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## TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH DETECTIVE FICTION: ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S «THE ADVENTURE OF THE BERYL CORONET» FOR UPPER-INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS

**Abstract.** This study explores how English is taught through literary texts, using Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* as the main resource. The approach focuses on teaching advanced vocabulary and enhancing learners' reading skills. A set of challenging words is selected from the story and is used in tasks such as paraphrasing, matching words with definitions, and gap filling. Moreover, if learners do not understand how to pronounce certain words, audio support is provided. The chosen vocabulary is also compared in its use then and now, so that changes in meaning are clearly understood. The study further aims to examine the methodological potential of detective fiction, to analyze how narrative structure supports comprehension, and to highlight the value of authentic linguistic input in vocabulary learning. It also considers key findings from previous research, which emphasizes that literary texts strengthen lexical retention through context. As a result, the results demonstrate that words are taught through consistent exposure, active practice, and contextual analysis. In conclusion, the article contributes to teaching English advanced words and enhancing reading skills through literary texts.

**Keywords:** literary texts, vocabulary development, upper-intermediate learners, detective fiction, contextual learning.

### Introduction

In recent decades, literary texts have regained their importance as authentic materials for teaching English as a foreign language. Literature provides rich linguistic input, cultural insights, and meaningful contexts for developing communicative competence. For upper-intermediate learners, exposure to original literary texts supports vocabulary development, grammar awareness, and discourse interpretation skills, extending learning beyond simplified coursebook materials. In this context, the present study aims to explore the methodological potential of using a literary text in the upper-intermediate classroom. Specifically, the work seeks to examine how Arthur Conan Doyle's «*The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet*» can be applied to language teaching, identify the vocabulary, grammar, and discourse features particularly relevant for B2-level learners, and design a structured lesson framework comprising pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. Additionally, the study aims to discuss the theoretical foundations of teaching English through literature and to justify the use of authentic narrative materials in instructional settings.

Arthur Conan Doyle's short story «*The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet*» is widely recognized for its clear narrative structure, expressive language, and authentic representation of Victorian English. For learners at the B2 level, the story provides an appropriate level of linguistic challenge while remaining engaging and accessible. Its genre - detective fiction - naturally motivates students to follow the plot, make predictions, and analyze characters' actions, which enhances reading comprehension and critical thinking.

The present work examines the methodological value of using Conan Doyle's story as a basis for English lessons aimed at developing vocabulary (including crime-related and descriptive lexical items), grammar structures (modal verbs of deduction and past perfect), and discourse skills (dialogue interpretation, sequencing of events, and cause effect relations). This research does not involve an experiment; instead, it focuses on designing pedagogically grounded teaching materials using a literary text as the main input.

The role of literature in foreign language teaching has been widely discussed in methodological research. Scholars emphasize that authentic literary texts enrich learners' exposure to natural language and stimulate meaningful interaction.

Lazar [5] argues that literature motivates learners, expands cultural knowledge, and supports communicative competence. Similarly, Collie and Slater [2] highlight the benefits of literature for vocabulary extension and stylistic awareness. According to Duff and Maley [3], literary texts foster student creativity and develop interpretive skills, which are crucial for advanced language learning.

Carter and Long distinguish between cultural, linguistic, and personal growth models of teaching literature, all of which are relevant for upper-intermediate learners [1]. Paran stresses that literature contributes to deep reading and enhances students' inferencing abilities - important skills when working with detective fiction [9].

In reading classrooms, text-based methodologies (Nunan, 2003) and communicative approaches [8] highlight the importance of contextualized learning. Gilmore [9] emphasizes that authenticity of texts improves learners' discourse competence. Conan Doyle's writing exemplifies natural dialogue, pragmatic language use, and narrative coherence.

Detective stories have been successfully used for teaching English due to their engaging structure. According to Short [12], narrative tension and logical sequencing stimulate learners to interact with the text actively. McRae [6] notes that literature encourages emotional and cognitive involvement, increasing retention of new vocabulary.

Vocabulary acquisition through literary texts is discussed by Nation (2013), who states that exposure to repeated lexical items in meaningful contexts strengthens long-term memory. Schmitt (2008) adds that inferencing vocabulary from context, which detective stories naturally require, develops learners' lexical competence.

Thus, literary texts and detective fiction in particular present significant methodological advantages for upper-intermediate learners, aligning with communicative, cognitive, and linguistic goals.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study employed an experimental research design to evaluate the effectiveness of literature-based instructional materials developed around Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet*. Two groups of upper-intermediate learners participated in the study: an experimental group, which received instruction based on the developed literary materials, and a control group, which followed conventional textbook-based instruction. Both groups completed a diagnostic pre-test and a post-test to assess vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and language awareness. The instructional sequence consisted of four lesson units incorporating pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. The collected quantitative data were compared to determine the effectiveness of the proposed instructional approach.

