



## “LITERATURE” IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### ABSTRACT



Teaching of English language will become more interesting and enthusiastic among the learners if it is taught through Literature. Literature can help the learners to develop their basic skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. At the same time the literary texts deal with the universal themes such as friendship, love, family relationship, social problems, terrorism, war and victory or loss and so on. It will help the learners to understand the other side of the world that are not always covered in the text books. Literary works help the learners to use their imagination, enhance their empathy for others and lead them to develop their own creativity. There are many reasons why teachers do not feel comfortable with literature in the language classroom. Many teachers who have courageously taken the leap of literature in the language classroom speak of the feeling of liberation and the sense of creativity which transfers into the class. The purpose of this paper is to find out the specific problems in teaching language through literature and make solutions for the problems. The paper also tries to find out whether learning English Language is practicable through the use of Literature.

**Keywords:** *Interesting, Enthusiastic, Listening, Speaking, Reading And Writing, Imagination, Enhance, Comfortable, Courageously, Creativity, Practicable.*



## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English education in India has largely depended on the teaching of literature. The relationship between literature and English language teaching has been difficult all these years. In many situations while English language teaching adopted a structural approach, literature was taught as a separate subject. The current approaches have attempted to reexamine the value of literature and have begun to uphold its worth again. Literature is a verbal art that leads readers to appreciate the beauty of language. Literature is used in English Language teaching to broaden students' mind by giving them knowledge of the classics of literature, to improve students' general cultural awareness, to stimulate students' creative and literary imagination and to develop their appreciation of literature.

Literary texts offer a rich source of linguistic input and can help learners to practice the four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing - in addition to identify grammatical structures and presenting new vocabulary. The Literary texts provide opportunities for multi-social classroom experiences and can appeal to learners with different learning styles. Literature is beginning to be viewed as an appropriate vehicle for language learning and development. The main concern of teachers and teacher trainers is not to teach about language, but to develop learners' abilities to make them capable of using the language for a variety of communicative purposes.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Laura Miccoli (2003) tells in her review that, 'Learning Language cannot be divorced from culture learning. The aspects of language are very subtle for learners to grasp, let alone learn to use'. Natalie Hess describes, when we read, understand, and interpret a literary text we learn language through the expansion of our experience with the larger human reality. Ali Yahya Al Arishi(1994) gives an account that the students want to assume the roles, a classroom communicative process where 'hamming it up' and 'mere display' over cognitive and intellectual aims, and they want to engage in an activity fraught with componential artificialities at each other in the communicative process. Bhaliya Uma(2012) discusses

the Literature and the teaching of language skills, benefits of different genres of literature to language teaching and some problem encountered by language teaching within the area of teaching language through literature genres of literature example for poetry, short fiction, drama and novel.

## HYPOTHESIS

This paper aims at the use of literature in EFL/ESL classroom. The main reason for this teaching also discussed here.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Why literature is useful in language teaching?
2. Is it really interesting for the learners?
3. How to teach language through Literature?
4. What are the major problems in teaching language through literature?

## DISCUSSION

Literature has been a subject in many countries at a secondary level, but until recently it has not been given much prominence in the classroom. One main explanation of literature is that literary texts are products that reflect different aspects of society. They are cultural documents which offer a deeper understanding of a country or countries (Basnet & Mounfold 1993). Other linguists say that there is no inherent quality to a literary text that makes a literary text rather it is the interpretation that the reader gives to the text (Eagleton 1983). This brings us back to the above definition in the sense that literature is only literature if it is considered as art. There are many good reasons for using literature in the language classroom. They are,

- Literature encourages interaction because the literary texts are seldom rich and has multiple meaning which can be effectively mined for discussions and sharing feelings or opinions.
- It expands language awareness. Asking learners to examine complicated examples of language makes them more aware of the norms of language.
- Literature is motivating the students because it gives more interesting than the texts in the course books.



- Literature offers a wide range of language structures, which can enhance our understanding of the range of language usages.
- Literature provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items which enrich their language and culture.

Language is incomplete without literature. Literature gives permanent happiness to anyone who reads with diligence and passion. Literature starts in delight but ends in wisdom. It is not only instructs but also delights. It helps students to appreciate other cultures apart from their own. It provides certain emotions like anger, greed, love, jealousy etc that are universal. It helps students to have absolute control over their emotions. McRae (1994) says that literary texts are representational rather than referential. Referential language is very informational and less appealing and representational language appeals to one's emotions and as a result extremely interesting.

