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Enhancing Language Acquisition through Literary Texts: A Comprehensive Approach to English Language Instruction

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Abstract :

When compared to informational materials, the use of literary texts in language instruction can significantly improve the language acquisition process. Using literary texts in the classroom helps students become more proficient while also developing their creativity, word awareness, and ability to communicate well in group discussions. Students who study literature from a variety of historical periods are better able to participate in topic-related conversations and debates because they have a deeper understanding of various cultures, cultural norms, and historical settings. This study highlights how effective it is to teach vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in addition to the fundamental language abilities of reading, writing, speaking, and listening through the use of literature. It is widely acknowledged that using literature in English language instruction helps students become more fluent in the language by acquainting them with dialogues, sentences, and vocabulary. Literary works include descriptive language and offer a variety of characters, which helps students improve their reading comprehension by using efficient techniques that improve their English fluency and accuracy. The study also emphasises how crucial it is to choose appropriate literary works for English language training because English is the language of instruction used by all. Poetry, short fiction, drama, and novels are just a few of the literary forms that can be used to teach language skills. The paper also discusses difficulties faced by language teachers when integrating literature into ESL/EFL classrooms. These difficulties include teachers' lack of background and training in literature, TESL/TEFL programmes' lack of preparation in literature teaching, and the dearth of pedagogically sound materials appropriate for classroom use.

Keywords: Language learning, literature, literary texts, language and literature,

Introduction

When teaching the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, literature is an essential component. Literature is recommended for use in language classes by Collie and Slater (1987) because it offers real content, encourages student participation, and enhances language and culture learning. (6) They recommend utilising engaging and pertinent materials, as well as adding activities that promote participation, reader response, and the smooth blending of language and literature, to fully realise these advantages.

Carter and Long (1991) present a compelling argument for integrating literature into language instruction, highlighting three distinct strategies that underscore the multifaceted benefits of this approach. (3)

The first strategy, known as the Cultural Model, places a strong emphasis on the unique ability of literature to bridge cultural gaps and promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse philosophies, cultures, and artistic expressions. Through engaging with literature, students are exposed to a myriad of feelings, artistic nuances, and cultural diversities, enriching their educational experience and fostering a global perspective. This model leverages the power of literary texts to transcend cultural boundaries, enabling students to explore and empathize with the experiences and worldviews of others.

Moving to the Language Model, the focus shifts to the intrinsic relationship between language and literature. This strategy recognizes the inherent linguistic richness of literary works and advocates for their use as effective tools in teaching vocabulary, grammatical structures, and linguistic subtleties. By delving into the complexities of language through literature, students can enhance their language skills in a more engaging and contextualized manner. This model appreciates literature not just as a vehicle for storytelling, but as a vibrant showcase of the language itself, offering students a dynamic and nuanced understanding of English.

The third strategy, the Personal Growth Model, explores the profound impact that interaction with literary texts can have on students' personal development. It emphasizes the role of literature in deepening students' understanding of society, culture, and self-identity, as well as in recognizing and evaluating cultural artifacts. Through personal engagement with literature, students embark on a journey of self-discovery, gaining insights into their own identities and societal roles. This model champions literature as a catalyst for emotional and intellectual growth, encouraging students to reflect on their values, beliefs, and their place in the world.

Collectively, these strategies highlight the invaluable role of literature in English language instruction. By incorporating literary texts into the curriculum, educators can not only enhance students' linguistic proficiency but also stimulate their cultural and personal growth. Literature serves as a direct conduit to students' emotions and intellect, making the learning process more motivating and engaging. Ultimately, skillfully integrating literature into language teaching offers students a rich, comprehensive learning experience that encompasses linguistic mastery, cultural awareness, and personal enrichment.

Prose in English Teaching

In the context of English language teaching, prose texts serve as a versatile and powerful tool, facilitating a broad spectrum of educational objectives. These texts are instrumental in teaching core aspects of the language, including vocabulary expansion, the usage of phrasal verbs, and the exploration of contemporary topics. Beyond their linguistic value, prose materials are adept at delving into complex themes, such as psychological issues and communication skills. This, in turn, stimulates meaningful dialogue among peers, fostering a deeper level of engagement and comprehension.

