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THE EFFECT OF INTEGRATING LITERATURE INTO SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**ВЛИЯНИЕ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ НА УРОКАХ ВТОРОГО ЯЗЫКА НА ВОВЛЕЧЕННОСТЬ СТУДЕНТОВ В ВЫСШИЕ УЧЕБНЫЕ ЗАВЕДЕНИЯ****TALABALARNING OLIY TA'LIMGA JALB ETILISHIDA IKKINCHI TIL DARSLARIGA ADABIYOTNI INTEGRATSIYALASHISHINING TA'SIRI****Gafurova Nodira Ravshanovna** 

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Abstract

This article explores the impact of integrating literature into second language (L2) classrooms on student engagement in higher education institutions. A review of existing literature reveals that the inclusion of literary texts enhances cognitive, emotional, and social engagement, fostering a more holistic learning experience.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola adabiyotni ikkinchi til (L2) sinflariga integratsiyalashning oliy o'quv yurtlarida talabalarning faolligiga ta'sirini o'rganadi. Mavjud adabiyotlarni ko'rib chiqish shuni ko'rsatadiki, adabiy matnlarning qo'shilishi kognitiv, hissiy va ijtimoiy faollikni oshiradi, yaxlit o'rganish tajribasini rivojlantiradi.

Аннотация

В этой статье рассматривается влияние интеграции литературы в классы второго языка (L2) на вовлеченность студентов в высших учебных заведениях. Обзор существующей литературы показывает, что включение литературных текстов усиливает когнитивную, эмоциональную и социальную вовлеченность, способствуя более целостному опыту обучения.

Key words: *second language learning, student engagement, literature integration, higher education, cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement, language teaching.*

Kalit so'zlar: *ikkinchi tilni o'rganish, talabalarning faolligi, adabiyot integratsiyasi, oliy ta'lim, kognitiv faollik, hissiy faollik, ijtimoiy faollik, til o'rgatish.*

Ключевые слова: *изучение второго языка, вовлеченность студентов, интеграция литературы, высшее образование, когнитивная вовлеченность, эмоциональная вовлеченность, социальная вовлеченность, преподавание языка.*

INTRODUCTION

The integration of literature into second language (L2) classrooms has long been regarded as a powerful tool for enhancing student engagement in higher education. While traditional language teaching often focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and conversation practice, incorporating literary texts into the curriculum offers students a more immersive and culturally enriching learning experience. The potential benefits of using literature include not only improving language skills but also fostering deeper cognitive, emotional, and social engagement. As students work with literary works, they are exposed to complex structures and a variety of vocabulary, and develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of the cultural context of the language. This approach is believed to foster a more holistic engagement that can enhance overall learning outcomes.

This study aims to explore the effect of integrating literature into L2 classrooms on student engagement in higher education institutions. The concept of engagement, which encompasses cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, is central to understanding how students interact with the language and the learning environment. Through a review of existing literature, the study examines the various ways in which literature has been utilized in second language teaching and its impact on student participation, motivation, and sense of connection to the material. In doing

so, this review seeks to shed light on the effectiveness of literature-based strategies in fostering a more engaged and dynamic learning experience for students in higher education settings.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a systematic review methodology to investigate the effect of integrating literature into second language (L2) classrooms on student engagement in higher education. The review focuses on empirical studies published between 2000 and 2025, drawn from high-quality academic journals indexed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). The selected studies were analyzed based on their relevance to L2 learning, their measurement of student engagement (cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social), and their use of various research methods such as surveys, case studies, and classroom observations.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The target group for first study consisted of 394 students enrolled in various academic programs at the University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, Romania, during the 2020-2021 academic year. These students, primarily in their first and second years of study, were enrolled in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. The survey aimed to investigate their behavior towards learning English during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period marked by an abrupt transition to online learning. The survey focused on emotional and social engagement, exploring how factors such as anxiety, online learning dynamics, class environment, and interaction with peers influenced their learning experiences [4, p.5].

The results of the study identified two distinct clusters of students: "Moderately Engaged Students" and "Highly Engaged Students." Moderately engaged students showed higher levels of anxiety, lower involvement, and more passive behavior in class, regardless of whether the system was online or face-to-face. These students tended to perceive the online learning system in a neutral manner, suggesting that emotional engagement might be generally low in online environments. Conversely, the highly engaged students exhibited lower anxiety, greater involvement, and a higher enjoyment of class activities. These students were more likely to adapt well to online learning, finding it an effective platform for engaging with the material and participating in class dynamics. The study highlights the importance of fostering a supportive class environment and using interactive teaching methods, such as quizzes and games, to maintain student engagement in virtual settings. These findings align with previous research on the emotional and social factors influencing online learning and offer valuable insights for improving student engagement in EFL and ESP courses during times of crisis [4, pp.11-14].

The target group for this analysis comprises studies on engagement in language learning, specifically focusing on research published in high-quality L2 journals within the Web of Science's Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). When narrowing the range of journals to these publications, the study sought to ensure a robust selection of empirical work, favoring studies published in sources that are considered reliable and consistent by the scientific community. However, this exclusivity introduces a limitation, as it excludes reports from other databases and unpublished research, which could present a more comprehensive view of engagement in language learning. Despite this limitation, the chosen focus on SSCI journals is in line with other L2 research syntheses, which have favored this selection criteria to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the studies reviewed [2, p.8].

