



ROLE OF LITERATURE IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Introduction:

Language and literature are inseparable. They are complementary to each other. Literature cannot live without language and language cannot survive without literature. Among language instructors, there has been a hot debate as to how, when, where and why literature should be incorporated in ESL, EFL curriculum. Literature plays a vital role in teaching four basic language skills like reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, when using literature in the language classroom, skills should never be taught in isolation but in an integrated way.

Reasons for Using Literary Texts in Foreign Language Classes:

According to Collie and Slater, there are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. These are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. In addition to these four main reasons, universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power and ambiguity are some other factors requiring the use of literature as a powerful resource in the classroom context.

Valuable Authentic Material:

Literature is authentic material. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real-life contexts 'i.e. travel timetables, city plans, forms, pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles' are included within recently developed course materials. Thus, in a classrooms context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life, real life like settings. Literature can act as a beneficial complement to such materials, particularly when the first "survival" level has been passed. In reading literary texts, because students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers, they become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings.

Cultural Enrichment:

For many language learners, the ideal way to increase their understanding of verbal, nonverbal aspects of communication in the country within which that language is spoken a visit or an extended stay is just not probable. For such learners, literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc. Facilitate understanding how communication takes place in that country. Though the world of a novel, play, or short story is an imaginary one, it presents full and colorful setting in which characters from many social, regional backgrounds can be described. A reader can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside' i.e. their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings. This colorful created world can quickly help the foreign learner to feel for the codes and preoccupations that shape a real society through visual literacy of semiotics. Literature is perhaps best regarded as a complement to other materials used to develop the foreign learner's understanding into the country whose language is being learned. Also, literature adds a lot to the cultural grammar of the learners.

Language Enrichment:

Literature provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Students become familiar with many features of the written language, reading a substantial and contextualized body of text. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Students also become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn and begin to make use of some of that potential themselves. Thus, they improve their communicative and cultural competence in the authentic richness, naturalness of the authentic texts.

Personal Involvement:

Literature can be useful in the language learning process owing to the personal involvement it fosters in the reader. Once the student reads a literary text, he begins to inhabit the text. He is drawn into the text. Understanding the meanings of lexical items or phrases becomes less significant than pursuing the development of the story. The student becomes enthusiastic to find out what happens as events unfold via climax; he feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. This can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process. At this juncture, the prominence of the selection of a literary text in relation to the needs, expectations, and interests, language level of the students is evident. In this process, he can remove the

identity crisis and develop into an extrovert. Maley lists of the reasons for regarding literature as a potent resource in the language classroom as follows:

- **Universality:** Because we are all human beings, the themes literature deals with are common to all cultures despite their different way of treatment - Death, Love, Separation, Belief, Nature the list is familiar. These experiences all happen to human beings.
- **Non-Triviality:** Many of the more familiar forms of language teaching inputs tend to trivialize texts or experience. Literature does not trivialize or talk down. It is about things which mattered to the author when he wrote them. It may offer genuine as well as merely "authentic" inputs.
- **Personal Relevance:** Since it deals with ideas, things, sensations and events which either constitute part of the reader's experience or which they can enter into imaginatively, they are able to relate it to their own lives.
- **Variety:** Literature includes within it all possible varieties of subject matter. It is, in fact, a battery of topics to use in ELT. Within literature, we can find the language of law and of mountaineering, of medicine and of bull-fighting, of church sermons and nursery talk.
- **Interest:** Literature deals with themes and topics which are intrinsically interesting, because part of the human experience, and treats them in ways designed to engaged the readers' attention.
- **Economy and Suggestive Power:** One of the great strength of literature is its suggestive power. Even in its simplest forms, it invites us to go beyond what is said to what is implied. Since it suggests many ideals with few words, literature is deal for generating language discussion. Maximum output can often be derived from minimum input.
- **Ambiguity:** As it is highly suggestive and associative, literature speaks subtly different meanings to different people. It is rare for two readers to react identically to any given text. In teaching, this has two advantages. The first advantage is that each learner's interpretation has validity within limits. The second advantage is that an almost infinite fund of interactive discussion is guaranteed since each person's perception is different.

