



EFFECTIVE WAY OF TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH LITERATURE

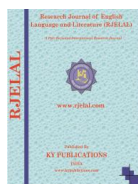
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Abstract

In this study we are attempting to prove that literature is the part and parcel of the language learning tool and would help the students and the teachers to include the literary passages in the language learning centers which would be fruitful, attract the students' attention and would help the language session interesting and cheerful with possible role plays and skits. We all would agree that literature has a lot to do with the English learning whether one likes it or not. Despite the fact literature is not intended to promote English learning skills; it has a tremendous role in stimulating the learning of English language. Literature unites language and people, the teacher and the students with its powerful imaginative and noble exposure.

Keywords: Literature, Language, English, Skills, Exposure.

Introduction

The very word literature is derived from the term "Letter" and each and every letter is essential for language learning. Moreover, as literature has the amazing medium of self-expression in speech and writing, it has every element to gear up the language learning skills. Many teachers consider the use of literature in language teaching as an interesting and worthy concern [1]. As far as language learning is concerned it is not simply learnt rather acquired. And when a student comes across the literary piece of writing he can be attracted more than anything else as literature is the only subject that deals with each and every sphere of our life like, love, joy, sorrow, happiness and enjoyment. As it is closely associated with life language can be well acquired when it is efficiently displayed. In this, we are going to focus on the elements of literature that could prove to be a good language learning tool.

The need of literature at the beginning of Language Learning

We all would agree that the base of language learning starts with simple literary genre right from the cradle. A lovely mother's musical tone can really amuse a baby in the cradle and the rhyme and rhythm of a song can easily enchant anyone on the street. This is what literature really does with the people who love the language. As stated in the beginning, literature is closely associated with the life and it is in fact what the people have really felt, experience and involved. In a nursery class the little children normally love to recite the rhymes with a beautiful rhythm despite the fact they don't know the complete meaning of it. However, as language is an acquired element, slowly the words get implanted in the minds of the little children and helps in the vocabulary building.

If we go through the nursery books irrespective of any language there would be stories with pictures and that would really stimulate the child to identify and guess the meaning of it and when supported by the teacher the learning baby would be able to express the same with further imaginative genres. This is what is the primary duty of literature which helps in self-expression which was earlier conceived in the hearts and minds of the learner.

When the English alphabet is taught with ABCD rhyme it has a tremendous effect to penetrated deep into the hearts of the children and they keep on reciting it. Even today as teachers we could remember the same old ABCD rhyme taught in our nursery or primary school level. This rhyme normally does a mightier job than a teacher who would simply use the chalk and talk teaching methodology. Therefore, it is quite evident that language which is flowing through the genre of literature will have a powerful and effective means of language implant. Collie and Slater [2] argue the major need for including literature in the language learning institutions as per the following points.

- a. Valuable authentic material
- b. Cultural enrichment
- c. Language enrichment
- d. Personal involvement

When we examine the first point it is quite clear that literature has the complete quality of valuable authentic material. It speaks about the life and the materials connected to life. For example when we deeply look into a novel how amazing it is see one's plan, the implementation, the success and failures in the attempt, people's interest, friendship, hatred, broad and narrow minded people, love and treachery, people's travel into different areas, different culture and habits and so on. When all these elements and clustered together it polishes the language learning, concept perceived, ideas displayed and accepted. In short we can say rough language learning is well shaped and connected to life which is very highly appealing to students in the language learning endeavor.

Cultural Enrichment

When we see the settings of fiction or drama, we get to know the cultural diversity of different societies and nations. People's mind always looks for comparison and change of life and such attraction will prompt a student involve into reading habits which is really a ladder indeed in language learning. Meanwhile, the language teachers have every role to motivate the student for such habit by giving certain assignment which would also kindle the interest of the student in this effort.

