



Creativity and Techniques: Teaching Literature Vs. Short Story

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Abstract

This paper sets up to investigate and correlate between creativity and techniques in teaching literature vs. short story and how the teacher is going to manage the whole process of teaching by his/ her creativity helping the students to understand the literary text as a way to learn the new language. There are many techniques which may be used by the teacher to create an interesting and creative atmosphere through his/ her pedagogic practice. Hemingway' s " Cat In The Rain" is going to be taught as an example.

Introduction

Creativity means" involving the use of skill and imagination to produce something new or a work of art" (Hornby, 2004: 294),Wher as, technique is defined as "a particular way of doing something, especially one in which you have to learn special skills" (Hornby, 2004: 1334-5). Literature is used in teaching the second or foreign language as Carter& Nunan(2001: 180) assure that" literature in language teaching has a long pedigree. It was fundamental part of foreign language teaching in the "classical humanist paradigm" , because " literature is a legitimate and valuable resource for language teaching" (Cater& Long, 1991: 4). Younis also (1998: 21) claims that" teaching literature and language is interdependent. In order to have better grasp of literature, the student must have a proper training of these skills" , because " literature demonstrates language in use as its best" (Ibid. : 13). In teaching literature there are many activities which can be used



through teaching the literary texts. The question that may impress itself is how can a group of activities work together and be sequenced?. To use techniques creatively, there should be a good ground. This is as Protherough (1986: 35) explains" in the triangle of forces the teacher-students –text, how can we use our relationship with the group and the text to make that other relationship between students and book, as fruitful as possible? " .

Advantages of Teaching Short Story

There are many forms of literature: the novel, short story, poetry and drama. But the short story remains one of the most appealing forms of literature because" it combines interesting aspects of almost every other genre. It involves character and conflict which are essential to drama, narrative and expository and descriptive discourse which are basic to longer narrative form, namely the novel, and it makes vital use of suggestive imagery and style, both of which are native to poetry" (Jezairi & Su'dad, 1974: 14).

Zyngier (1988: 22) justifies that there are at least three good reasons for teaching a short story. It has unity independent existence, and an embryonic character. When the story is not too long, the student can gulp it in one mouthful and motivation is required only once. Moreover, short stories should not be considered a lower- quality production of an author. In fact, the student can work harder than he would with the novel, as he dictates more of his time to thinking than to reading new material and thus spends more time analyzing. In addition, there is a sense of complete fulfillment, of concentration and tension that are relaxed only when the story ends. The student is transported wholly to the world the artist has



created, and he goes through the entire experience. He can also re-read the work and obtain a much deeper understanding.

The length of the short story is one of its positive aspects as Moody (1971: 61) agrees that " a story can often be read to a class at a single sitting, or studied as a single assignment, whether in or out of the class. The teacher has the advantage that the whole story can be experienced simultaneously by the whole of his class, which often makes discussion easier" .

Pederson (1995: 10) affirms that " stories are part of aesthetic education and develop creativity" because " stories can be rich source of practice for vocabulary items" (Brown, 1988: 44).

Lado (1964: 142) believes that " some literary works are easier to understand than others" ; therefore, Zyngier (1988: 22) states that " an effective way to introduce the work of a specific author in a course of modern literature is by means of the short story" .

Techniques

The following techniques can be used to make the process of teaching literature creative:

- 1. Interaction:** through the discussion of the literary text the teacher can motivate his/ her students to interact with both him/her and the literary text because " learning takes place as a result to a complex interaction between the linguistic environment and the learner's internal mechanisms" (Ellis, 1997: 44). Literary texts provide the chance for interaction, between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves. The factors which may shape the interaction are like: the teacher and the learner's beliefs, social and



cultural background of the both. Karppinen (2000: 30) believes that "students are required to study personal ways of expression, train their ability to use voice and movement in communication and study the scales of expression in touch, sound, voice, and mime". Maley & Duff (cited in Carter & Nunan, 2001: 182) draw attention to the motivating power of literary texts in term of their universality and their non-triviality, echoing Billow's comment on the texts usually found in textbooks. They also stress how literary texts invite multiple interpretation, thus providing ready-made material for discussion. Since" meaning is created in the interaction between reader and text" (Bock, 1993: 7). Interaction can be by one of the following:

