

INCLUSION OF LITERATURE IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: A UTILITARIAN APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

According to well known proverb “Literature is a mirror of society”, literature is connected to real human experience of society irrespective caste, creed, religion and culture. In order to reinforce English language proficiency along with analytical, critical and creative thinking of learners, there is an alert to engage the students of English language with past as well as contemporary social issues of our society. A man cannot be a human being by doing away with ongoing practices of society. Incorporation of social issues in a course of language and literature can make a language classroom more participative and interactive. It also widens the horizon for a skill-based and task-oriented holistic learning of English language and literature. The proposed paper will make an attempt to explain and evaluate the genuine contribution by introducing some textual readings related to contemporary society to make this new approach adequately effective for the learners.

Keywords: English language learning, literature, contemporary, culture, acquisition

Introduction:

The paper focuses on the use of literature and language in global context. Language and Literature are two words that seem to be similar but strictly speaking they are not so. These are the two words which are the most commonly used by the literate people because language and literature are used not only for literary works but also for medical science, computer science and all other subjects of studies. But very few people understand the real meaning of language and literature in a wide sense. In fact we use language and literature as a single compound word having the one meaning. But if we go deep into the meaning of the words, language and literature, we find a great difference between them. We also find that language is primary and literature is secondary. The Free Encyclopaedia defines language as "the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communications." (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia).

Difference between language and literature:

Literature is produced by the creation of works in a particular language by the writers of the language. A language on the other hand is a mode of expression of thought by means of articulate sounds. This is the main difference between language and literature. There can be as many literatures as there are languages. Language is the fundamental unit of literature. In other words it can be said that language makes literature. Literature is the source which makes use of language to present myriad hues of society and its culture. Thus we see that literature is the product of language and so it depends on language. If a language is dead, automatically, its literature is also dead. It has been rightly said that if you want to kill and destroy a community, first kill its language, the community will automatically be killed and vanished. Since there are many languages so many different literature came into existence. Every language has its own literature. Any literature can be said to be rich or poor depending upon the correctness of the language in which it is created. Literary Language is that language which is used in literary criticism and general discussion on some literary works. Before the 18th century the language of literature was totally different from the language which was used by the common man in spoken or written. So literature was not easy to understand for a common man. Only highly qualified and educated people could enjoy the reading of literature. So literature was far away from the reach of the common people. Shakespeare's language was not so easy to understand for common Elizabethans. Similarly Samuel Johnson's prose was not easy for common people because it was full of rhetoric with antecedent models in Greek and Latin. It was only Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) who wrote the major works of literature in the ordinary English language. Since then the language of literature has changed a lot. William Wordsworth proposed the theory of poetic diction in literature by saying that the language of poetry should be “a selection of language, really used by men.”

In the modern time we find literature written in the languages which are really used by common people in their daily life. This is the reason why literature has become popular in our time. Now every literate person can enjoy the reading of literature of his or her choice because it is written in the language which he or she uses in daily life. In country like India where people consider English language as a monster, Simple but effective language can be a great help. So nowadays literature has become close to the people and so its reading has increased. It has now become a necessity to write in ordinary and common language.

The Inclusion of Literature in Language Classrooms:

In this paper we also propose to discuss the purpose, aim and benefit of studying literature in language classrooms. Everybody knows why do we study language? We want to speak and communicate with others but did anybody ever think why do we study literature? What can be the benefits of studying literature in this scientific & technical age? Isn't it the wastage of time and energy to study poetry, novels, short stories or drama? According to Leo Tolstoy literature answers two important questions which are related to the human beings in the world and they are: who we are and how should we live in this world. The answer of very these questions proves that literature is vital for our life because it reflects our life in it. When we study literature we come to know ourselves which is a kind of self revelation. We come to know where we are committing mistake in our life and so we can make correction.

Literature is the mirror of our lives in which we see the reflections of our lives. Literature includes all the activities of human soul in general, or within particular sphere, period, country, or a language. (Nabila Tanvir, Literature and its Scope, 2009, in www.classic-enotes.com). Literature is that form of writing which arouses our feelings and emotions by the perfection of form or excellence of ideas literature has several forms. Each of these forms is called a literary form. The various literary forms are poetry, prose, drama, epic, free verse, short story, novel and the like. Each of these literary forms is laden with the language in which it is written. In short it can be said that the entire literature is constructed by the language in which it is written. The Important historical periods in English literature are the Renaissance period, old English period, Middle English period, Shakespearean and Elizabethan period, 18th century Restoration period, 19th century Victorian period, and the 20th century modern period. Romanticism, Feminism, post-colonialism, post-structuralism, post modernism, psycho-analysis, Marxism etc. are the important movements in English literature.

Literature is a required tool in the material development of a student for language learning course. Literature exposes students to a wider expanse of themes and human emotions like love, hate, joy, sorrow, fear, and faith. We have also noticed that literature has two aspects—the first is enjoyment and appreciation and the second is the analysis and exact description. When study literature we go to a new world—a world of dream and magic—which is totally different from our own real world. Being an art literature expresses life in forms of truth and beauty. That's why any literary text in the form of short story, poem or a novel may be gripping the attention of the students. As a result students get involved in the process of reading and comprehending as to what is to happen next in the text. In this sense literature can prove to be helpful in learning the language and increasing basic components of communication skills—listening, speaking, reading & writing. Language learning can not take place in a one day. A person is most fluent in their mother tongue as it's the one language we have been speaking since we are born. I believe if you can learn a secondary language really fast if you learn to think in it. In ELT (English Language Teaching) context there are two of developing the language competence : acquisition and learning. Acquisition is something happening naturally in a sub conscious manner, stays for ever as how we acquire our mother tongue, but learning is happening with the respective person's consciousness which for sure fades away over a period of time. To be precise Acquisition is the best method which makes you to acquire the language. The paper suggests that a systematic use of target language and a minimal use of mother tongue in English language classroom may provide learners with explicit knowledge of the target language systems.

Selection of Material by a Language Learner:

It is important to decide whether the text we have selected is really comprehensible by the target learners; will the text be useful for the target students; will it be enjoyable or too difficult to motivate them? Lazar (1993) explores that the nature of course should be considered as to what is the level of the students for the course. The most important factor in selecting materials for a language course will be learners themselves. Sometimes even advanced learners may find it difficult to understand the language of the literary text as it uses too many rhetorical devices and metaphors. Material selection and adaptation, thus, involves consideration of the literary qualities of the text. Use of funny short stories, which also have a moral, can enhance the motivation level of the learners.

Introducing literature in language class room can broaden students' horizon and make them aware of the social, political, and historical events. Students will be able to express their feelings and opinions in group discussion and other activities as literature facilitates multiple layers of meaning. Students' acquisition of language is accelerated when they interpret multiple meanings all by themselves. According to Widdowson, exposing the language learners to literature helps develop their interpretive skills by exploring or brainstorming a text for its ambiguities or variety of meanings or connotation.

Conclusion:

English literature has become part of the education system and English language as the medium of instruction in many countries of the world. It is undeniable fact that language reflects culture and one can learn better language through literature. With the tremendous achievements in science and technology our aim should be to seek for meaningful life. The personality development classes and counselling will not serve any useful purpose at all if inclusion of moral values and mental discipline is not aimed at.

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