Benefits of Using Poetry to Language Teaching:

Poetry can pave the way for the learning and teaching of basic language skills. It is metaphor that is the most prominent connection between learning and poetry. Because most poetry consciously or unconsciously makes use of metaphor as one of its primary methods, poetry offers a significant learning process. There are at least two learning benefits that can be derived from studying poetry:

- The appreciation of the writer's composition process, which students gain by studying poems by components.
- Developing sensitivity for words and discoveries that may later grow into a deeper interest and greater analytical ability sarac also explains the educational benefits of poetry as follows:
- Provides readers with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond the known usages and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary,
- Triggers unmotivated readers owing to being so open to explorations and different interpretation,
- Evokes feelings and thoughts in heart and in mind,
- Makes students familiar with figures of speech 'i.e. simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc. Due to their being a part of daily language use.

Benefits of Using Short Stories to Language Teaching:

Short fiction is a supreme resource for observing not only language but life itself. In short fiction, characters act out all the real and symbolic acts people Carry out in daily lives, and do so in a variety of registers and tones. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives. The inclusion of short fiction in the ESL, EFL curriculum offers the following educational benefits:

- 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,
- Provides more creative, encrypt, challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge for advanced level readers,
- Motivates learners to read due to being an authentic material,
- Offers a world of wonders and a world of mystery,
- Give students the Chance to use their creativity,
- Promotes critical thinking skills,
- Facilitates teaching a foreign culture I.e. serves as a valuable instrument in attaining cultural knowledge of the selected community,
- 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 student understand the positions of themselves as well as the others by transferring these gained knowledge to their own world.

Benefits of Using Drama to Language Teaching:

Using drama in a language classroom is a good resource for language teaching. It is through the use of drama that learners become familiar with grammatical structures in contexts and also learn about how to use the language to express, control and inform. The use of drama raises the student' awareness towards the target language and culture. In this context, the use of drama as a tool rather than an end gains importance in teaching a foreign language. Yet, there is one obvious danger: cultural imposition should be severely avoided since it results in the loss of language ego and native language identity in many cases. To put it differently, languages learning should be culture-free but entirely not culture-biased. For this reason, the new language and the context of the drama should fuse into a language learning process with high interest, relevance and enjoyment. Learners should make use of drama to promote their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstances and make sense of their extra linguistic world in a deeper way. The educational benefits of drama, according to, are as follows:

- Stimulates the imagination and promotes creative thinking,
- Develops critical thinking skills,
- Promotes language development,
- Heightens effective listening skills,
- Strengthens comprehension and learning retention by involving the senses as an integral part of the learning process,
- Increases empathy and awareness of others,
- Fosters peer respect and group cooperation,
- Reinforces positive self - concept,
- Provides teachers with a fresh perspective on teaching.

Some other educational benefits of using drama in a foreign language class can be listed as follows:

- Bringing authenticity into the classroom,
- Exposing the learners to the target culture as well as the social problems a society may be undergoing,
- Increasing, creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation, and examination of moral attitudes, while developing communication skills and appreciation of literature,
- Helping learners improve their level of competence with respect to their receptive and productive skills,
- Providing a solid basis for the learners to bridge the gap between their receptive and productive skills,
- Offering students the space and time to develop new ideas and insights in a range of contexts,
- Enabling students to develop new understanding and forms of knowing not accessible in other more traditional ways of learning.

Benefits of Using Novel to Language Teaching:

The use of a 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:

- Develops the advanced level readers' knowledge about difference cultures and different groups of people,
- Increases students' motivation to read owing to being an authentic material,
- Offers real life, real life like settings,
- Give students the opportunity to make use of their creativity language,
- Improves critical thinking skills,
- Paves the way for teaching the target language culture,
- Enables students to go beyond what is written and dive into what is meant,

Helton, C. A, J. Asamani and E. D. Thomas expounds the educational benefits of novels as follows:

- Stimulates their imagination,
- Helps students to identify the emotions of the characters so that they can learn how others cope with situations and problems similar to their own experiences,
- Helps them master the skills that will enable them to acquire information, process this knowledge, identify problems, formulate alternatives, and arrive at meaningful, thoughtful, effective decisions and solutions,
- Develops oral and written language skills,

- Serves as a springboard for a multitude of holistic learning and critical thinking activities beginning with basic comprehension and writing,
- Presents a unique way of teaching reading by getting students involved and excited about the reading process,
- Motivated students to become a lifelong reader,

Conclusion:

Literature plays an important role in the English programs of many non-English speaking countries. However, there are some problems encountered by language teachers within the area of teaching English through literature. First, there are very few pedagogically-designed appropriate materials that can be used by language teachers in language classroom. Second, there is a lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching in TESI, TEFL programs. Third, there is the absence of clear - cut objectives defining the role of literature in ESL, EFL. Many instructors try to include literature in their classroom, but lack the background and training in that field. The teacher has an important role in teaching English through literature.

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