The choice of prose as a pedagogical tool is strategic, leveraging its narrative structure and thematic diversity to bridge the gap between language learning and real-world applicability. By integrating prose texts that touch on current and relevant topics, educators can create a more dynamic and contextualized learning environment. This not only aids in the acquisition of language skills but also equips students with the ability to discuss and reflect on a wide array of subjects, ranging from everyday scenarios to more profound, thought-provoking issues.

Moreover, the emphasis on psychological themes and communication skills within prose texts underscores the importance of emotional intelligence and interpersonal abilities in language education. Engaging with these themes through the medium of prose encourages students to analyze and articulate their thoughts and feelings, enhancing their communicative competence. This approach not only enriches students' vocabulary and linguistic structures but also cultivates critical thinking and empathy, essential components of effective communication. The incorporation of prose in English teaching thus transcends traditional language instruction, offering a holistic learning experience. It not only improves linguistic proficiency but also promotes intellectual curiosity, emotional depth, and social awareness. By fostering a culture of discussion and reflection, prose texts pave the way for a more interactive and enriching educational journey, likely increasing students' inclination towards reading and continuous learning.

Examples of prose in literature and everyday communication include:

Novels: Extended works of fiction that narrate a story or a series of events. Examples include "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee and "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen.

Short Stories: Brief narratives designed to be read in a single sitting, offering a snapshot of characters, settings, and themes. Examples include "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson and "A Good Man is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor.

Essays: Short pieces of writing on a particular subject, often expressing the author's personal point of view. Examples include "A Room of One's Own" by Virginia Woolf and "Notes of a Native Son" by James Baldwin.

Biographies and Autobiographies: Accounts of a person's life written by someone else

(biography) or by the person themselves (autobiography). Examples include "The Diary of a Young Girl" by Anne Frank (autobiography) and "Steve Jobs" by Walter Isaacson (biography).

News Articles: Informative reports on recent events, typically found in newspapers and online news sources.

Poems in English Teaching

The effectiveness of poetry courses depends on the teacher's imagination, energy, and ability to read aloud in a variety of tones. It also depends on the strategies they use to pique students' interest in poetry. To help teachers better understand and meet the needs of their pupils, these lessons ought to be learner-centred. Poetry is a useful teaching and practice tool for fundamental language skills. Poetry frequently employs metaphor, which helps readers understand the author's point of view and promotes independent thought and analysis.

Çubukçu (2001) asserts that poetry's use of rhyme and rhythm, which express a love and appreciation for the sound and power of language, makes reading poetry a fulfilling and delightful experience. (1) Poetry gives pupils a way to express their feelings and helps them learn about stress, pitch, juncture, and intonation in the target language. It also makes it possible to investigate semiotic components of the language. Furthermore, poetry uses language to highlight and evoke special aspects of life, stirring strong emotions in its audience. Particularly lyric poetry has the power to arouse strong emotions.

Poetry is a potent cultural transmitter that lets pupils experience many facets of the culture of the language they are learning. Students can also participate in role-playing, dialogue development, and character representation in groups through poetry. These exercises help students become more proficient speakers, stress the value of practising pronunciation, and foster creativity and critical thinking. Instructors can provide students with helpful criticism on pronunciation mistakes and performance. Teachers can also help students express themselves creatively and strengthen their language skills by encouraging them to compose and publish poems in magazines or other venues.

Teachers may create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that fosters language proficiency, cultural awareness, emotional exploration, and creativity by introducing poetry into their language courses.

