Continuum between L2 Language and Literature

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I. Introduction

This paper aims to provide reviews of scholarly speculations regarding the issue of incorporating literature and language components in second/foreign language (L2) and literature education. Frequently, language teaching and the teaching of literature is considered incompatible (Bassnett & Grundy, 1993); however, both sides realize the need to incorporate the other. Schofer (1990) noted, as follows, that institutional and pedagogical conditions motivate them to reassure their fundamental goals of curriculum by means of diversifying teaching tools and methods.

... today language and literature teachers are in a strong position to integrate literature into the core of language teaching, to the benefit of both language and literature instruction. The benefits should be obvious for a number of reasons: Language and literature instructors might find that they do have common interests and that they can articulate their programs more rationally. Of greater importance, students would have better preparation in reading and
writing as they go from language to literature (and culture?) courses than is now the case. (Schofer, 1990)

Existing studies concerning the relationship between language teaching and the teaching of literature vary according to the academic disciplines and perspectives taken. Diverse theoretical and empirical studies seem to be well represented on the “language-literature continuum” (Paran, 2006; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). The language-literature continuum, with the teaching of language and literature on opposite ends of the pole, effectively illustrates the different approaches and the relative emphasis given to incorporating both language and literature in the L2 classroom. Actual teaching practice and goals are located somewhere between these two ends.

In order to enhance the understanding of the transforming status of both parts, this paper examines two distinct perspectives on literature from each field, language and literature. Different approaches commonly used to describe the language-literature relationship include the study and the use of literature (Maley, 1989), also referred to as literature as object of study and literature as topic/resource (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). Applying the dichotomy, two main sections of the thesis examine viewpoints from stances of literature as 1) a goal and 2) a tool of study, representing disciplines of foreign language literature and language education, respectively. The reasons for the language and literature incorporation from each side are discussed correspondingly.

II. Literature as goal of study

The research from what Maley (1989) called “the study of literature” perspective approaches literature as an academic subject and fundamental goal of study (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). Literature, from this view, is considered a body of