



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE, LITERATURE
AND TRANSLATION STUDIES (IJELR)**

A QUARTERLY, INDEXED, REFEREED AND PEER REVIEWED OPEN ACCESS

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

<http://www.ijelr.in>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 4. Issue.1., 2017 (Jan-Mar.)

ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

ROLE OF LITERATURE IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Dr. S.SOBANA

Guest Faculty in English

Mother Teresa Women's University, Research and Extension Centre,
SAIDAPET, CHENNAI. Email: sobanasobi@gmail.com



Dr. S.SOBANA

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the need to recognize the important role that English Language and Literature plays in professional success round the usage of words, speed of delivery of words, pitch modulation and body language. With the advent of globalization, English has become a global language. Hence it appears to be the best bet as a link language. In fact, it still remains a strong communicative language. The paper is an attempt to explore the significance of Language and Literature, which benefit you in all aspects of your life, from your professional life to social gatherings. Language and Literature helps us in different channels that can be used for communication flow more efficiently. The ability to communicate effectively is one of the most critical skills that anyone can master.

Keywords: Literature, Language, English, Teacher, Communication.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

The main goal of a language teacher is to teach the grammar of a language and it is mistaken that literature does not have a place in it. Literature due to its structural complexity and unique use of language is believed to contribute little to the goal of teaching language. This is the most common argument against using literature as a part of curriculum for teaching English.

There are two levels of linguistic knowledge-the level of usage and the level of use. The level of usage involves the knowledge of linguistic rules and level of use is to know how to use these rules for effective communication. And literature helps to improve the vocabulary usage and syntax. Literature is ideal for developing an awareness of language and it need not be studied to the exclusion of other types of texts. Literature helps in increasing the reading proficiency, that is, it helps an interaction to take place between the writer and the reader. The interaction is said to take place in two levels. One is interacting with the text and decoding the language and the other comprehends the concepts presented.

Literature also works to promote a greater tolerance for cultural differences for both teacher and student. Apart from the encouragement of tolerance, it also helps in the transfer of imaginative energy from literature to student. But care should be taken to see that a simple and suitable text is prescribed for the students. The selected texts should be readable and stylistically uncomplicated.

Thus literature has an active place in teaching language. For many students literature can provide a key to motivating them to read in English. Literature is an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use and for

introducing cultural assumption which helps the students to spur their own imaginative writing. Literature is a basic component and a source of authentic texts of the language curriculum rather than an ultimate aim of English instruction. Literature can be used as a technique for teaching both basic language skills and language areas.

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, suggestive power and ambiguity are some other factors requiring the use of literature as a powerful resource in the classroom context.

Literature is authentic material. Since students should also cope up with language intended for native speakers by reading literary texts they become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings. For many language learners, the ideal way to increase their understanding of verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication is to visit the country in which the language is spoken. Since this is not possible they can read literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc., which will facilitate them to understand how communication takes place in that country.

Though the world of a novel, play or short story is an imaginary one, it presents a full and colorful setting in which characters from many social and regional backgrounds can be described. A reader can discover the way in which the characters in such literary works see the world outside, that is, their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions ; what they buy, believe in fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings. This colorful world created can quickly help the foreign learner to feel the codes and preoccupations that shape a real society.

Literature also provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Students become familiar with many features of the written language. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures and the different ways of connecting ideas which develop and enrich their own writing skills.

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 the climax; he feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. This can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process. Some of the other reasons listed by Maley are Universality, Non-triviality, Personal Relevance, Variety, Interest, Economy, Suggestive Power and Ambiguity.

Death, love, separation, belief, nature are the common themes of literature and they are treated differently based on the different cultures. Many 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. There is also personal relevance since the reader can relate the ideas, things, sensations and events with their own lives.

Literature also has variety for we can find the language of law, mountaineering, medicine, bull-fighting, church sermons and nursery talk and one of the great strengths of literature is its suggestive power. Even in its simplest forms, it invites us to go beyond what is said to what is implied. As it is highly suggestive and associative, literature speaks subtly different meanings to different people. Because of this is an infinite fund of interactive discussion is guaranteed since each person's perception is different. Apart from this, one of the main functions of literature is its sociolinguistic richness since language changes from one social group to another and from one geographical location to another.

When selecting the literary texts to be used in language classes, the language teacher should take into account, the needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students. However, one major factor to take into account is whether a particular work is able to reveal the kind of personal involvement by arousing the learners' interest and eliciting strong, positive reactions from them. Reading a

literary text is more likely to have a long-term and valuable effect upon the learners' linguistic and extra linguistic knowledge when it is meaningful and amusing. Choosing books relevant to the real-life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner is of great importance.

Language difficulty has to be considered as well. If the language of the literary work is simple, this may facilitate the comprehensibility of the literary text. Interest, appeal, relevance, enjoyment; a fresh insight into issues felt to be related to the heart of people's concerns; the pleasure of encountering one's own thoughts or situations exemplified clearly in a work of art; the other, equal pleasure of noticing those same thoughts, feelings, emotions, or situations presented by a completely new perspective: all these are motives helping learners to cope with the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material.

By reading a poem, student develops sensitivity for words and discoveries that may later grow into a deeper interest and greater analytical ability. It provides readers with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond the known usages and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary and it makes students familiar with figures of speech like simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc.,

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. It makes the students' reading task easier due to being simple and short when compared with the other literary genres, it motivates learners to read, offers a world of wonders and a world of mystery, gives students the chance to use their creativity, promotes critical thinking skills, facilitates teaching a foreign culture, makes students feel themselves comfortable and free and helps students coming from various backgrounds to communicate with each other because of its universal language.

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. It also strengthens comprehension and learning retention by involving the senses as an integral part of the learning process, It brings authenticity into the classroom, exposes the learners to the target culture as well as the social problems of the society and increases creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation, and examination of moral attitudes, while developing communication skills and appreciation of literature.

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. It develops oral and written language skills, presents a unique way of teaching reading by getting students involved and excited about the reading process and it motivates students to become a lifelong reader. When selecting a novel to be used in the foreign language class, the language teacher should pay attention to whether 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. The content of the novel should be suitable to students' cognitive and emotional levels.

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 a language classroom and 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.

As Obediat states, literature helps students acquire a native-like competence in English, express their ideas in good English, learn the features of modern English, learn how the English linguistic system is used for communication, see how idiomatic expressions are used, speak clearly, precisely, and concisely, and become

more proficient in English as well as become creative, critical, and analytical learners. Literature is not only a tool for developing the written and oral skills of the students in the target language but also is a window opening into the culture of the target language, building up a cultural competence in students.

Works Cited

Collie, J. and S. Slater. *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*. Cambridge: CUP, 1990.

Maley, A. *Down from the Pedestal: Literature as Resource in Literature and the Learner*. Cambridge: Modern English Publication, 1989.

Obediat, M. *Language vs. Literature in English Departments in the Arab World in English Teaching Forum*, 1997.