- **Questions:** the teacher may ask his/her students comprehensive questions about the text, through which he/she can know their understanding of the literary text and this may arouse the sense of competition among the students. Pederson (1995: 9) adds that "there are other, more creative way, to use questions. Multiple choice questions and questions that can be answered by inference can be used. Supposition can be made, like: What would you have done? What should the character have done? ". While Carter& Long (1991: 58) maintain that" instead of always responding to the teacher's questions, students may begin to ask questions about the text for themselves" . As Moody (1971:56) assures that " sometimes students can be invited to prepare questions to ask each other, possibly in teams, in the style of quiz programme, with the teacher presiding as the adjudicator; certainly one of the best ways of activating a class will be to ask them to prepare questions to ' test' the teacher" .



- **Enthusiasm:** the teacher, definitely through the literary text, can stimulate his students to interact with literature. " Description of classroom interaction focuses initially on the language used by the teacher especially the teacher questions and the learners` responses elicited, teacher's feedback and turn allocation behaviors (Carter & Nunan, 2001: 120). Spiro 1992 (cited in Carter & Nunan, 2001: 183) states that " in developing new-style test items, she [the teacher] is concerned to draw a range of stimulating and fresh material, to allow scope for personal response and creativity and encourage empathy with the text". Through the process of teaching literature, the teacher may express considerable aspects. These are: enthusiasm, spontaneity, creativity, and enjoyment. The creation of mood by the teacher through his/her physical appearance and mannerisms can be an influential factor on the students' interaction through the discussion. And the teacher must avoid to be rush or ramble. He/she must prevent themselves of being condescending or phony. Also he/she must hide nervousness or embarrassment. And the prominent of all, he/she should reveal the used technique (Pederson, 1995: 7).
- **Debate of opposite viewpoints:** it is one of the main and significant ways to motivate the students to interact through the discussion, since "topic is not itself a sufficient reason for holding a discussion" (Pederson, 1995: 136). Perhaps, there are two reasons behind using a debate:
 - a) because there is some uncertainty or ambiguity in the text that we wish to resolve or,



b) we think that the author in some way distorts life (' People aren't really like this...') and we wish to correct the record. And to make a debate at all two opposing points of view are required and it requires the teacher to formulate those points of view (Carter & Long, 1991: 136).

Through the debate the students may not reveal their beliefs and/or express opinion about the text only, but debate will force them to examine the text closely.

2. Audio-Visual Aids: anything that assists in clarifying the literary work and makes the process of teaching accessible is considered as an aid. Such as:

- **Teacher's voice:** when the teacher reads the literary text, the students should pay attention to him and the teacher can use this as an aid to reveal and ensure some important sides of the subject, because " a pause and dropped voice are often more effective than shouting. Take poetic passages slowly, report conversation at natural speed; tell narration more rapidly, building towards the climax" (Pederson, 1995: 5). There are many early studies which " show that in order to make their [the teachers'] speech comprehensible to learner, teachers generally speak slower, use simpler syntactic structure, exaggerated pronunciation, clearer articulation, more repetition and more basic vocabulary than when speaking to native speakers" (Carter & Nunan, 2001: 121). In reading, the teacher must concentrate on his voice very much, he/ she may alter his/ her speech and pitch e.g. giving different tones to different characters adds to emotional impact" (Pederson, 1995: 7).



- **Teacher's facial expressions:** one of the significant means which the teacher can use in the explanation of the literary text and controlling the class is the teacher's eyes as Pederson (1995: 8) assures that "eye contact is one of the utmost importance as it not only holds the listener's attention and involves the listener in the story, but it checks understanding and gives instant feedback" . Also, the teacher's facial expressions and gestures can participate to clarify the teacher's intended meaning and reinforce his/ her feelings because " facial expressions and movement are also vital aids" (Ibid.).
- **Pictures:** using pictures is one of the simplest techniques that may be used by the teacher to clarify the actions or the characters' behaviors or appearance to make the image of the idea nearer to the students' mind. Kerop (1978: 129) assures that" a picture is better than thousand words". In addition Al-Azzawii (2006: 1) clarifies that" pictures may stimulate the student to discuss, criticize and even analyze what has been seen through them. They will cause a unified image inside the minds of all the students about an action, behavior or character, but they will be somehow different in their analysis and impressions through the discussion".
- **Board Drawing:** the teacher can use the board effectively to clarify the actions or anything else related to the literary text by drawing a diagram, figure, or even symbols on the board. Billows (1961: 132) states that" the great advantage of a blackboard drawing is that it takes shape under the eyes of the pupil; the teacher loses this advantage by preparing the drawing in advance". Moreover, " good drawing does the work of the lesson better than bad; but bad drawing



is better than no drawing at all where the pupil needs help in visualizing" (Ibid.).