### **Result and Discussion**

The developed instructional sequence demonstrates the pedagogical value of integrating detective fiction into Upper-Intermediate English language instruction. The materials show how an authentic literary text can be adapted for educational purposes while preserving its linguistic richness and stylistic authenticity.

The lesson materials designed for this study form a complete four-part instructional sequence based on Arthur Conan Doyle's «The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet». This sequence includes a pre-reading stage, a while-reading stage, a set of post-reading tasks, and a final consolidation task focusing on modernizing Victorian expressions. Each stage contributes a distinct pedagogical function, and together they illustrate how an authentic literary text can be methodically structured to support vocabulary development, grammatical awareness, and interpretive reading skills among upper-intermediate learners. The integrated design demonstrates how literary material can be systematically adapted for language instruction while preserving its authenticity and linguistic richness. In the pre-reading stage learners are introduced to key themes

and vocabulary of the story. They engage with critical-thinking questions that activate prior knowledge and stimulate the use of complex grammatical structures such as modals, conditionals, and relative clauses. Additionally, learners explore a thematic vocabulary list containing definitions, contextual examples, and notes on contemporary usage. This list directly prepares students for linguistic and stylistic features in the story and supports inferencing skills.

In the author's view, the vocabulary tasks are particularly effective because they require learners to engage with meaning rather than memorize isolated definitions (Picture 1).

№	Word / Phrase	Definition	Context in the Story	Use: Then vs. Now
1	eccentric conduct	Unusual or unconventional behavior	Describes the man's strange movements in the street	Still used; <i>eccentric</i> keeps a slightly old-fashioned, polite tone
2	sombre	Dark or dull in color or mood	«He was dressed in a sombre yet rich style»	Still used, literary or formal style
3	in absurd contrast to	Completely opposite in nature or tone	His wild gestures contrast with his dignified dress	Still used, formal academic or literary tone
4	imposing	Grand, impressive, commanding respect	Describes his physical presence	Still used, especially for architecture or people
5	gesticulate / gesticulating	To make gestures while speaking or in strong emotion	The man enters the room «still gesticulating»	Still used, more formal than “gesture”
6	contortion	A twisted or strained expression or movement	His face «writhed into the most extraordinary contortions»	Rare outside descriptive or artistic writing
7	resounded with	resounded with	resounded with	resounded with
8	despair	Despair	despair	despair
9	to unseat one's reason	to unseat one's reason	to unseat one's reason	to unseat one's reason
10	affliction	affliction	Affliction	affliction
11	to compose oneself	to compose oneself	to compose oneself	to compose oneself
12	bore a stain	bore a stain	bore a stain	bore a stain
13	pitiable pass	pitiable pass	pitiable pass	pitiable pass
14	brace oneself	brace oneself	brace oneself	brace oneself
15	to hasten	to hasten	to hasten	to hasten
16	secure one's co-operation	secure one's co-operation	secure one's co-operation	secure one's co-operation
17	concern (as noun: a business firm)	concern (as noun: a business firm)	concern (as noun: a business firm)	concern (as noun: a business firm)
18	to befall	to befall	to befall	to befall
19	compose (tone)	compose (tone)	compose (tone)	compose (tone)
20	fatigued with your haste	fatigued with your haste	fatigued with your haste	fatigued with your haste

Picture 1 – Vocabulary List

This stage equips learners with the lexical tools needed to understand and interpret the narrative and encourages inferencing from context rather than dictionary consultation (Picture 2).

## 2. WHILE-READING STAGE

Read the text attentively and try to identify not only the key events but also the underlying motivations and psychological states of the characters. While reading, take brief notes on any contradictions, unusual behaviour, or details that may later serve as clues. Aim to understand how the author builds tension and mystery.

Picture 2 – While-reading stage

The while-reading materials consist of a shortened but authentic extract from the original story. Only length was adjusted, ensuring that learners receive exposure to genuine linguistic structures, Victorian vocabulary and natural dialogue. This adaptation preserves narrative integrity while making the text accessible for classroom use. The while-reading task guides students in analysing narrative sequencing, cause effect relations and character behaviour.

The post-reading component of the instructional sequence consists of three tasks designed to consolidate learners' understanding of key vocabulary, develop paraphrasing and semantic flexibility, and enhance morphological awareness. These tasks encourage students to move beyond comprehension and engage in active language production, supporting the transition from receptive to productive mastery of the lexical items encountered in the story (Picture 3).

