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The Impact of Literature on Learning Language, Accusation and Development of Its Skills in the Society

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Abstract:

Literature is the manifestation of the society. In society, language plays a key role to communicate with each other. It also helps the audience to convey and exchange their feelings, thoughts and ideas to one another. Nagendra Singh Gangola in his research paper titled “Teaching language through literature: An innovative approach” has transformed the classroom to a stage and the students are as characters where they are practicing their communicative language. This research paper intends to emphasise on the very basic language skills i.e listening, speaking, reading and writing and at the same time it will also attempt to touch the language areas like vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The soul intention of this research paper is to break through the traditional concept of literature (getting aesthetic pleasure) and make use of it in developing language and its skills. Literature is not only a platform to have a mere conversation to one another. Anzar Ahmed in his research paper titled “Literature and its influence on human life” has stated that ‘literature enables people to see through the lenses of others.’ He also defines literature as it follows: ‘It serves as a reflection of reality, a product of art, and a window to an ideology.’

Keywords: Language, Literature, Method of teaching language, Teaching skills, Soft skills, Silent and loud reading.

Introduction

Literature and language are two sides of a single coin. It is quite hard to imagine literature without language and vice-versa. Literature plays a crucial role in developing one’s language. In academic spheres students, scholars and academicians are posing question whether literature is really important to teach language or not. Murat Hismanoglu in his article titled “Teaching English Through Literature” said in an academic zone there is a

heated debate or point of discussion as to where, why, when and how literature should be included in professional English, TESOL, IELTS and TOFEL curriculum (Hismanoglu 53). People, those are claiming that literature cannot explicitly help in developing one's language, consider it as mere prose, poem, drama, fiction, novel, essay etc. Which job is to delight and give pleasure to people. They think and bound literature only as the source of catering aesthetic pleasure. Some of the teachers are not ready to accept the accusation called 'literature is only for pleasure'. They consider the use of literature in language teaching as an interesting and worthy concern (Sage 1987:1). This research paper will attempt to unfold the necessity of literature in learning language and its skills. It will also try to put some lights on, what sort of literature ought to include in the syllabus to deal with language classrooms. How literature and its different genre will help the students to develop their language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (LSRW). This is how, this research paper will solidify and unearth the place of literature as a tool in learning language and developing its skills.

Since ages people are not giving value and credit to literature. In the year of 1579 Stephen Gosson published an essay with the title *The School of Abuse* where he blamed literature/poetry as the 'the mother of lies', poets are having effeminate quality and poets are banished from Plato's Ideal State. He has given paramount importance to the subject like history, philosophy, law and astronomy. Later on, Philip Sidney wrote an essay in 1580 in response to Stephen Gosson and the title was *Defense of Poesy/ or An Apology for Poetry* (1595). Here he has justified how literature is important in one's life. He has defended the allegation by saying that literature (poetry) is the only subject which helps the toddler to acquire language. In this time period mother prefers rhyming words and sentences to utter in front of the child. Thus, she helps her child to acquire language.

Philip Sidney tried to mean that literature is the first step to enter into the realm of epistemology. Poet never insists his readers to accept his thoughts. He just imagines a certain thought and attempt to give a certain shape in the form of poetry. Besides poetry or literature Gosson has given more priority to some subjects which demand and compelled people to believe them as a fact. For example, history and astronomy, nobody knows what happened in 1000 years ago on a particular date but people have to accept it as it is written in history book. In terms of astronomy nobody measured the distance between the sun and the earth yet, people have to accept it as this topic is dealt with astronomy. In a nutshell, the allegation against literature that it is the 'mother of lies' is absolutely baseless. Poetry or literature does

not only help to acquire language rather it helps to encourage the people as well. The English Victorian poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote a poem titled *The Charge of the Light Brigade* where he encouraged the soldiers to be active in the war. He wrote this poem when United Kingdom was engaged at the battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War. In that time period soldiers lost their energy, they were under the impression to yield the battle; at that particular juncture Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote this poem to encourage and motivate them in the following way:

*Forward, the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blundered.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.*

(Tennyson, The Charge of the Light Brigade)

Therefore, allegation against poet that they have effeminate quality is out and out unfounded. Gosson also claimed that Plato banished poetry from his Ideal State. Sidney made it clear that Plato didn't banish the poets rather he has banished cheap poetry. He didn't have any objection in poetry. Even he himself used poetry to write his work. Now the question is if he has banished poets from his Ideal State then why did he use poetry in his writings? Most of the religious texts are written in poetry only. Therefore, the allegation called poets are banished from Plato's Ideal State is baseless.