The teacher may suddenly , through teaching, draw a figure for urgent need, Billows (Ibid.) states that " a figure may be rubbed out and rapidly redrawn in a new position to give the illustration of movement" . For instance, in the explanation of the structure of any literary work, the teacher can draw the following diagram :

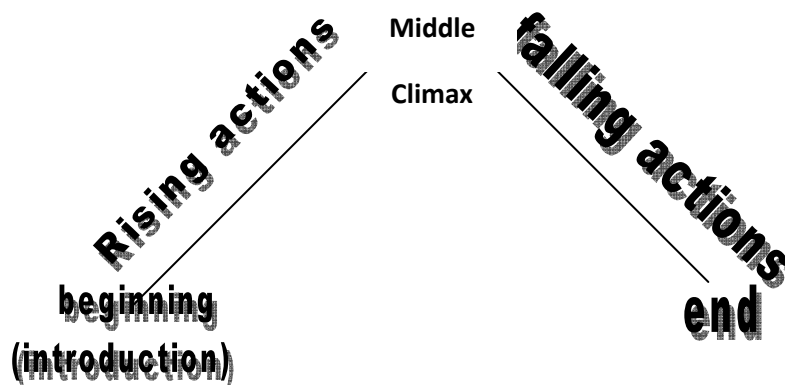


Figure No. 1: The structure of any traditional literary work



In addition, the teacher may use the following diagram to explain the elements of the short story:

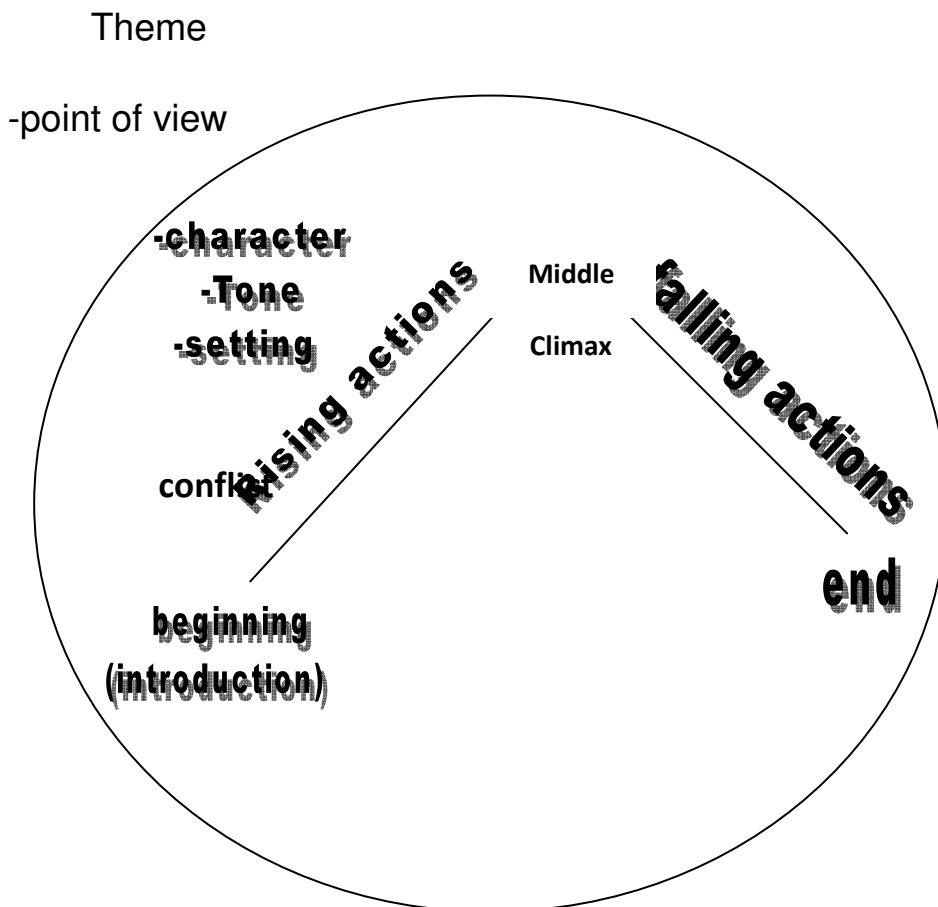


Figure No.2: The plot

- **Video& films:** video and films are very familiar audio-visual aids and they can be used a lot in teaching literature. Scacco (2007: 11) states that according to his experience" using a book and its accompanying film can provide the language teacher with so many poitential activities that an entire course could be built around just one title" . Carter (1991: 55) explains that " watching video or listening to a recording of literary work may stimulate interest for some students" because " when the students have made their hypotheses, the visual mode can then be brought in for confirmation"



(Shepherd, 1990: 19). Furthermore, Rivers (1981: 24) claims that films" give a vivid representation of the life of the people and the places where they live, thus providing much useful information as a background to reading and as a basis for oral discussion" . The teacher may use the audio-visual aids in various ways. He/ she can manipulate these ways differently such as" fast-forwarding for omitting sequences and homing in on a specific episode or exchange; the pause button for sudden stopping ("freezing") in mid – sentences for students to predict or attempt to continue an utterance; rewind for repetition to hear a phrase again or see an action again. In addition, we can use the slow motion to high light special visual image: a place, appearance, clothes, gesture, or expression" (Ibid.). Besides, Scacco(2007: 12) assures that "to give the students the opportunity to develop their language skills, and increase their engagement with the film, use exercises in which you stop the film or mute the sound and encourage students to discuss what happens or imagine what will happen" .

The student may co- operate to have a video of texts as Carter (1991: 57) shows that " students make a video of the texts, using only actors, location, sets, props, make- up, or, in this case special effects (as in the making of horror films, ghost films, etc.) which they required ". And through this activity, the students' creative abilities may reveal and with much motivation.

3. Critical thinking and Reading: critical thinking is one of the creative ways that may be followed in clarifying and explaining a literary text since" literary criticism as an approach to the study of literature has featured



largely in the past and still does at the literary stage of education" .Because "the critical thinking and reading provide the students to evaluate the situation and comment on it by using their all stored knowledge" http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3325/is_1_11/ai_n29356481, so, " helping students to read literature effectively is helping them to grow as individual as well in their relationships with the people and institutions around them" (Carter, 1991: 3). And with it the students' ability of criticizing and comment on what they read will improve. Protherough, (1986: 39) states that " in essence, the ability to read and the ability to criticize are not separate skills, but simply different ways of describing the same process, heads and tails of the same coin: ' Understanding involves criticism' " . Carter (1991: 55) says that" it should be remembered, however, the reading literature is a reading process, as well as, hopefully, a pleasure. The student is adding to his or her store of knowledge, which can be activated when reading further work of literature" .

As a way of thinking, the students will participate more and he/she is going to examine the literary text from many sides and different eyes for everything within the literary texts such as: the characters' behavior, setting, actions, theme ...etc. in details by which he/she can evaluate literary work as a whole; i.e. " through their reading and through a range of classroom activities, students are learning how appropriate and how effective are different perceptions of texts. We can discuss books only in term of our interpretation of them, and students have to learn that in describing and justifying their response to a text they are, in fact behaving as critics" (Protherough, 1986 : 33).

Definitely, the critical and pedagogic activities should be together. James Gribble (cited in Protherough, 1986: 34) has pointed to the essential similarities between teaching and criticism, in their aims, in their



function and in the relationship between teaching and learning: "the process of leading someone towards the meaning of a work of literature . . . is the concern of literary criticism. The activities of critic and the teacher of literature are, in this way, bound up with one another . . . both activities should be collaborative". Before reading the text, the teacher may give a glossary of some new difficult vocabularies and different cultural items for his/her students to support them through reading as Lado (1964 : 91) assures that" vocabulary and cultural items can be treated beforehand so that when the literary work is read, it can be read through understood appreciation" . Moreover, Shepherd (1990: 19) adds that " at pre-viewing stage (as with pre-reading and pre-listening activities), we can anticipate potentially difficult lexical grammatical, or conceptual items (in this case those that differ from the original written short stories) and provide (board or transparency) jumbled definitions or synonyms or L.1 [i.e., first language] translation" .