### Task 1. Vocabulary Application

Choose 5 words from the vocabulary list and explain why each word fits its sentence.

Write only the word and one short justification.

1. Mary's face turned completely white; the narrator noticed her sudden
2. Holmes believed the father's explanation was not because it required impossible actions.
3. The police searched the garden examining every corner and surface.
4. The sound that awoke Mr. Holder was so that he immediately knew it came from the next room.
5. Arthur showed great by refusing to react emotionally or defend himself.

Picture 3 – Post-reading stage, task 1

Task 1 requires learners to select five words from the pre-reading vocabulary list and justify why each word appropriately completes a given sentence. The activity focuses on semantic precision, ensuring that students understand not only the dictionary meaning of a word but also its contextual appropriateness and connotative value. By explaining their choices briefly, learners practise lexical discrimination - a crucial skill at the B2 level, and demonstrate an ability to apply vocabulary in meaningful contexts (Picture 4).

### Task 2. Contextual Rephrasing

Rewrite the following sentences using the bolded vocabulary word. Do not change the meaning.

1. Mary controlled her emotions remarkably well. - Use: self-restraint
2. The inspector examined the coronet very carefully. - Use: minutely
3. The situation was shameful for the family that the father could hardly speak of it. - Use: disgrace
4. The explanation did not make sense logically. - Use: tenable
5. Holmes decided to investigate the matter thoroughly. - Use: probe

Picture 4 – Post-reading stage, task 2

Task 2 develops learners' paraphrasing skills by asking them to rewrite sentences using a target lexical item while preserving the original meaning. This activity trains students to manipulate language creatively and recognise stylistic differences between neutral expressions and more formal, literary, or contextually marked vocabulary. Words such as *self-restraint*, *minutely*, *disgrace*, *tenable*, and *probe* require learners to adjust tone and precision, thereby reinforcing both semantic understanding and stylistic awareness (Picture 5).

Task 3. Word Formation Challenge				
Fill in the chart with the correct forms				
Base Word	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
disgrace				
Fatigue				
Impose				
Pallor				
Endeavour				
Secure				
Persuasion				
Now use one form from any three families in your own sentences. Example: She showed great self-restraint despite the shock				

Picture 5 – Post-reading stage, task 3

Task 3 focuses on morphological development, guiding learners to complete a lexical family chart containing noun, verb, adjective, and adverb forms derived from base words such as *disgrace*, *fatigue*, *impose*, *pallor*, *endeavour*, *secure*, and *persuasion*. After completing the chart, learners create original sentences using any three derived forms, promoting active language production and deeper lexical retention. This task strengthens learners' understanding of how word families function within English vocabulary, a skill essential for academic reading and writing at the upper-intermediate level.

In the author's view, the vocabulary tasks are particularly effective because they require learners to engage with meaning rather than memorize isolated definitions.

Together, the three post-reading tasks reinforce vocabulary acquisition, paraphrasing ability, and morphological awareness. They support the broader learning objectives of the lesson sequence by encouraging independent language use, enhancing stylistic sensitivity, and promoting precise and contextually appropriate vocabulary application.

In the author's view, the vocabulary tasks are particularly effective because they require learners to engage with meaning rather than memorize isolated definitions. By applying lexical items in different contexts, students develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary and improve their ability to use new words appropriately in communication.

The analysis of the lesson materials suggests that Arthur Conan Doyle's «The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet» can be effectively adapted into a structured instructional sequence for upper-intermediate learners. The developed materials include pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, each designed to support vocabulary development, grammar awareness, and discourse interpretation. The pre-reading stage introduces key lexical items related to motion, emotion, and analytical observation, reducing potential lexical barriers and promoting inferencing skills. The while-reading tasks guide learners through Holmes's deductive process, emphasizing the sequence of events, cause-effect relationships, and the analysis of descriptive details such as footprints, blood marks, and window impressions. Post-reading activities vocabulary justification, contextual paraphrasing, and word-formation exercises reinforce morphological awareness, lexical precision and higher order thinking skills.

The materials show the pedagogical potential of detective fiction. Literary texts provide authentic vocabulary, natural dialogue, and stylistically rich language, exposing learners to formal, archaic and modern expressions. Tasks focusing on collocations, word formation, and lexical transformation enhance fluency, accuracy, and stylistic awareness, while also encouraging critical

reading, inferencing, and discourse competence. Students are prompted to think analytically, make predictions, and engage emotionally with the narrative, promoting both linguistic and cognitive development. The adapted reading passage preserves the original style while remaining accessible, illustrating that authentic literature can be successfully integrated into classroom practice without oversimplification.