Language and Literature

Language is a medium which is used to communicate with one person to another. When a child born, he starts storing the exterior reality in his brain. The great American linguist Noam Chomsky has given two names in his book titled *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* for the process of storing and delivering the language and they are: i) 'Competence' which means all the material concepts are already there in the brain in an unstructured or in a raw shape. ii) The second concept is 'Performance'. Here the student will make use of his competence faculty and articulate it in the form of words or sentences. French Linguist

Ferdinand de Saussure also talked about language in his book titled *Course in General Linguistics*. He has used two concepts and they are: a) Langue and b) Parole. Langue means language which deals with the abstract part of language whereas Parole is the presentation of preserved thought. Since childhood people preserved thought in the form Langue/Competence and Parole/Performance is the ability to give a shape in the form of language when to use, how to use, what to use, where to use the language in conversation. Langue/Competence is like a storehouse where all the crops, corns and commodities are reserved and Parole/Performance is a like different shop of a different crops, corns and commodities. Language basically use to convey or share or exchange of one's feeling, thought, ideas, opinion and suggestion as well.

Literature is the reflection of the society. According Robert STECKER, "literature is any piece of writing or publicly available writing. It refers to a proper subclass of writing" (STECKER, What is Literature).

Literature is a piece of writing in the form of poem, prose, essay, shortstory, novel, drama, fiction, nonfiction, novella, novelette, biography, autobiography, memoir, diary writing, prison writing &c (etc.). Literature is not only restricted in written format, there is oral literature as well which is known as orature. People preserve their traditions, cultures, folklores, folktales, proverbs, myths, legend and several other things by literature only.

Manohar Palle and Mr. Garre Venkateswarlu said in their article named "Language and Literature are Two Sides of a Coin to An English Teacher" that language and literature are inter-related and both of them are conjointly subordinate in social life. Literature is deeply rooted in language and vice-versa. It gets life from literature as well. (Manohar 1443)

Carte and Long (1991) both are equally agreed that literature is a legitimate and valuable resource for language teaching.

Method of Teaching

The study will make use of certain specific methods to teach students language through literature and they are as follows:

The first and foremost is the usage of playway method. Here the teacher will teach student in a playful manner. Once the teacher will use playway method, student will be burdenless and they will show interest to learn. Once teacher will become a friend of the student, they will show their utmost curiosity to learn. The teacher can make use of Dr. James J. Asher Total Physical Response (TPR) method while teaching drama and poetry. In order to strengthen the

vocabulary in students the teacher can make use of the following techniques as well and they are:

SCANNING OF THE TEXT

The scanning of the text means to look for the specific points or particular things or words in a text. In order to store/accumulate vocabulary, the student ought to make use of dictionary to search the specific or particular words. Before going through any literary text, the students ought to scan that particular text first. For example, while reading a text like poetry he should know the title of the poem, name of the poet, types of poems and several other things. All these things will help the learner to rich his vocabulary as well as content.

SKIMMING OF THE TEXT

Skimming of the text means having overview or the summary of the text. Once the learners will go through the text, they will come to know certain things which are needed in communication. If the respondent is contentless then he couldn't continue his communication. Literature like fiction and non-fiction helps student to enrich his content or help him to gain mastery over subject or content.

INTENSIVE READING

Here the students need to concentrate the text. While reading biography or autobiography the students are needed to maintain concentration as these texts are full of information. The teacher ought to follow the technique of close reading while teaching them in the classroom. This technique will help the students to enhance their vocabulary at the same time their understanding level will be developed.

EXTENSIVE READING

Extensive reading is a sort of method where pleasure is given the top most priority. Here the reader basically reads the text for the sake of pleasure. This method helps students to polish their language. When somebody will go through several texts for the sake of pleasure, he will come to know umpteen things which are unknown to a lot of people. This method will also help the learner to become a vast reader especially by reading novel, short story, essays and memoirs.

SILENT READING

The teacher needs to follow this method before going into the depth of any literary text. Here the teacher should give some times to students to read the text silently. This method is inevitable while reading the text like poems, prison writings, diary writings etc.

LOUD READING

This is the best method to polish someone's language. Here the teacher can rectify students' pronunciation related problems. Here the teacher comes to know the weakness of the students in reading. The teacher can easily identify the mistakes on stress, accent, Mother Tongue Influence (MTI), sociolect issue and idiolect problems as well. The teacher can make use this method in the classroom while teaching novels, poems, essays and dramas.

TEACHING SKILLS

The hard and soft skills that aid a teacher in grabbing learners' attention are known as teaching skills. In order to gain their attention, teacher might use these skills to establish themselves as an educator. Some people have natural talent for teaching while others may need to practice and develop their skills.