4. Role reading : reading is a very effective factor for the students' first impression because "many students enjoy reading literature, as learning process, literature is a potentially useful aid to the language teacher" (Brumfit & Carter, 1986: 91). So, to make this reading influential the teacher may ask some of his/ her students to read the character's role in the literary text. This technique may be considered as one of the oral activities. And" reading literary text aloud in performance also attracts favorable attention" (Carter & Nunan, 2001: 184).

5. Prediction: to create a new way of thinking with the students, the teacher may use ' prediction' as an effective technique in teaching literature. Brumfit & Carter (1986: 111) note that this " requires careful



preparation before the story is read in class. The technique is for the teacher to stop the reading at key points and to elicit predictions of how the narrative will develop and what comes next? ". Moreover, the teacher may omit the title and after the story has been read, students can be invited to predict what it should be" (Ibid.).

6. Written activities: the teacher may ask the students to write a summary 'what's it all about' for the literary work at home as a homework or within the lecture. Brumfit & Carter (1986: 113) assure that "a strategy designed to focus on the overall point or meaning of the story is to ask the students to produce summaries of the text". In addition the teacher can give a question or questions to be answered according to their understanding for the literary work . In such activities the students will be motivated to write and if, and only if, there is any place for being shy to speak through the discussion, he/ she will find this a way to communicate their ideas, opinions, points of views, appreciation for the literary work.

7. Working in groups: this is one of the techniques that the teacher can use to add an interesting side to the lecture. The teacher may divide the students into groups. As Lynch (1996: 110-11) states " the idea of group work (including pair work) is not new, of course. The usual reasons given for using it are that simultaneous group work maximizes each learner's opportunity to speak and that practicing in small groups reduces the psychological burden of public performance" . Each group will be responsible for a part of the literary work. This group will explain the part and discuss it with the others then give their comment on it . The teacher is going to be a guide and the controller for the whole discussion. For example, with the novels and long plays which the students may face difficulties with their reading and preparing, the



teacher can distribute the chapters of the novel or the scenes of the play individually or chorally among the students. By this the teacher will create an interesting atmosphere and an attractive way for the interaction through the lecture.

Teaching Short Story

There are many ways of teaching short stories as there are many teachers and short stories. In teaching literature there are three main approaches: the cultural; the linguistic; and the personal growth model. The three models differ in terms of their focus on the text: in the first, the literary text is seen as a cultural artifact while in the second, the text is used as a focus for grammatical and structural analysis; and in the third model, the text is the stimulus for personal growth activities. Brumfit & Carter (1986: 120- 21) show that Labvo (1972) has developed the linguistic model for teaching literature. And the structural properties isolated by Labvo can be described as follows (see figure: 3):

- 1. Abstract.** This is a short summary of the story that narrates generally provide before the narrative commence. It ‘encapsulates the point of the story’.
- 2. Orientation** is an essential constituent in helping the reader/ listener ‘to identify in some way the time, place, persons, and their activity or situation’ . It can include ‘an elaborate portrait of the main character’ .
- 3. Complicating action** contains narrative clauses. Such clauses have a verb which is simple past or simple present. They are minimal units



of the narrative and are temporally ordered in that ' a change in their order will result in a change in the temporal sequence of the original semantic organization'.

4. Evaluation. Like the basic narrative clause, this is the most important element in narrative. Evaluation can take many shapes and be marked by a number of different linguistic forms:

A. Evaluation: Commentary

- 1) External: comments by the narrator to the action and addressed directly to the interlocutor.
- 2) Internal: comment is embedded :
 - a. the evaluation comment by the narrator or the character at a specific moment occurs to the action;
 - b. comment is addressed to another character;
 - c. evaluation remarks are attributed to a third party.

B. Sentence –Internal Evaluation Devices

1. Intensifiers: e.g. gestures, expressive, phonology, repetition, interjection, etc. In other words, a host of available stylistic-expressive, rhetorical means.
 2. Comparators: generally speaking, a 'comparator moves away from the line of narrative events to consider unrealized possibilities and compare them with the events that did not occur' .
- 5. Resolution:** this contains the last of the narrative or free clauses which begin the complicating action.