The results of this review highlight engagement as a complex and multidimensional construct that encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects, including social interactions. The past 20 years of research have provided valuable insights into the role of engagement in various language learning contexts, including classroom settings and technology-assisted learning. However, despite advances, challenges remain, particularly in terms of operationalizing and defining engagement more precisely. Future research should address these issues, focusing on longitudinal studies and interventions targeting disengaged learners. Additionally, greater clarity in defining engagement could deepen the understanding of how it connects to other key aspects of language learning. As the field continues to evolve, the study calls for enhanced methodological rigor and a more nuanced understanding of engagement to guide future research and pedagogical practices in language education [2, p.25].

Li & Li study consisted of university students, with a specific focus on their engagement in flipped classroom environments for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, which initially gathered quantitative data through engagement questionnaires, followed by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of the students' engagement in terms of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions. The research targeted two groups: a control group that received conventional instruction for 16 weeks and an experimental group that received flipped instruction after an initial period of traditional teaching. The data collected helped investigate how different instructional methods influenced engagement and learning outcomes [3, pp.6-7].

The results showed that flipped classrooms led to significant improvements in students' behavioral, emotional, and social engagement, primarily due to increased peer interactions and instructor-student communication in both physical and online environments. The flipped instruction allowed students to learn at their own pace, fostering autonomy, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. However, emotional engagement did not show significant improvement, possibly due to the short duration of the study and individual differences in student readiness. The study highlighted the importance of addressing learners' emotional needs and workload concerns for the success of flipped classrooms. The findings suggest that while flipped learning has potential for enhancing engagement, instructors must consider contextual factors and ensure adequate support for all students to maximize the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model [3, pp.15-18].

The target group for another study by Afzali & Izadpanah consisted of 360 intermediate and upper-intermediate English learners, aged 13–19, from four institutes in Zanjan, Iran. Participants were selected using multiple-stage cluster sampling, with a focus on students in these specific proficiency levels as determined by the Oxford placement test. The sample represented a small subset (10%) of the total English learner population in the region, which was composed of 19,400 students across 110 institutes. This homogeneous group, which included both male and female students, was carefully chosen to ensure a clear focus on learners who were at intermediate levels of English proficiency [1, p.8].

The results of the study indicate that the flipped classroom approach had a positive effect on both motivation and engagement among the learners. Specifically, it was found to enhance the motivation of upper-intermediate learners in learning grammar, with the experimental group showing increased performance on grammar tests and a more positive attitude toward learning English. Additionally, engagement levels improved significantly, with students actively participating and applying their prior knowledge in classroom discussions. These findings are consistent with previous studies, which highlight the benefits of flipped learning models in increasing student interactivity, engagement, and motivation through self-paced learning and active participation. The flipped classroom approach demonstrated its potential in fostering a more collaborative, engaging, and motivating learning environment, particularly for learners at intermediate proficiency levels [1, pp.17-19].

DISCUSSION

The review of the existing literature reveals consistent evidence that integrating literature into second language (L2) classrooms positively impacts student engagement, though the nature and extent of the effect vary across studies. For instance, research by Li & Li on flipped classroom models demonstrates that when literature is incorporated into flipped L2 classrooms, students exhibit increased behavioral engagement, such as active participation and peer interactions. The use of literature in this context encourages students to engage critically with texts, enhancing their autonomy and fostering problem-solving skills. Such findings align with the broader trend in the literature that highlights the role of literature in promoting higher-order cognitive skills, which are essential for deep engagement in L2 learning.

Another important theme from the reviewed studies is the emotional impact of literature on student engagement. Studies like those conducted by Afzali & Izadpanah found that literature, when used in conjunction with flipped classrooms, led to higher levels of motivation and emotional engagement among students. In particular, literature-based tasks that were

collaborative and student-centered helped mitigate feelings of anxiety and alienation, which are often associated with L2 learning. The narrative nature of literature also allows students to form personal connections with the material, fostering emotional investment and a sense of enjoyment in the learning process. These findings underscore the value of emotional engagement in sustaining long-term interest and commitment to L2 learning.

The integration of literature into L2 classrooms appears to enhance social engagement by creating a dynamic and interactive learning environment. For example, the studies reviewed suggest that literature-based activities, such as group discussions, role-playing, and debates, facilitate meaningful social interactions among students, both in physical and virtual learning spaces. This social engagement, as seen in the studies by Li & Li and others, not only promotes language practice but also helps build a sense of community and belonging in the classroom. This aligns with the broader understanding of engagement as a multidimensional construct, where cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions intersect to create a more comprehensive and motivating learning experience for students.

Conclusion

The review of existing literature provides compelling evidence that integrating literature into second language classrooms can significantly enhance student engagement in higher education. Studies highlight the multifaceted nature of engagement, with literature fostering not only cognitive development but also emotional and social connections. Engaging with literary texts, students develop a deeper understanding of the language, expand their vocabulary, and improve their critical thinking skills. The emotional and social aspects of engagement, such as increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and stronger peer interactions, are also positively influenced by the inclusion of literature in the curriculum.

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges remain in the effective implementation of literature-based strategies in L2 classrooms. These include issues related to the selection of appropriate texts, the level of difficulty, and the need for tailored instructional approaches that accommodate diverse learner needs. Future research should continue to explore these challenges and investigate the long-term effects of integrating literature into second language education. The integration of literature offers a valuable tool for enhancing student engagement, and further exploration in this area can help educators design more effective and enriching language learning experiences for students in higher education institutions.

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