they themselves perceive to be useful or relevant to their learning. The idea emphasises the agency of learners, making their own individualistic choices, but also that learners necessarily operate in given environments, they can't just do whatever they like. The model is also dynamic, in the sense that affordances emerge and develop in ongoing situations, they are not just there, fully formed, from the outset. Opportunities for meaningful action and interaction.

Canon   The 'literary canon' is used to refer to the 'approved' works of literature, supposedly of highest value, which a course of literary study would be expected to include. Prestigious writers and their works.

Case study   Study of an individual example. Popular research methodology in education and the social sciences, usually qualitative in orientation, though a strength of case study research is the naturalness of triangulation when a lot of data bearing on a single 'case' is being gathered, enabling richer understanding of the students(s) or classroom(s), etc. involved. Selection and definition of a case should be made with a view to the accessibility and usefulness of the data likely to be collected.

Cognitive linguistics, cognitive poetics   Cognitive linguists are interested in the mental operations provoked and enabled by language, how meanings can be developed in reading and discussing a literary text, for example. The best single introduction is Stockwell (2002), which covers topics such as **Iconicity**, **Metaphor**, **Foregrounding** and **Schemas** – all discussed in this book, with entries also in this Glossary.

Corpus linguistics   Large-scale collections (a 'corpus') of naturally occurring text (language samples) are stored in a computer and are available for computer-assisted searches and analysis. You search for a word or a phrase and can then inspect a 'concordance' line or go to the larger extract (depending on software and levels of access). Statistics of use are also easily generated. The samples are ideally coded or 'marked up'

to facilitate the investigation of linguistic features. Well-known examples would include the BNC (British National Corpus), COBUILD (Collins and University of Birmingham) or CANCODE (Cambridge University Press and Nottingham University). Searches of literary texts can be done, for example, through the LION database, or see the Oxford Computing Service website (references in Part 4). Google is making complete texts available online from 2005.

Defamiliarisation   Coming to see something in a new, less familiar way. The Russian Formalists, particularly Shklovsky, felt that defamiliarisation was the function of literature reading, to give readers new perspectives (See Chapter 1; and **schema**, below).

Discourse   Linguistically, 'language beyond the level of the sentence'. But a more useful understanding is as 'language in use', or 'language in social interaction'. In such perspectives, language is seen as an ongoing activity in which people shape their worlds and are shaped by the wor(l)ds of others.

Deviance, deviation   Variation from a norm or average, breaking the rules, unpredictable, unexpected, unconventional. Formalists propose deviance as a key defining feature of poetic language use. (Chapter 1 and 4.)

Ecological validity   A concern of many readers of experimentalist research, especially to those with more qualitative orientations, such as many educators, is that the findings only apply to the rather artificial situation in which they were generated, often by a group of psychology undergraduates. How typical is such a group? Or (for example) what does the reading of a specially written extract under laboratory conditions tell us about more ordinary reading situations and experiences? Much research is concerned by the difficult questions of 'controlling' a situation, so that the researcher feels he can report what happened with some authority, bearing on a topic of pre-established interest. This felt need for control must be balanced against more qualitative 'suck it and see' approaches, which would rather feel confident of the representativeness or at least naturalness of the situation or activity studied.

Emic; etic   Ideas used in ethnography, where 'emic' perspectives are those of outsiders, looking 'objectively' and scientifically, as opposed to 'etic' perspectives, which represent the understandings of participants, what they actually find significant as opposed to what they might theoretically notice and value or disvalue (Compare a linguist's study of phonemics vs. the phonetics of a particular language, like English).

Foregrounding   Discussed in Chapter 4. Salient or psychologically noticeable, coming to the attention for reasons such as design (e.g. in painting), difference (a brass instrument when only strings have been used in a piece of music), or because it is unusual ('Ten thousand saw I at a glance'' is unusual syntax; see discussion in Chapter 4).

Formalism (Russian Formalism)   See Chapter 1. Arguably the first group to study literature as 'poetics', to understand its 'literariness', and how it worked, as opposed to what it meant. Many perceptive ideas and observations which are still being discussed today.

Functionalism   Functionalist understandings of language, associated with names like Halliday or Jakobson, argue that uses of language take the form they do because of the meanings they are intended to convey. Functionalists, in this understanding,

will be particularly interested in effects of language choices, where other forms could have been used but weren't.

Genre   A 'type' or 'kind' of writing, often closely related to particular social institutions or activities. A sermon (church) would be a different genre from a business letter (commerce). Literature is often opposed to non-literature as a genre, and can itself be subdivided into Poetry, Drama and Epic, or Fiction and Poetry, or other types, argued to have different functions for readers. Genres can be partly identified formally, by linguistic features, but are also importantly in the minds of readers as sets of expectations or norms of how to read different text types. In modern literature, genres are often mixed or not easily identified, which can make reading more difficult.