Literary texts can be selected based on interest and consequence to students. The level of students should be checked thoroughly before prescribing any literary texts. The earlier generations had solid foundation in language, because they learnt classics written by literary writers like Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Mathew Arnold etc. But, the modern generation does not have any exposure to classics. In India, the beginners can be introduced classics from Indian Writing in English so that they get a glance into the glorious culture and tradition of our motherland. Great writers like R.K.Narayan, Mulkraj Anand, and Rabindra Nath Tagore etc. have permanent influence over the readers. Once the students get a fair idea about the great Indian Writers, it will become easy for them to appreciate the works of literary masters like Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus.

Literary texts will expose students to use the appropriate language according to the situation and condition. Cruz (2010) and Kramersch (1998) speak about the importance of fifth skill that is learning culture apart from the four skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Students will really enjoy learning culture which they confidently believe

in and accepted by society. Reading and writing are mainly associated with literature in language classroom; it has given equal importance to listening and speaking also. The following genres of literature will enhance the language students' knowledge over culture and other aspects.

#### **TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH POETRY**

It has two benefits: first is the appreciation of writers' composition process and second is developing students' wisdom over sensitivity on new words. Poetry provides readers with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond the known usages and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. It triggers unmotivated readers remaining to be open to explorations and different interpretations. It evokes feelings and thoughts in heart and in mind, makes students familiar with figures of speech due to their being a part of daily language use for example simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc. Thus, poetry is a rewarding and enjoyable experience with the properties of rhyming and rhythm both of which convey "love and appreciation for the sound and power of language."

#### **TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH SHORT STORIES**

Teaching language through literature a Short fiction is a supreme resource for observing not only language but life itself. It makes the students' reading task easier due to being simple and short when compared with the other literary genres, enlarges the advanced level readers' worldviews about different cultures and different groups of people. It provides more creative, encrypt, challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge for advanced level readers. It motivates learners to read due to being an authentic material, offers a world of wonders and a world of mystery, gives students the chance to use their creativity, promotes critical thinking skills, and facilitates teaching a foreign culture. It makes students feel themselves comfortable and free, helps students coming from various backgrounds communicate with each other because of its universal language helps students to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings, acts as a perfect vehicle to help students



understand the positions of themselves as well as the others by transferring these gained knowledge to their own world.

#### **TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH DRAMA**

Learners become familiar with grammatical structures in contexts and also learn about how to use the language to express, control and inform through the drama. Drama raises the students' awareness towards the target language and culture. The use of drama is a tool rather than an end gains importance in teaching a foreign language. And the educational benefits of drama are that.

It promotes language development, stimulates imagination and creative thinking, and strengthens comprehension by involving the senses as an integral part of the learning process. It exposing the learners to the target culture as well as the social problems and helping learners to improve their level of competence with respect to their receptive and productive skills. It is enabling students to develop new understandings and forms of knowing not accessible in other more traditional ways of learning. Thus, the use of drama seems to be an effective technique in today's communication-based, student-centered foreign language teaching and it is an authentic material, it helps students to promote their comprehension of the verbal / nonverbal aspects.

#### **TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH NOVEL**

Teaching language through novel is a beneficial technique for mastering not only linguistic system but also life in relation to the target language. In novel, characters reflect what people really perform in daily lives. Novels not only portray but also enlighten human lives. Using novel in a foreign language class offers the following educational benefits that. Language teacher should pay attention to the novel has an intriguing story that will be of interest to the entire class. Themes and settings captivating their imagination and exploring the human condition should be included in the nature of the selected novels. Novel should have a powerful, fast-paced plot and interesting, well delineated, memorable characters. Thus, the use of novel is a very beneficial technique in today's foreign language classes. If selected carefully, using a novel makes the

students' reading lesson motivating, interesting and entertaining.

#### **THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE TEACHER**

There are some factors which must be considered by the language teachers to teach the learners the language through literature. They should have a positive impact on students, they should expose students to real language and they should provide appropriate texts to the students according to their need and cultural values. Most of the teachers neglect this technique because they think that it is time consuming and they could not finish their syllabus within the time if they follow this method.

Literary texts can present teachers and learners with a number of difficulties including: text selection - texts need to be chosen that have relevance and interest to learners. Linguistic difficulty - texts need to be appropriate to the level of the students' comprehension. Length - shorter texts may be easier to use within the class time available, but longer texts provide more contextual details, and development of character and plot. Cultural difficulty - texts should not be so culturally dense that outsiders feel excluded from understanding essential meaning cultural appropriacy - learners should not be offended by textual content.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Teaching English through literature become the fashionable phenomenon. Although literature once played a significant role in language study, its prominence faded as linguistics became the focal point of language programs (Widdowson, 1982). Linguistics such as Topping (1968) argue that literature should be excluded from the foreign language curriculum because of its structural complexity, lack of conformity to standard grammatical rules, and remote control perspective. But it enables the students to improve their written and oral English. It helps them to relax when communicating in foreign language. For many students literature can provide a key to motivating them to read in English.



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