Language Growth

Collie and Slater affirm the language enrichment vastly found in the piece of any good literary passage. We have the good writers to produce the good material with good content. The right words are placed in the right area which can capture the admiration of the reader on the other hand that helps in language development when the reader attempts to write by himself. There are plenty of good elements for language growth. The rich vocabulary, the style, the metaphors, sarcasm, the jokes, the proverbs and the genres required for a language growth are plenty in literary writings. Literary writing is not a rough piece of information rather it is presented with high power of imagination where spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling is displayed.

Personal involvement

Personal involvement with self-interest cannot be confined with just language learning. Our imagination is far beyond one can measure which has no boundaries at all. All piece of writing come into existence because of personal involvement and here literature reigns supreme. There are young students coming up with their own little role plays, poems and short stories. Each and every attempt of the young soul focuses on his gift of writing skills with admirable imagination. Here, the teacher can provide an atmosphere that the student's interest is coming out with his writing skills and this can supply a good foundation for language learning skills.

Maley [3] underlines the following points for the need of literature in the language learning class room as literature contains:

1. Universality (Literature is not limited to any language or society)
2. Non-triviality (which is necessary for a sound living)
3. Personal relevance (personal experience prompts one to create an art)
4. Variety (every individual is different and can present his own)
5. The interest (our interests to choose and present the article)
6. Economy (the length as per the needs of the reader)
7. Suggestive Power (the very aim of literature to reveal the theme or message)
8. Ambiguity (the message conveyed can be taken with different out looks)

Reading through literature in the language class room:

When we give reading comprehension it would be better to provide students with short stories with is a very useful tool for making students to understand the text and giving the answer whether it is direct or indirect. As we know a short story can have a greater impact than any other piece of information provided. Moreover, in the class room discussion a teacher can also provide literary material like a climax in a drama or novel or an end a short story which the author leaves to the readers mainly the students to discuss and come to a final conclusion or to argue upon the end provided. Such practice not only promotes reading habits but also helping students to make up with thoughtful conclusions and such drill can really be helpful in the language learning. Literature suggests that if literary exercises are provided the students can make inferential level of comprehension where they can make speculations and interpretations about the themes and settings and bring about a good evaluations on the matters presented about the given passage. This will stimulate the problem solving abilities amongst the students and discussion grows and critical appreciation blooms and naturally language level grows with such exercises [4].

Literature promotes Reading and Listening skills

In order to promote reading and writing in a language class the teacher can take up the tool of literary work for discussion. She can ask the students to read aloud the drama where the correct pronunciation, the stress and intonation, dramatic style with proper use of words, the correct gesture, and the emotional outburst whether is joy or sorrow should be present if the story is enacted as a role-play. This is necessary for communication in the outside world and a good platform is well arranged in the class room itself with the help of the dramatization. Here the listener too will have a golden opportunity to improve his language skill as he watches keenly on the As the teacher is there to correct the students' expression of speech and action there takes place a good privilege for promoting English language.

Different literary genres that promote the English Learning Skills:

Poetry as the medium of Language Learning

As per William Wordsworth, "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". It's known from the ancient history that poetry existed even before letters came into existence. All popular ballads in English language would not know its origin or authorship. Even when education was not prevalent poetry dominated and it passed from person to person by oral recitation. Even today music has a great inspiration over the people. From all this we understand the poetry could be used as a good tool for language learning classes. As mentioned earlier, primary school text books provide good rhymes for the students for enjoyment as well as for catching up vocabulary with rhyme and rhythm. One can certainly remember the nursery rhymes he/she had studied in the childhood. Rhymes and music can easily retain in the hearts of the little learner and helps in the language acquisition.

Sarac [5] examines the benefit of poetry in language learning with the following points.

- a. Developing sensitivities for words that may later grow into deeper interest.
- b. Provides readers with a different view point towards language use by going beyond the rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary.
- c. Evokes feelings and thoughts in heart and in mind.
- d. Make students good with figures of speech (i.e. simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery and etc.) due to their daily language usage.

As per Cubukcu [6], "poetry is a rewarding and enjoyable experience with the properties of rhyming rhythm both of which convey love and appreciation for the sound and power of language".