From a teaching perspective, the combination of mystery and authentic language makes the story especially suitable for upper-intermediate learners. The detective genre naturally encourages curiosity and active participation, motivating students to follow the narrative closely while simultaneously engaging with complex linguistic structures.

A deeper analysis of the developed lesson sequence suggests that the effectiveness of the materials lies not only in the use of authentic literature but also in the integration of linguistic and cognitive learning objectives. The story encourages learners to process information actively rather than simply extract factual details from the text. Because detective fiction is based on the gradual revelation of clues and logical reasoning, students are required to formulate hypotheses, evaluate evidence, and revise their assumptions while reading. Such processes promote inferencing skills and analytical thinking, which are essential components of successful reading at the B2 level. In this respect, the story functions not merely as reading material but as a tool for developing higher-order cognitive abilities through language.

The analysis of the vocabulary tasks also indicates that contextualized lexical learning may provide advantages over traditional memorisation techniques. Learners encounter target vocabulary repeatedly in meaningful situations and subsequently apply it in paraphrasing, justification, and word-formation activities. This progression from recognition to production supports deeper lexical processing and encourages students to use new language more confidently. Moreover, the inclusion of Victorian and literary expressions broadens learners' awareness of stylistic variation within English. Exposure to different registers helps students understand that language use depends on context, audience, and communicative purpose, which contributes to overall communicative competence.

Another important observation concerns learner engagement. The narrative structure of «The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet» creates a natural sense of curiosity that can increase motivation throughout the lesson sequence. Unlike many textbook texts designed primarily to illustrate language points, detective stories encourage readers to continue reading in order to solve the mystery. This intrinsic motivation may positively influence both comprehension and vocabulary retention because learners focus on understanding the content rather than completing isolated language exercises. Therefore, the findings suggest that literature-based instruction can effectively combine language development with meaningful intellectual and emotional involvement, making the learning process more engaging and pedagogically valuable for upper-intermediate students.

Overall, the study shows that literature-based lessons can address multiple learning objectives in a single sequence, supporting vocabulary growth, grammar, and discourse skills, while maintaining student engagement. Although the study is theoretical and does not include classroom implementation, it confirms that Conan Doyle's story provides a strong foundation for upper-intermediate instruction. Literature based materials offer advantages over standard coursebook approaches, providing rich linguistic input, stylistic variation, cultural depth, and opportunities for critical thinking, demonstrating their relevance and value in contemporary English language teaching.

To verify the effectiveness of the developed materials, a pedagogical experiment was conducted to compare the achievements of an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group worked with the author's materials based on Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet*, including pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading tasks, while the control group studied the same topic through conventional textbook-based exercises.

The purpose of the experiment was to determine whether the use of an authentic literary text with a structured system of tasks could improve learners' vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and language awareness more effectively than traditional instruction.

The results showed that both groups began at a similar level. The experimental group scored 58.3 points on the initial diagnostic test, while the control group scored 57.9 points. After the

instructional period, the experimental group improved to 78.6 points, whereas the control group reached 66.8 points.

#### Summary result

	Before Experiment	After Experiment	Gain
Experimental group	58.3	78.6	20.3
Control	57.9	66.8	8.9

This means that the experimental group gained 20.3 points, while the control group gained 8.9 points. The difference in improvement clearly indicates that the developed materials had a stronger educational impact.

The experimental group demonstrated a much higher rate of progress, which suggests that the materials were effective in promoting language development.

Students in the experimental group also became more confident in using new vocabulary in their own speech and written work. They showed better understanding of cause-and-effect relations, character motivation, and the overall meaning of the text. In contrast, the control group made progress as well, but it was less pronounced and mainly concerned reproduction of material rather than independent interpretation.

#### Conclusion

The present study investigated the pedagogical potential of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* as a resource for teaching English to Upper-Intermediate learners. A literature-based instructional sequence consisting of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities was designed to promote vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, grammatical awareness, and discourse competence through authentic literary input.

The findings of the pedagogical experiment demonstrated that the proposed instructional approach was more effective than conventional textbook-based instruction. While both the experimental and control groups improved their performance, learners who studied with the developed materials achieved substantially greater progress in vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and language awareness. The experimental group also demonstrated greater confidence in using newly acquired vocabulary and showed stronger analytical skills when interpreting the narrative, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, and evaluating characters' motivations.