6. Coda: the coda should provide a sense of completeness, signaling that the story has ended and has been evaluated by bringing ‘the narrator and the listener back to the point at which they entered the narrative’ .

a

1. Abstract..... What was this about ?
2. Orientation.....Who, when, what, where?
3. Complicating action.....Then what happened?
4. Evaluation.....So what?
5. Result or resolution.....What finally happened?
6. Coda.....

b

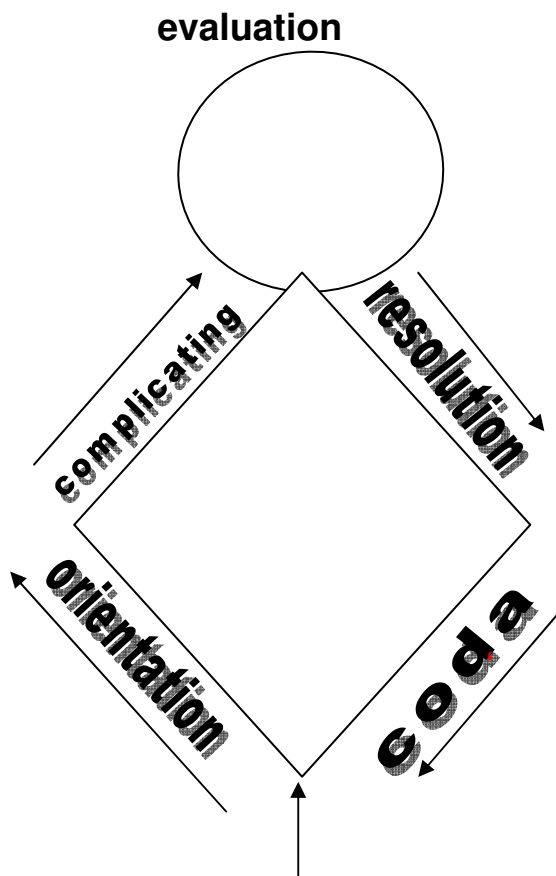


Figure No. 3: Narrative Structure(From Labvo 1972)



To teach literature vs. short story in EFL/ ESL, there should be an approach which attempts to integrate: the cultural; the linguistic; and the personal growth elements in a way that makes literature accessible to the learners and beneficial for their linguistic development . So, I suggest the following approach to be followed in teaching the short story at the university level and through this suggested approach, the creativity is recommended:

1. Grasping the text

Introduction: which includes

- a. *Abstract:* Introduce the students to the writer Ernest Hemingway by a portrait for him, and giving them a summary of the short story " Cat in The Rain" before reading it in order to make their understanding for the story easier. Such as: " Cat in The Rain" is a very short story which is apparently simple in its plot. In fact behind the very realistic surface there is a wealth of symbolism and possible meanings for the reader to supply for himself, and it is not surprising that this very brief story has given rise to so much contradictory criticism on the part of literary critics and academics. Also introduce in brief the characters, establish the mood, or predicament of the protagonist and arouse pleasurable anticipation.
- b. *Orientation:* helping the students to know when, where who, what, i.e. identify in some way the time, place, persons, and their activity or situation. " Cat in The Rain" was conceived by Hemingway in Rapallo, Italy, in February 1923. From the Hotel Splendide (Griffin, 2001 : 99).



- c. *Glossary*: giving them a glossary of the new difficult vocabularies and the different cultural items before asking them to read the story at home.

Glossary:

crouched: lying close to the ground, protecting itself from the rain.

compact: fitting into a small space.

Il piove: Italian for 'It's raining.'

'Ha perduto qualche cosa, Signora?' Italian for 'Have you lost something, Madam?'

Padrone: hotel – keeper.

to grow out: to grow longer and fuller.

Pretty darn nice: an American way of saying 'very nice'.

Avanti: Italian for 'Come in'.

tortoise-shell: yellow and brown coloured.

- d. Asking the students to read the story at home and to put it through reading under a microscope. Zyngier (1988: 23) assures that "they had to see, hear, smell, touch-suffer or rejoice, whatever the case might be. As they read and enjoy the words, they were to jot down reactions or ideas that might strike them, underline passages that impressed themselves why they had considered those passages significant". It is preferred to tell the students not to use any critical work because "they seem to feel more self-assured when they read the opinions or renowned critics, and they generally take those opinions as their own. They do not feel confident enough to question printed words,



and their capacity is not geared to literature. Precious pieces of analysis thus stay in dark" (Ibid.).