Being a good teacher, one requires more than just developing instructional techniques. Working as an educator one requires having strong teaching skills. These skills aid a teacher in keeping their class motivated and interested in learning

There are end number of soft skills which are developed by reading literature. Some important soft skills are given bellow:

- Communication Skills
- Time Management Skills
- Decision Making Skills
- Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Skills
- Oratory Skills and Public Speaking Skills

Literature helps student to develop their communication skills. Noojilla Srinivas and Dr. T. Ashok said in their article titled "Imparting Soft Skills Through Teaching of Literature" that ancient scripture of India talks about six basic elements of speech and they are: (1) Maadhuryam (Sweetness); (2) Akshara vyakthi (Verbatim); (3) Padachchedam (Proper phrasing of words); (4) Suswara (Good tone); (5) Dhairyam (Courage); and (6) Laya (Proper stress). The Bhartruhari Subhashithas tell as: "Vagbhushanam bhushanam" i.e., the

Speech is the best ornament and not any other materialistic ornaments (Srinivas and Ashok 197). Literature is not only developed one's verbal language but body language as well. Poem helps student to learn where to give pause, word stress, accent and intonation. Drama helps to develop one's expression.

Managing the time is not a cup of tea or a piece of cake. There are end number of literary books that talk about time and all. The Victorian Novelist Thomas Hardy always talk about time and destiny or fate in his novel like *Return of the Native*, *Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Jude the Obscure*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* etc. William Shakespeare also talked about time in his sonnet as well like sonnet 18 (Shall I Compare Thee to a Summers Day?), sonnet 60 (Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore) etc.

Vijayalakshmi in his article titled "Teaching Soft Skills Through Literature" discussed about decision making skills. He said that taking right decision at right time is inevitable. There is a saying procrastination is the enemy of success. Shakespeare in his masterpiece tragedy titled *Hamlet, the prince of Denmark* said 'to be or not to be that is the question'. He always wastes time on thinking again and again (Shakespeare Act 3, Scene 1). Robert Frost also talked about decision making skills in his poem titled *The Road not Taken*. He first thought which road he needs to take and eventually he chose the less travelled one.

Noojilla Srinivas and Dr. T. Ashok in their article named "Imparting Soft Skills Through Teaching of Literature" said that literature especially novel, drama and prose helps student to develop one's communication skills. The student can develop his interpersonal communication skills through reading, memoire, novel, drama, pose etc. and he can develop his intra-personal communication skills by giving certain time to friends, parents, siblings etc. (Srinivas and Dr. T. Ashok 198).

Noojilla Srinivas and Dr. T. Ashok talked about Oratory Skills and Public Speaking Skills. Literature helps student to develop their oratory skills and public speaking skills. Willam Shakespeare's drama *Julius Caesar* is the best example of oratory skills. In this drama Caesar shared his oratory skills like pun and some poignant words and said 'Cowards die many times before their death; the valiant never taste of death but once' (*Julius Caesar* Act 2, scene 2). The speech of Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. Hitler, Mahatma Gandhi, Barak Obama, Mandela, John F. Kennedy, Roosevelt, Churchil, Bill Clinton, Neheru, Steve Jobs and so on had an extraordinary quality of public speaking. They all were free from glossophobia. They had the potentiality to fasten or corroborate the audience by their coherent words. Nissim Ezekiel wrote a poem titled *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.*

where he made use of funny language and all the conversations are in simple and lucid language. The main purpose of any conversation is to exchange their thought. Hence, it's unnecessary to make use of boulder like language to impress the receiver. Here in the poem the poet Nissim Ezekiel has used very simple and lucid language to reach over his audience.

Apart from all these skills there are some other important skills as well and they are self-confidence, etiquette, optimistic attitude, will power etc. People should have a strong will power and optimistic outlook. American novelist Ernest Hemingway wrote a novel named *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) where he mentioned that “a man can be destroyed but not defeated” that means people should have strong will power/zeal to achieve his goal. He should be optimistic as well. Satya Nadella has quoted Irish playwright Oscar Wilde in his text titled *Satya Nadella's Email to His Employees on His First Day as CEO of Microsoft* that “we need to believe in the impossible and remove the improbable” (Nadella 48)

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis the study comes to an end that literature is a sort of platform which can be used by the students to develop their language and its skills. The relationship between language and literature is quite strong. Without literature, a teacher cannot instruct language as literature itself carries the meaning of life. This study has tried to dismantle that people are reading texts for the sake of life only. People are not only practicing the art for art sake but also art for life sake. The pupils' linguistic development is aided by literature. A knowledge of literature is necessary for language teachers. The use of literature in English language classroom helps pupils to become more familiar with the great works of literature. Literary works cultivate a rich stream of linguistic input and can aid in the development of the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—in addition to providing learners with a grammar rules and fresh vocabulary. Language and literature integration is crucial since it gives authentic materials and real-world circumstances for language learning and instruction. As it is already discussed that several kinds of soft skills can be inculcated in students with the help of literary texts like prose, poem, novel, drama etc.

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