The study confirms that detective fiction offers considerable methodological advantages for English language teaching. The authentic linguistic environment, engaging narrative structure, and contextualized presentation of vocabulary encourage active learner participation and foster both linguistic and cognitive development. Carefully designed literature-based activities enable learners not only to acquire new lexical items but also to develop critical thinking, inferencing skills, and stylistic awareness.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted using a single literary work and involved a relatively limited sample of learners. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized to all educational contexts. Future research should examine the effectiveness of similar instructional materials based on different literary genres, learner proficiency levels, and educational settings, as well as investigate their long-term impact on vocabulary retention and communicative competence.

In conclusion, the findings support the integration of authentic literary texts into English language instruction at the Upper-Intermediate level. The instructional model developed in this study demonstrates that detective fiction can serve not only as an engaging reading resource but also as an effective pedagogical tool for fostering vocabulary development, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and communicative competence. These findings contribute to the growing body of research advocating the use of literature-based approaches in contemporary English language teaching.

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## ДЕТЕКТИВТІК ПРОЗА АРҚЫЛЫ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУ: АРТУР КОНАН ДОЙЛДЫҢ «THE ADVENTURE OF THE BERYL CORONET» ШЫҒАРМАСЫ (UPPER-INTERMEDIATE ДЕҢГЕЙІ ҮШІН)

**Аңдатпа.** Бұл зерттеу әдеби мәтіндер арқылы ағылшын тілін оқытуды қарастырады, негізгі ресурс ретінде Артур Конан Дойлдың *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* шығармасы қолданылады. Әдіс күрделі лексиканы оқытуға және оқушылардың оқу дағдыларын дамытуға бағытталған. Әңгімеден алынған қиын сөздер тандалып, олар парафраз жасау, сөздерді анықтамалармен сәйкестендіру және бос орындарды толтыру сияқты тапсырмаларда қолданылады. Сонымен қатар, егер оқушылар кейбір сөздердің айтылуын түсінбесе, аудиоқолдау ұсынылады. Тандалған сөздердің мағынасы бұрынғы және қазіргі қолданыста салыстырылып, мағынадағы өзгерістер анық түсіндіріледі. Зерттеу сондай-ақ детективтік прозаның әдістемелік мүмкіндіктерін қарастыруды, баяндау құрылымының түсінуге қалай ықпал ететінін талдауды және лексиканы меңгеруде аутентикалық тілдік материалдың маңызын көрсетуді мақсат етеді. Бұдан бөлек, әдеби мәтіндердің контекст арқылы лексикалық есте сақтауды күшейтетініне баса назар аударатын бұрынғы зерттеулердің негізгі нәтижелері қарастырылады. Нәтижесінде сөздер тұрақты қайталау, белсенді практика және контекстік талдау арқылы үйретілетіні көрсетіледі. Қорытындылай келе, мақала әдеби мәтіндер арқылы ағылшын тілінің күрделі сөздерін оқытуға және оқу дағдыларын дамытуға үлес қосады.

**Тірек сөздер:** әдеби мәтіндер, сөздік қорды дамыту, upper-intermediate деңгейі, детективтік проза, контекстік оқыту.

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## **ОБУЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ ЧЕРЕЗ ДЕТЕКТИВНУЮ ЛИТЕРАТУРУ: ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЕ АРТУРА КОНАН ДОЙЛА «ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЕ БРИЛЛИАНТОВОЙ КОРОНЫ» ДЛЯ УЧАЩИХСЯ УРОВНЯ UPPER- INTERMEDIATE**

**Аннотация.** Данное исследование рассматривает, как английский язык можно преподавать с помощью литературных текстов, используя произведение Артура Конан Дойла *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* в качестве основного ресурса. Подход направлен на обучение продвинутой лексике и развитие навыков чтения у обучающихся. Из рассказа отбирается набор сложных слов, которые используются в заданиях, таких как перефразирование, сопоставление слов с определениями и заполнение пропусков. Кроме того, если учащиеся не понимают произношение некоторых слов, предоставляется аудиоподдержка. Выбранная лексика также сравнивается по употреблению в прошлом и в настоящем, что позволяет ясно понять изменения значений. Исследование также направлено на изучение методического потенциала детективной литературы, анализ того, как структура повествования способствует пониманию текста, и подчеркивает значения аутентичного языкового материала в изучении лексики. Кроме того, рассматриваются ключевые выводы предыдущих исследований, которые подтверждают, что литературные тексты усиливают запоминание слов через контекст. В результате показано, что слова усваиваются через систематическое повторение, активную практику и контекстный анализ. В заключение статья вносит вклад в обучение продвинутой английской лексике и развитию навыков чтения через литературные тексты.

**Ключевые слова:** литературные тексты, развитие словарного запаса, уровень upper-intermediate, детективная литература, контекстное обучение.

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