

The Role of Literature in Learning the English Language

Anosha Islam, Samona Mumtaz, Ayesha Shafique, Ume Kalsoom, Hassan Bin Zubair
BS English, Department of English, Superior College, Mian Channu. (Pakistan)

Hassan Bin Zubair

Head of English Department, Superior College, Mian Channu.
Ph.D. Scholar (English Literature), Department of English,
National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. (Pakistan)
hbz77@yahoo.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0051>

Published: 5th December, 2022

Citation: Islam A., Mumtaz S., Shafique A., Kalsoom U., Zubair H.B. (2022) The Role of Literature in Learning the English Language, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: English Language, Teaching, Communication, Literature and Linguistics* 3(2),21-26

ABSTRACT: *This research article focuses on how it works to teach both speaking domains and fundamental language abilities (how to read, how to listen, and how to speak) (i.e. and vocab, grammatical structure, and pronunciation of words). Since English is the only language in which all topics are taught, it is important to emphasize and utilize texts in English as a foreign learning language as well as the primary considerations for choosing appropriate literary texts. Additionally, there are advantages to teaching language skills through various literary genres (such as poetry, short fiction, drama, and novels), but there are also challenges faced by language teachers when it comes to teaching the English language, including fewer sources of preparation in this area in "TESL" and "TEFL" programs, the nonappearance of specific goals explaining the role of English literature in "ESL" and "EFL", and English language professors no specific sources or background and training.*

KEYWORDS: literary genres, language teachers, skills, locations, classroom.

LITERATURE AND ITS ESSENTIAL ROLE

The importance of literature in teaching the four abilities to listen, speak, read, write, and cannot be overstated. Collie and Slater (1987) advocate for the use of literary genres in English language instruction because it offers useful real content, fosters personal engagement, and helps readers become more culturally and linguistically literate. They go on to say that these benefits can be attained if teachers employ engaging and pertinent content for their students through the use of sources and specific activities that encourage participation, the response of the reader, and a strong bond between the English-speaking language and English literature.

Carter and Long (1991) offer different strategies to support the use of literary genres in line with this tendency. The first model they explore is the CULTURAL MODEL, which is literature that contributes to our learning and appreciation of many different cultures, identities, and ideologies as well as the growth of our capacity to perceive emotions and aesthetic forms. The language model is the second model. This concept emphasizes that literature may be used to teach particular vocabulary and structural elements and that language is the literary medium. Last but not least, their PERSONAL GROWTH MODEL requires students to study literary works, appreciate and evaluate cultural artifacts, and, generally speaking, grasp our society, culture, and ourselves as we are.

One of the resources at our disposal as English teachers to help our students learn the language and contribute to their cultural knowledge and understanding is literature, or literary text. It stimulates and catalyzes learning. It immediately appeals to the student's thoughts and feelings, which in turn paves the road for their linguistic development. It draws attention to:

- By learning about the classics of literature, students' perspectives are widened.
- Their general cultural awareness is also improved.
- Their creativity and literary imagination are encouraged to grow, they learn to appreciate literature, and their mental stress and outlook on life are also addressed.
- The necessary changes in humans, social changes even history are based.
- Historical realities of life; Life's philosophy; the inherent, inborn goodness of man.

“The greatest works of American and British literature should be read by pupils as a learning experience and to increase their general knowledge of the globe.” (Akyel and Yalçın, 1990)

Teachers deal with children that don't suit the curriculum daily. Numerous children in a classroom have special needs, speak different languages, and have various learning styles. Readers are responsible for making their sources interesting. Literature is thus a combination of composition and verification and plays. Using a few particular secondary schools, this study explores the role of literature in English language teaching and learning. This was done to show how important literature is to language learners in their early stages of learning the language. The study examines how literary materials affect students at the secondary level of schooling. Some of the learners will be taught using such materials, such as literary texts and electronic viewing materials, while some of the learners were taught without such materials. The legitimacy of the research findings based on the importance of literature in the teaching and learning of the English language in the early stages of learners was then determined by comparing the two groups.

Research Questions

The following research is conducted to find the answer to the following question:

1. What is the role of different genres of literature in teaching the English language?

Prose

Prose text is used to teach phrasal verbs, vocabulary, language, theories (like psychoanalytical issues), and communicative skills such as discussion among members and reading.

Poems in English Language Teaching

The procurement of poetry sessions is dependent on the teacher's creativity, eagerness, reading loudly in a musical tone, and the approaches that the teacher executes to create the learner's attention towards poetry. The method must be learner-centered and the teachers must form it in a way that students learn it easily. Poetry creates the technique for the acquisition of knowledge and instructing of language ability. Most of the poetry, deliberately or in deliberately, uses metaphor as the primary method. The metaphor serves the great cause of the author's explanation for a better understanding of learners. For instance, the poem of Sylvia Plath's "Metaphors"...

“I’m a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant, a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils.
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!
This loaf’s big with its yeasty rising.
Money’s new-minted in this fat purse.
I’m a means, a stage, a cow in calf.
I’ve eaten a bag of green apples,
Boarded the train there’s no getting”

When the poem is being read loudly by a teacher with tone variety, the teacher can teach students effectively. Along with changing tone, he can cherish the poem by interrogating questions as

- 1) Who is the “riddle in nine syllables” in the poem?
- 2) What images are introduced in the poem?

The students may answer the question as a bag of apples, elephant, fat purse, a cow in a calf, and a train.

- 3) What is the purpose of the use of images used by the author?

The students may not be able to answer. The teacher will proceed

- 4) What is the meaning of “boarding of train”?
- 5) Why the author has mentioned, "there is no getting off"?