Here, we don't mean Miltonic expression of poetry rather simple poems that is appealing to the hearts and minds of the students and to retain it in their minds and to store up vocabulary then use them whenever it is necessary. Poetry with simple themes are highly beneficial for the students of primary classes like " Little lamb who made thee" [7] or " The Tyger" by William Blake [8] who has written many poems for little children and for the students of secondary level we can give poems with good thoughts and moral by Eliza Cook.

"One angry moment often does

What we repent for years

It works the wrong we nee'r make right

By sorrow or by tears" - "Eliza Cook- on Anger" [9]

Just see the simple theme but a powerful expression with a cause and effect at the end. When we present such verses with lively, contemporary, historical or just class room examples the theme of these words stay so magically in their hearts and such words can develop in the language promotion little by little or in a large scale.

Simply speaking poetry is nothing but "Man speaking to men" – William Wordsworth. Poetic diction can be strong or easy; the essence hard or

simple; the philosophy powerful or lowly everything will come at the end that man speaking to men. The language promotion here is to analyze the power of the poet's imagination, the effect of the diction and the exposure of the ideas with amazing rhymes that would captivate the reader's mind to see the polished and the beautified language skill.

Short stories for language development:

Short stories are very good materials to accelerate language learning skills. Fairy Tales for example pose a very useful guide for language learning and that is the main reason such stories are abound in the primary school syllabus. Following are the benefit of using short stories in the English Language class room.

- a. It motivates the learners for listening.
- b. Helps to understand the cultural background of different groups or people.
- c. Offers a world of wonders and a world of mystery.
- d. Provides a great chance for the students to be creative.
- e. Promotes critical thinking amongst the students and to discern good and evil found in the short stories.
- f. Normally such stories end with good moral the students will have a better understanding of the ethics and values that good will win but the evil will fail at the end.
- g. It also facilitates teaching a foreign culture and knowledge of the overseas world.
- h. It makes students feel themselves comfortable and free.
- i. It acts as a perfect guide to help students understand the positions of themselves as well as others.

In short, the short story is a very helpful technique in today's Language learning classes. As it is short it makes the students' reading task higher and the teacher's role to make the environment joyful and glee. On the other hand it helps the students grow in the knowledge of vocabulary and

the use of English language in different surroundings and atmosphere.

Using Drama as an important tool in Language Learning

When we speak about drama it is a story acted on stage. Normally life is depicted as drama and the in such a play we find several characters with different mindset. Moreover, we see drama catches the attention of more audience when it is enacted. The characters come up with different roles and make up and the plot will explain the success and failure of the hero or brings about a great amusement to the audience. If classical plays are enacted one could enjoy the rich vocabulary and understand the wits and the humorous tone. However, if the students themselves arrange a drama with a good plot it would be more welcoming at it helps the writer to display his dramatic talents and the listener to grow in the knowledge of the English language. As drama has dialogues with action it attracts the attention of the pupils and thus provides an ample chance to improve their language skills.

According to Lenore [10] the following points are helpful in language growth when a drama is staged in the English language class room.

It stimulates imagination and creative thinking.

- a. Develops critical thinking skills.
- b. Promotes language development.
- c. Broadens the effective listening skills.
- d. Strengthens comprehension and learning retention.
- e. It places the students to be the judges and analyze the plot whether justice overcomes finally in the plot.

Meanwhile, Helton and Thomas [11] projecting their view as per the following about drama's influence on the learner:

- a. Helps students to identify the emotions of the characters so that they themselves can cope up with the similar situation they encounter in life.

- b. Helping students to identify the problems and to find better solutions for it in real life.
- c. Helping them to act in the critical situation from the lesson they have learnt from the drama.
- d. Helping them to become effective decision makers.
- e. Presents a unique way of teaching reading by getting students involved
- f. A Teamwork that makes the class room active and busy.

From all these we see drama as an important role in imparting language learning in students in speaking, listening and reading dramas as well. Particularly teachers those who wish to promote skills of language, drama can be taken as a very powerful and useful literature element to motivate the students with best results.

