LITERATURE: AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *Literature and literary texts can be considered effective and significant pedagogical tools for learning English as a Second language. Literature provides motivation for linguistic improvement; it makes language learning enjoyable. Among various approaches to teaching and learning English, the inclusion of literature can play a vital role. To facilitate language proficiency, literary texts like poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction are highly relevant. This paper aims to emphasize on literature as a tool for English language learning. Students can be made familiar with literature while improving vocabulary, grammar, and language skills (i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). Integration of literature into language teaching and learning can increase the interest and motivation of the students and it can make the language learning process enjoyable and interesting. This paper also focuses on the fact that literature helps language learners to develop interpretative skills, which can prepare them for different situations and contexts. This paper talks about the various methods and the importance of using materials and activities in the classroom for English language learning. The use of authentic literary texts stimulates the learning process and language acquisition, as it helps to acquire cultural experience and critical thinking. Literature provides rich sources for students' needs and expectations. This paper highlights the importance of promoting involvement and responses from learners by using literature as a tool for learning.*

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Literary Texts, Literature, Language Acquisition, Language skills.*

Introduction

Literature is composed of language and it also provides space for the applications of the language (Babaee & Yahya, 2014). Literature can be used as a significant tool to teach and learn the English language. To learn basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and for learning pronunciation and grammar choosing appropriate literary material can be helpful. Linguists offer the idea that there is an intimate relationship between language and literature (Violetta-Irene, 2015). literature is 'an ally of language' (Brumfit and Ronald, 1986, p.1). Literature can develop the ability and confidence to process, understand and examine different kinds of texts- verbal and written in students (Deswal & Khanna, 2022, p.vii).

The literature presents learners an authentic material from real life and language. The language of literature is recreational and creative which can embed interest in learners. Duff and Maley (1990) argue that literature is used for three reasons as a means of second language teaching (6). The first reason is, for the linguistic approach as it provides a sample of actual language, style, and text. It is helpful for the learner of English as a second or foreign language to understand the correct linguistic form. The methodology of learning through literary texts is the second reason to teach literature. It promotes creativity and meaningful interaction. The

third reason is the motivation a learner can feel while experiencing language learning which provides a relation to the real world.

In a similar context, Hadaway et al. (2002) describe three benefits of literature as a tool for language learning. The first advantage considers the contextualization of language. Real-life situations teach a learner. Secondly, different genres proved different social factors and cultures to the learner. Thirdly, the natural and meaningful application of language can be achieved by illustrations and the use of descriptive language in literature.

Literature in the FL classroom motivates, and offers access to cultural background, encourages language acquisition, expands language awareness, develops students' interpretative abilities, and educates the whole person in so far as it enhances our imaginative and affective capacities Lazar (1993:15-9).

Benefits of Using Literature in Language Teaching:

There are many benefits to using Literature in a language classroom such as authentic literary materials, Enrichment of knowledge and culture, and personality development. The use of authentic literary texts is a reliable source to encourage students to practice four skill- listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Literature with elements like poetry, drama, fiction, or non-fiction students can have conversations, discussion and they can express their thoughts in a more effective way. Collie and Slater (1990) observe that four major factors convince a language instructor to decide to use literary texts for teaching language. These factors are genuine material, cultural enhancement, language enhancement, and personal participation. Moreover, universality, non-triviality, variety, interest, and creativity are some other factors for using literature in language teaching.

Authentic literary texts can motivate and build confidence in learners. Through creativity and novelty, literature presents a unique experience that is enjoyable. Literature promotes cultural and intercultural awareness too (Van, 2009). The global approach of literature helps to understand global phenomena like politics, economy, and society. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge as manifested in communicative competence models can be developed by Authentic literary texts s (McKay, 2001).

Grammar and Vocabulary can be developed through exposure to literary texts which treat both formal and informal language. Students can acquire efficiency in writing and can develop grammar, pronunciation, spelling proficiency, and punctuation.

Teaching literature provides learners with truly cultural competence, equipping them with culturally apposite pragmatic and socio-psychological components around which to build effective identities which will enable their socialization in the target culture and enhance the effectiveness with which they participate in that culture (Sell 2005, p. 90). Literature can be a smart and effective tool to transmit cultural concepts such as history, literary theories, genres, the biography of different authors, etc. (Carter & Long, 1991).

Approaches to Teach Literature in Process of Language Acquisition:

According to T.T.M. Van's approach, external elements like social, political, historical, and economic factors cannot be considered to interpret the literary text because it is related to an author's personal thoughts and opinions. Critical awareness and critical literacy can be taught through literary texts. Learners' personal experiences, opinions, and feelings and their

interpretations are encouraged. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing can be developed through interaction, collaboration, and student independence (Van, 2009).

Maley (1989, p.8) suggested the benefits of using literature as a resource in the language classroom:

• **Universality:**

The literature has the same theme around the globe yet is presented differently. The literary genre, devices and cultural representations are common across cultures.

• **Reader's response**:

Reader's response is an important factor in literature. It can also be presented in language learning.

• **Variety of ideas:**

Literature gives chance to showcase a variety of ideas and opinions, it is helpful for a learner to express themselves differently and creatively.

• **Interest:**

Literary texts generate motivation and eventually lead to developing interest and the creation of effective communication.

• **Economy and suggestive power:**

One of the great strengths of literature is its suggestive power. Even simple literary texts turn readers' attention to the underlying implications of what is said (Ramnath, 2016).

Amer (2003) opines with the approaches based on the interaction between the reader and literary text. The reader interprets and associates the ideas to suggest a new understanding. The interpretation of different texts like narrative, expository, or persuasive, etc., can make a reader aware of the development of the text which provides a better understanding of language too. Everyone responds differently to a single text and thus constructs his/her own version of reality when encountered with the text. Therefore, we can have multiple interpretations rather than a single correct interpretation of a text according to Reader Response Approach (Amer, 2003).

Savvidou (2004) and Divsar (2009) suggested the linguistic approach to literary texts. Also, they aim at exploring literary and non-literary texts from the perspective of style and its relationship with content and form. They suggest models that integrate linguistic description and textual analysis (Divsar & Tahriri, 2009). Savvidou's (2004) approach comprises a six-stage based model that makes literary texts work for language-learning purposes:

- **The First Stage – Preparation and Anticipation:** How the learner experiences the text and the opinion presented.
- **The Second Stage – Focusing:** The familiarization of text through reading or listening provides the learner to choose a specific text to learn the language.
- **The Third Stage - Preliminary Response:** How the learner responds to the text whether it is written or spoken.
- **The Fourth Stage - Working I:** Comprehension of text by reading or listening.
- **The Fifth Stage - Working II:** Interpretation and evaluation of the text.
- **The Sixth Stage - Interpretation and Personal Response:** Personal response and interpretation are significant to achieve the goal of communication through literary texts.

Conclusion:

The use of literature can increase the motivation to learn the language. Literature can be an effective tool in English Language Teaching. Various approaches can be followed to determine the role of literature and its effectiveness in classrooms. Literature helps the learner to read and listen to literary texts which is a way of improving vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence. Literary genres like poetry, novels, drama, or even non-fiction can be the sources to motivate a learner of language to improve with its creativity and uniqueness.

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