Iconicity   The relation of the sound or shape of words to the meanings they have. Research in this area has been given new impetus by cognitive poetics, and is obviously of interest to readers of literature who have insisted at least since the New Critics and Russian Formalists that forms have meanings, whether at the level of the morpheme, word, sentence or genre. Useful introduction with examples and references in Ungerer and Schmid (1996: 250–5). The argument is that there are indeed real correspondences between forms and meanings in a language, known only subconsciously by native speakers, but recognised when exploited by literary writers or advertisers, and which should be drawn to the attention of the language learner.

Implied reader   Iser's idea that a literary text constructs a position for readers from which it will be most successfully read. Loosely, the idea that co-operation of a reader with a text will be necessary for successful literary communication. The implied reader position must be recognised even if a particular reader decides to 'resist' this position – for example, the contemporary female reader of an eighteenth-century novel, who needs to understand earlier ideas of appropriate behaviour for women, but could not accept those ideas for herself today.

Intertextuality   Texts deliberately refer to or recall for a particular reader other previously encountered texts. Some would restrict the idea to linguistic echoes and quotations which can be precisely traced, while many see intertextuality more broadly to include reference to ideas or beliefs of previously encountered texts or language. Ideas of originality or creativity are clearly related to this notion that all texts (Kristeva, Barthes) contain traces – or are even composed of – earlier texts. Genre would be an instance of intertextuality in the sense that the formulaic words of a fairy story or an encounter in a hotel reception area remind us of earlier experiences of those genres. But again, it may be the exact repetition of words so much as (say) the sequence of questions and answers that remind the interviewee of other experiences of the interview genre.

Literariness   The Formalists had a programme to establish the nature of literariness, which was never quite achieved. Literariness was proposed as the quality which would distinguish literary texts from non-literary texts, and was originally expected to be linguistic (**poetic language**). With time, it has become evident that literariness, if such a thing exists at all, is a relative matter, and not only to be found in texts conventionally thought to be literary (see Chapter 1).

Literary language   See **poetic language, literariness** and Chapter 1.

Literature   What gets taught in literature classes (after Barthes).

Member checks   Important qualitative research idea that the researcher should take back his findings or conclusions and understandings to those he is studying and working with, to check their views and understandings against his own. This dialogue could then be built back into a richer account.

Mental model   The idea first proposed in this phrase by Johnson-Laird that we build models in our heads of a situation or event which will include elaborations, inferences etc. beyond the things we actually saw or heard or otherwise perceived. In the case of linguistic comprehension, actual words are forgotten as a mental model is constructed, as we come to our own understanding. (Compare '**schema**'). A mental model of a story, for example, will have selected from and transformed the actual words read to produce an individual's understanding of (say) *Pride and Prejudice*.

Metaphor   Usually taken broadly now as 'non-literal language' or understandings based on analogies, a particular interest of cognitive linguistics and cognitive poetics. The important modern development is to have moved from an understanding of metaphor as some kind of optional ornamentation, particularly characteristic of literature, to realise that metaphors are pervasive in our thinking and through all language use.

Narrative   Story-telling of a sequence of events in time in order to make some point to others. Narratives have identifiable structures of Orientation–Crisis/Problem–Resolution of Crisis, and are widely used in human interaction way beyond literary writings, as was once thought. The centrality of narratives to literature and literary study, but also to all human life, is the justification for their importance to education.

Narratology   Theoretical study of techniques and devices of various forms of narrative, whether in writing, conversation, film, comics, TV or other media. The best introduction for literature remains Rimmon-Kenan (2002), or across other genres, Berger (1997). Toolan (2001), at a slightly higher level, is more concerned with the linguistics of narrative.

New Criticism   North American school of literary critics, flourishing in the mid-twentieth century. An influential source for the pedagogical doctrine that the meanings for a poem (or any literary text) are to be found in the 'words on the page', that considerations of reader, or author, or historical context are not to interfere with the legitimate task of literary scholarship, which is textual analysis. The poem's own 'organic form' should be the object of interest, where the words add up to a whole of more significance than its parts, origins or intentions. Extreme respect is to be paid to great works of art. While this has been a useful corrective to impressionistic and carelessly produced interpretations of less successful readers (compare **stylistics, practical criticism**), the idea that a reader's identity, history or reason for reading the text can be excluded, or that it is useful to ignore questions of who wrote a text and when, are contested by critics of literature today, and always seemed to go against the grain of most readers' inclinations.