Novel to be used in the Language Class

Novel being a long narrative fiction may not be used as a whole in the language class. However, the extracts or the shortened version of a novel can well serve the purpose of the language learning exercise. The climax of a novel can also arouse the students' awareness a teacher can provide such areas in the class room. A novel normally speaks in detail about the ups and downs of the real life situation it will have a great impact on the students to pay more attention. Meanwhile, as novel takes the reader all along the way the character moves. This helps the student reader to place himself in such situation and makes him to feel life like. There are different characters; different episodes and different types of people high and low rich and poor are in abundance in novel. True love, sacrifice, villainy, comic elements and tragic situations are profoundly seen in any novel and the students read and study the life in depth.

Let's find some advantages of novel promoting language learning as listed below:

- a. It increases the advanced level of reader's knowledge about different culture and different group of people and their way of life.

- b. It formulates student's motivation to read an authentic material adapt to the different portrait of language skills.
- c. Improves critical thinking skills and helping them to make certain judgment of the plot concerned.
- d. Compare himself /herself on the characters in order to correct himself or alter the way of life towards morals and values.
- e. As the characters in a novel involve in letter writing, presentation of dialogues or telephonic conversation, it is a good material in the language learning exercise
- e. Meanwhile, the teacher must make sure that the student should not blindly follow each and every step of the biographer but to choose the best side of his life.
- f. A good biography can also prompt them to create their own story in the days to come when they carefully understand the way it was portrayed by the biographer.

In short the language teacher can use novel or an extract of a novel to be a good source of teaching English language in the class room. Meanwhile, if the novel is staged it is again an added advantage for them to make good progress in the language skill.

Biography / Auto-biography to be the tools of language learning skills:

Biography is an excellent material for teaching the language skills. An honest biography provides a good platform for reading exercise. If the biographer is a celebrity it takes up a double advantage for the students have their own hero's as film actors, players, singers, musicians, scientists, freedom fighters etc. As per their interest the teacher may suggest the students to choose his own hero and when they come up with the information they have read about him it helps them in their reading habits and to compare themselves with them and motivate them to improve in their skills to achieve the best like the biographer did in his life. The teacher may guide them as per the following list.

- a. Helping them to make the right choice of the biographer.
- b. Asking the students to list the merits and demerits of the hero.
- c. Make the students to find the achievements of the biographer and asking them to progress in their lives.
- d. Moreover, the teacher can also highlight how the biographer has overcome the

problems faced by him and to make students to grow in self-confidence and good decision makers.

If the biography is too long the teacher can bring about the extract or the main message displayed in the biography and give them different exercises like reading aloud or reading comprehension or asking them to write / paraphrase about the biographer. Such drill can really make a good progress in developing language learning and the biographer being the hero of the student he can focus his attention more on his life story and acknowledge the message conveyed in the biography. In the auto biographical account of great heroes like Mahatma Gandhi as in "My Experiment with Truth" [12] and Nelson Mandela's "A Long walk to Freedom" [13] one could find a lot of similarities and the accounts stimulate our hearts and souls. In these accounts we can see their childhood age and the schooling, the playmates and their friendship circle, the family bondage, their childhood achievements and failures and certain accounts are so funny as Nelson Mandela, as a child used to ride on a donkey to school and taking milk directly from the cow's udder and so playful and jovial. Young Gandhi on the other side used to be so calm and obedient to his mother with his tiny friend circle. However, in a day he took mutton and later vomited and bleated like a goat at home looks very interesting. Sharing of such childhood experiences will remind the students of their own early life and pave their ways for expressing their own experiences a literary way. Moreover, when we project the youthful achievements, their studies and the freedom struggle against the British Imperialism and the victory they got will certainly help the student generation to put themselves in such scene to dream for different achievements in life.