2. Reading the story inside the class: this will be either by the teacher or, as it is preferred, by the students and they may both participate to read the story. Through reading, the teacher has a wide scope of time to use many techniques to make the process of reading creative. For instance, he/ she can use the role reading technique or working in groups. Moreover, he/ she can apply the techniques of the teacher's voice and facial expressions and movement in reading, in the explanation of a certain action or character.

Through reading, the teacher is going to help the students to analyze the story details: the first sentence '*There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel*' gives us an idea that this is going to be an especially American story. And the second sentence '*They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on the way to and from their room*' explains that the couple were isolated personally and culturally. By not describing what the couple has seen or done, Hemingway focuses on repetitive proximities that are without intimacy" (Lindsay, 1997: 15+).

Moreover, the opening paragraph is a descriptive one for their room which faces the sea, the public garden, and the war monument. During the wife's looking outside through the window, she saw a cat under one of the tables trying to protect itself from the rain ; therefore she wanted to go out to bring that cat. Her husband offered from the bed "*I'll do it*". Lindsay (1997: 15+) expresses that "the husband's first utterance deftly captures



his enervated romantic identity. . . . But it is clear immediety and from what follows that the husband has no actual desire to sreve. It is an offer rather than a statement of intent". The wife answered "*No, I'll get it*" and the husband continued his reading , lying propped up with two pillows at the foot of the bed. Critical thinking technique may be used when the teacher asks the students some questions to direct their attentions for the whole story, in which they need to think critically to answer. To clarify the action, setting, the image or any idea or the character...etc., the teacher will use pictures or films, definitely if he has, in the appropriate time.

The teacher has the chance to ask the students some questions, as he stops the reading, to let them predict such as What will happen ? Who was the doer of the action? .This will keep the student's mind active and busy with the actions of the story.

3. **Written activities:** asking the students to write a summary of the story at home.
4. The next step will involve asking the students about their annotations i.e., " what had impressed them and why? How did the author manage to convey those impressions they had had? What was the story about? Was there a perceptible structure? If not, could it be divided into significant parts?" (Zyngier, 1988: 23).
5. **Analyzing the story** through the discussion , and the teacher' role becomes active only when he/ she has to point out elements that were specific to the author. The following are what will be discussed:



- a. What is the kind of the story? Who is the writer?
- b. Who can tell the plot of the story?, through the explanation of the plot, the teacher can draw a diagram on the board to express the sequence of the actions. (See figure No.1)
- c. What is the kind of conflict in this story? Why? In which action did the conflict start? . The conflict causes the rising actions.
- d. Characters: who is the main character? Who is the minor one? Why? What is the significance of such a character? For example, in Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain", what is the importance of the character of the hotel keeper?
- e. Theme: What does the writer want to reflect? Or what lesson do we learn from the story? Since there is something to be revealed from each character, there are more than one theme, but one to be the main.
- f. The setting: the time and place of the actions.
- g. The point of view: who narrates the actions of the story? Or from which eye we have seen the actions?. In " Cat in the Rain", the writer did not participate in the actions, i.e., third person narration.
- h. The tone: this element contains the language and style of the story. With language, the student will comment on the syntactic side for the language of the story, i.e. the sentences, verbs with their tense and kind, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, the voices, the direct and indirect speech and everything related to grammar; With style, the semantic side is going to be examined, i.e. how the writer introduces his/ her ideas through the actions, or the dialogue between the characters, and the simile, metaphor....etc. he/ she



used. In “ Cat in the Rain” Hemingway uses Italian phrases as a bilingual performance which adds a special effect on the reader:

- ❖ I'll Poive
- ❖ Si, Si, Signora, brutto tempo;
- ❖ Ha perduto qualche cosa, Sigora?;
- ❖ Si, il gatto;
- ❖ Avanti.

- i. How does the writer present the related action of the plot? Which technique he used?
- j. Through the discussion the teacher can make a debate among the students by giving an opinion or general question that may have more than one justification, such as why do you think the writer did not give the wife a specific name?, the husband's treatment for his wife is to some extent very bad. The students will be motivated to reveal their interpretation, and through this, the teacher may give to the students a chance to explain themselves freely. Also, the teacher may divide the students into groups.