Pedagogical stylistics   is concerned to raise student awareness of how texts, especially literary texts, work linguistically, by designing interactive exercises and activities to prompt close examination of the language of a text. How or whether this raised awareness translates into new enhanced language abilities for a student is a moot

point. A minimal claim would be that students who participate in pedagogical stylistic activities become more accomplished at least in talking about the language of texts. In L2 pedagogical contexts, the claim is that linguistic aspects of texts need to be made more explicit and that language learners find these a particularly useful way in to developing fuller responses and interpretations. A useful short review of these topics can be found in McRae and Clark (2004).

Poetic language   Literally, the language used in poetry, or more widely in literary writing, and so includes traditionally central ideas of literary language such as metaphor or alliteration. More broadly understood, poetic language is 'creative language', and so not distinctive to literature, but found across a wide range of language use, including everyday conversations.

Poetics   The study of how literature is made and how it works, from a textual point of view primarily, often opposed to interpretation or evaluation as a different field of interest. An attempt to generalise, often, across genres (poetics of the novel', 'poetics of tragedy', etc.) The Russian Formalists saw poetics as a new 'science' of literature.

Practical criticism   The pedagogical idea closely associated with Richards (discussed in Chapter 3) that readers of literature in education need to be trained to concentrate on and extract information from the words on the page in front of them, that context is likely to be unhelpful or at best a kind of cheating (compare **New Criticism**).

Protocol   Utterances made by a learner in the course of performing a task (**verbal protocols**). Protocol research (or 'think aloud') is a methodology in which subjects think aloud as they do a task, such as reading. The utterances are then analysed to see what they reveal about the mental processes involved in this activity. Findings concerning particular features of the particular text read, for that reader, are not the main point for the cognitive researcher, but can be of great interest to a teacher (e.g. words which cause difficulty; miscomprehensions).

Qualitative research   Often crudely opposed to quantitative research, though in fact counting often usefully complements more qualitative understandings. Qualitative researchers are interested or committed to the idea that much that is of interest in a situation is not amenable to counting or measuring, or that richer and valuable understandings can be reached by paying attention to detail and specificity without premature generalisation and categorisation. Well established in educational research but still often regarded with suspicion by linguists and others as too subjective, unreliable and not replicable.

Reader response   See discussion in Chapter 3. The reader is seen as a key player in the production of literary meaning, though the relative importance of reader in relation to the text varies between writers like Fish and Iser. Interpretation came to be seen as the central literary activity, and interpretations would necessarily vary between individual readers. Study of literature is thus the study of readers and reading as much as it is of 'texts' or authors and periods or genres. Educators found the approach congenial to their aims of developing individuals as readers but also as human beings.

Schema   The mental representation of 'typical' situations learned from experience. Schemas are argued to influence how or what we notice, remember and understand

and enable us to operate more efficiently in approaching new experiences. Something like mental versions of a **genre**, a schema for 'shopping' or 'travelling by train', or for 'birthdays' or 'a poem' leads us to have certain expectations and to deal with actual experiences of such events or situations in line with our expectations. Cook (1994) argued that literature offers 'schema refreshment', a way of extending our horizons (compare **defamiliarisation**).

Style   Broadly, how something is done, said, written, especially what is distinctive or valued about its form. Hence style as individuality or fashion. Compare Variation (below). Style can be discussed in terms of 'appropriacy' to situation or period (Baroque, Gothic) often in terms of formality ('high' or formal, versus informal styles). Authors' styles are also studied by literary critics and in computational linguistics, where distinctive patterns and frequencies in language use can be traced. Another related understanding of style is as meaningful choices made in language use (a certain word or phrase selected rather than another).

Stylistics   *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (Wales 2001) sees stylistics as a discipline centrally concerned with formal, especially linguistic, features of texts, and their functions for readers in elaborating meanings and interpretations. Wales also notes the increasing emphasis in stylistics on social and cultural contexts which will determine which texts are selected and which features are noticed and how they are interpreted.

Textbase   The actual language of a text, which a reader will process (select from, elaborate, infer, etc.) to produce a more 'propositional' (non-linguistic) understanding or **mental model**. The term is used by Kintsch and in cognitive psychological research by van Dijk and others deriving from Kintsch.

Triangulation   One way to increase the convincingness of qualitative research in particular, is to try to gain an understanding of whatever is being investigated from different perspectives to see if they seem consistent, or to try to relate them to each other – e.g. looking at a lesson from the standpoints of students, teacher, an analysis of the textbook, syllabus, and so on.

Variation   Another way to think of **style**, except that this more sociolinguistic term tends to be used by those who are particularly interested in the systematic nature of variation, and correlations between linguistic variation and sociological categories like class, gender or race.

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