Literary Criticism a tool for the language learning skills:

Literary Criticism seems to be a hard piece to be included in language learning. As we know classical criticism cannot be suggested for this purpose and it doesn't serve the purpose of language learning. However, when we understand the thorough meaning of criticism we can accept certain areas of literary criticism in language learning. The primary aim of criticism is to examine the good and bad side of any literary work and as we know the critic is the person who is well versed in the literary works as well as his critical ideas. "The Lives of poet" an amazing critical work of Doctor Johnson is indeed time immemorial. His close study of those classical scholars like Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Ben Johnson, John Milton and etc really fill our hearts with joy and gladness. An excellent work like this would provide students to choose any one of the best writer of English Literature and to know about them and their works concerned. Another critical work like "An Apology for Poetry" by Philip Sydney [14] is a work of par excellence which can provide a wonderful defense of poetic glory. Here he sees poetry more than any other subject like Science, history or geography and made it known that the early religious writings embrace poetry to reach out to the people and he quotes the book of Psalms and the Songs of Solomon. "The Defense of Poetry" by Shelly [15] is again a major critical work elevating a poet to a highest position. A good paragraph of such work can really be a challenging task in the class room to instigate the critical thinking amongst the students. Let me list out certain advantages of using this in the language learning centers.

- a. Students can develop critical thinking of any study material to look deep in to that to know whether it is worth reading or not.
- b. The aptitude of questioning and reasoning will develop when they go through such passages literary criticism.
- c. By using the work of literary criticism a student can easily identify the strengths and weaknesses of the writer as well as the concerned work.

d. It would help the students to maintain a good equilibrium good and evil and virtue and vice.

e. It would tremendously develop the language learning skills with proper discernment and skillful judgment.

Thus we can assert that a good work of Literary Criticism too has a greater role in language development within a class room set up.

Essay Writing

Essay Writing is also the part and parcel to enhance literary reading and the wonderful display of language with the marvelous expression of thoughts normally breathtaking effort indeed. Sr. Francis Bacon is called the Father of English Essays. He wrote many essays on the titles Of Truth, Of Studies, Of Usury and so on. Even today it is a famous quote of Bacon "Of Studies" suggests "Some books are to be tasted, and others to be swallowed but some few to be chewed and digested" A well-presented essay can be tested in a way that can develop into a great debate of joy and jubilation and it becomes mandatory for the reader to choose the best that will be thought provoking. In the 17th and the 18th century the Coffee House in London became the famous clubs of symposium where the Editorials in the News Papers were feeding the ears of the common public. Alexander Pope and John Dryden contributed so much for the public with their wits, satires, exhortations and criticisms over the general public. Even today we really appreciate the newspaper editorials that provide Educational documents, puzzles for the general public on language and subject allocation is there for the student's of English Language covers Composition 1 for the first year students, Composition 2 for the second year students, Creative writing is there for the 3rd year students and Advanced and Academic Writing is there for the 4th year students. As Bacon pointed out that "Reading maketh a perfect Man" the students are advised to read and plenty of books that are available in the college library, to go through the educational magazines and to listen carefully at the Course lectures and browse internet for more updates [16]. The habit of reading and listening

helps to write well with the proper usage of language skills.

The teacher's role here is to:

- a. Provide opportunities with the innovative thinking.
- b. Help them express their own ideas in writing and speaking.
- c. Help them to choose the best author and to make research work.
- d. Provide them with homework or class room assignment to see how far their ideas have achieved the desired goal in writing with regard to literary figures.
- e. Enhance Report Writing about a certain event that has taken place or a report on a tour they have gone in the recent past and etc.
- f. Writing composition on various topics on current affairs, the person they like or trust, describing a glad or sad occasion they have encountered. A great escape from a dangerous situation and so on.

Conclusion

In this world of business communication and internet revolution literature has been widely ignored in the language centers and it is my humble attempt to prove that literature has a greater role even today in the language development. However, it should be stated that the very word literature has derived from the root word "letter" which is the root of all learning. As the piece of literature is an authentic document it can charm as well as amuse the students of English learning. It creates interest and moreover, involves students with their imaginative views in the course of language learning. If literature is effectively used in class rooms and the language centers the outcome will be colorful and progressive.

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