The students may not answer any questions. The teacher will have to narrate with citation of the author's life history and force the students to read her more to inspect the poem. Saraç also makes clear the learning advantages of poetry:

“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 interpretations, evokes feelings and thoughts in heart and 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.” (Saraç, 2003:17)

As Çubukçu remarks, poetry is an enriching and entertaining encounter that is rich in rhythm and rhyming that carry "love and appreciation for the sound and power of language." (Çubukçu, 2001:1) As Sylvia Plath says, "Poetry is an outlet of emotions". At this point, it may be declared that students are becoming investigating many characteristics of the learned language by learning poetry. With the help of poetry, learners can also learn the semiotic components of the targeted language. Furthermore, poetry recruits language to call up the mind and acclaim exceptional characteristics of life. It satisfies the learner with feelings, for instance, lyrical poetry jumbles the emotions of the reader. Poetry is the most successful and tremendous conductor of the manifestation of human culture. All the joint projects evolve the speaking capabilities of learners, provide significance to accent implementation and amplify the inventive and comprehension expertise. Teachers can spotify the errors in the actions or in the delivery of words in a constructive way. They may involve the students in writing poetry to be published in magazines.

Role of Short Story in Teaching Language

For observing language and even life, the short story is a great resource. The characters in short fiction act so realistic and symbolic to the people of everyday life in multiple tones and registers. The genre of the short story reflects the lives of human beings in society (Sage 1987:43). The addition of short fiction in the syllabus of ESL/EFL provides the following benefits (Arioğul 2001:11-18)

- Easy to read due to its short length than other genres.
- Promotes students' ability to write short stories.
- Encourages students to analyze different themes like morality, despair, love, etc.

The technique of short stories is very helpful in foreign language classes. The limited length of it makes it easy to read for students and easy to cover for teachers. The universality of short fiction is one of its important characteristics. Short fiction, like other genres of literature, compresses the whole situation in a single moment and place which helps in the development of cognitive analysis. (Sage 1987:43)

Role of Drama in Teaching Language

Drama is an effective resource in language teaching classrooms to teach language. Through drama, students become able to learn about the grammatical structure in a particular context. It also teaches the power of language to express, inform and control. Drama teachings also aware the students about the culture of the target language. To increase their understanding of everyday life experiences, mirror specific circumstances, and gain more linguistic awareness in a deeper sense, students should adopt the use of drama. (Sarıçoban 2004:15)

There are some other educational gains of drama also, according to (Lenore 1993):

- Increase imaginative power.
- Promote students' creative thoughts.
- Increases skills in critical thinking.

- Develops language skills.
- Strengthen the skills of listening.
- Develops awareness and empathy of others.
- Promotes Group Cooperation and respect among peers.
- Increases the level of competence in students through their receptive as well as productive skills.
- Develop awareness about social problems and culture among students.
- Causes relief by shifting the strict and serious mood of the classroom to a humorous one.
- Also provides teachers with a fresh teaching perspective.

In short, drama seems to be an effective tool in teaching a foreign language. As drama provides authentic material, it promotes students' comprehension of the target language. Teachers who want something interesting, colorful, and motivating in their language class can choose drama to teach language. Teachers can also make their students perform drama in front of the class which not only increases their confidence but also promote their communication skills and their competence in the target language. It also improves their pronunciation of words in that language. In this way, the drama becomes a useful tool in the teaching of language.

CONCLUSION

In sum, many nations do not know how to speak English. These programs place a high value on literature. However, there are many problems and issues that language learners and instructors run into when it comes to teaching English through the literary genre. First off, there aren't many items that language teachers can utilize in pedagogically sound classes. Second, there is a dearth of training in "TESL/TEFL" programs for teaching literature. Third, there are no specific goals outlining the function of literature in ESL/EFL. When teaching English through literature, the teacher is crucial. He should first choose and decide the purpose behind the instruction of speaking language in connection and determination to the demands and goals of the learners and the speakers, or "student-centered." In addition, because students take up the majority.

References

- Collie, J. and S. Slater. (1990). *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities* Cambridge: CUP.
- Custodio, B. and M. Sutton. (1998). "Literature-Based ESL for Secondary School Students" *TESOL Journal*. Vol 7, No.5, p.p: 19-23.
- Çubukçu, F. (2001). "Use of Poetry for EFL Purposes." (Unpublished Article). İzmir: Dokuz Eylül University.
- Elliot, R. (1990). "Encouraging reader-response to literature in ESL situations" in *ELT Journal*. Vol 44, No. 3, p.p:191-198
- Helton, C.A, J. Asamani and E.D. Thomas. (1998). "A „Novel“ Approach to the Teaching of Reading". Tennessee State: Tennessee State University, pp.: 1-5.
- Hiller, J.P. (1983). "Teaching Poetry in the Foreign Language Classroom: Theory and

Practice." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Stony Brook: State University of New York.

Lenore, K.L. (1993). *The Creative Classroom A Guide for Using Creative Drama in the classroom*. U.S.A.

Maley, A. (1989). "Down from the Pedestal: Literature as Resource" in *Literature and The Learner: Methodological Approaches*. Cambridge: Modern English Publications.

Mengü, H.I. (2002). "A Suggested Syllabus for the Drama Teaching Course in ELT Departments". Unpublished M.A Thesis. Ankara: Hacettepe University.

Plath, S. (1981). *The Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath*. Ed by Ted Hughes. Harper Perennial. p. 116.

Sage, H. (1987). *Incorporating Literature in ESL Instruction* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Print.

Saraç, S. (2003). "A Suggested Syllabus for the Teaching of Poetry Course in ELT.

Stern, (1991). "An Integrated Approach to Literature in ESL / EFL" in *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* ed. Murcia, M. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.