Conclusions

Teachers of literature in general should keep in mind that studying literature vs. short story is not an easy task for the EFL/ESL learners because of the many difficulties they may face. The way which the teacher uses is the way in which he/ she proceeds to reach his/her aim. So, the teacher who is the main controller of



the whole process will use his creativity through teaching since teaching requires a talent. Short story provides the time for the teacher to create more than the other forms of literature which is due to its being short. Many techniques can support the teaching of short story like prediction, critical thinking, working in groups,..etc. Each one is going to add something different from the others and arouse pleasurable anticipation, and interesting for the students, which motivate them to participate in the discussion creatively.

The Cat in the Rain
-Ernest Hemingway-

There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel. They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room. Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. It also faced the public garden and the war monument. There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. In the good weather there was always an artist with his easel. Artists liked the way the palms grew and the bright colors of the hotels facing the gardens and the sea. Italians came from a long way off to look up at the war monument. It was made of bronze and glistened in the rain. It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain. The motor cars were gone from the square by the war monument. Across the square in the doorway of the café a waiter stood looking out at the empty square. The American wife stood at the window looking out.

Outside right under their window a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables. The cat was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on.



'I'm going down and get that kitty,' the American wife said.

'I'll do it,' her husband offered from the bed.

'No, I'll get it. The poor kitty out trying to keep dry under a table.'

The husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed.

'Don't get wet,' he said.

The wife went downstairs and the hotel owner stood up and bowed to her as she passed the office. His desk was at the far end of the office. He was an old man and very tall.

'Il piove, 'the wife said. She liked the hotel-keeper.

'Si, Si, Signora, brutto tempo. It is very bad weather.' He stood behind his desk in the far end of the dim room. The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands.

Liking him she opened the door and looked out. It was raining harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the café. The cat would be around to the right. Perhaps she could go along under the eaves. As she stood in the doorway an umbrella opened behind her. It was the maid who looked after their room.

'You must not get wet,' she smiled, speaking Italian.

Of course, the hotel-keeper had sent her. With the maid holding the umbrella over her, she walked along the gravel path until she was under their window. The table was there, washed bright green in the rain, but the cat was gone. She was suddenly disappointed. The maid looked up at her.

'Ha perduto qualche cosa, Signora?'



'There was a cat,' said the American girl.

'A cat?'

'Si, il gatto.'

'A cat?' the maid laughed. 'A cat in the rain?'

'Yes, –' she said, 'under the table.' Then, 'Oh, I wanted it so much. I wanted a kitty.'

When she talked English the maid's face tightened.

'Come, Signora,' she said. 'We must get back inside. You will be wet.'

'I suppose so,' said the American girl.

They went back along the gravel path and passed in the door. The maid stayed outside to close the umbrella. As the American girl passed the office, the padrone bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance. She went on up the stairs. She opened the door of the room. George was on the bed, reading.

'Did you get the cat?' he asked, putting the book down.

'It was gone.'

'Wonder where it went to,' he said, resting his eyes from reading.

She sat down on the bed.

'I wanted it so much,' she said. 'I don't know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn't any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain.'

'It's raining.'

'Yes, yes, Madam, awful weather'

'Have you lost something, Madam?'



George was reading again. She went over and sat in front of the mirror of the dressing table looking at herself with the hand glass. She studied her profile, first one side and then the other. Then she studied the back of her head and her neck. 'Don't you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?' she asked, looking at her profile again.

George looked up and saw the back of her neck, clipped close like a boy's.

'I like it the way it is.'

'I get so tired of it,' she said. 'I get so tired of looking like a boy.'

George shifted his position in the bed. He hadn't looked away from her since she started to speak.

'You look pretty darn nice,' he said.

She laid the mirror down on the dresser and went over to the window and looked out. It was getting dark.

'I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel,' she said. 'I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I

stroke her.'

'Yeah?' George said from the bed.

'And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty

and I want some new clothes.'

'Oh, shut up and get something to read,' George said. He was reading again.

His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.



‘Anyway, I want a cat,’ she said, ‘I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can’t have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.’

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square. Someone knocked at the door. ‘Avanti,’ George said. He looked up from his book. In the doorway stood the maid. She held a big tortoise- shell cat pressed tight against her and swung down against her body.

‘Excuse me,’ she said, ‘the padrone asked me to bring this for the Signora’



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