Role of Short Stories in Language Teaching

Since short fiction is made up of all the significant and symbolic actions that individuals take daily, it could be the best tool for studying language and life in general. The world of short fiction enhances and reflects human existence (Sage 1987). According to Arioğul (2001), the inclusion of short fiction in the ESL/EFL curriculum presents several pedagogical benefits. The concise and straightforward nature of short fiction simplifies reading assignments for students, making it easier for them to engage with and complete their reading tasks. (18) This approach also opens avenues for students to draw comparisons with other literary forms, enriching their understanding of literature and its diverse genres. Additionally, by analyzing and engaging with short stories, students learn the art of composing their own short narratives, enhancing their

writing skills and creativity. Beyond language learning, short fiction serves as a medium for students to explore and discuss universal themes such as moral principles, love, hopelessness, and friendship. This not only fosters critical thinking and empathy but also encourages meaningful discussions among peers, contributing to a deeper, more holistic educational experience.

Role of Dramas in Language Teaching

The integration of drama inside language schools has been identified as a highly efficacious pedagogical tool. The utilisation of drama as an instructional tool enables learners to enhance their comprehension of grammatical structures within specific contexts, hence facilitating the acquisition of accurate and exact language usage skills. Drama additionally fosters students' consciousness of the target language and culture, thereby augmenting their comprehensive language acquisition encounter.

When employing theatre as an instructional instrument, it is crucial to regard it as a method rather than a final objective. The primary emphasis should be placed on the development of an educational experience that is captivating, pertinent, and pleasurable, rather than exclusively on the theatrical component of drama. The objective is to establish an educational setting devoid of cultural influences, so learners can engage actively and establish connections between their personal experiences and the language they are acquiring. Through the utilisation of drama, learners have the opportunity to delve into particular situations, contemplate their encounters, and acquire a more profound comprehension of the world that extends beyond just linguistic aptitude.

The incorporation of drama into language instruction facilitates dynamic and immersive educational encounters. It motivates learners to employ the language in genuine and significant manners, fostering communication, ingenuity, and analytical reasoning. Drama offers students an opportunity to actively participate in language learning, foster collaboration with their peers, and enhance their linguistic and non-linguistic abilities.

Thus, the incorporation of drama as an instructional instrument within language classes has the potential to build a vibrant and captivating educational setting. Through the utilisation of drama, learners can acquire a more profound comprehension of grammatical structures, augment their cultural consciousness, and establish a connection between language learning and their personal life experiences. The interactive and immersive characteristics of theatre facilitate active engagement, effective communication, and the cultivation of diverse language acquisition skills. According to Lenore (1993), the benefits of theatre might be outlined as follows. the use of drama in language teaching offers a wide array of benefits that contribute to a dynamic and effective learning environment. (23) It not only enhances imagination and creativity but also cultivates critical thinking abilities, facilitating language acquisition through engaging and interactive methods.

Drama improves listening proficiency and bolsters understanding and memory retention by engaging students' senses in the learning process. By embodying different characters and scenarios, students develop empathy and an awareness of others, encouraging

peer respect and group collaboration. This approach reinforces positive self-perception among learners and provides educators with a novel teaching method, transforming traditional classroom settings into more vibrant and enjoyable learning spaces. Drama also serves as a gateway for learners to explore the target culture and address societal issues, further enriching their educational journey. Ultimately, the integration of drama in language teaching proves to be a highly effective strategy in contemporary, learner-focused instruction, offering authentic content that helps students grasp both verbal and nonverbal aspects of the language. The addition of color, drive, and interest to language sessions significantly enhances student engagement and facilitates a more immersive acquisition experience.

According to Coleridge, literature enhances language and functions as a medium of communication. The interconnection between language and literature is evident, as literature encompasses a diverse range of genres including plays, poetry, short stories, novels, and lyrics. The tool serves as a means for learners to enhance their proficiency in the English language, encompassing aspects such as vocabulary, word structures, and syntax. To remain competitive in the global arena, individuals must continuously enhance their proficiency in the English language. In this regard, literature assumes a crucial role in attaining this objective.

The study of literature encompasses more than mere enjoyment, as it also functions as a potent educational instrument that conveys ideals and contributes to cultural enrichment. The literary works authored by esteemed figures such as Shakespeare, including *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, persistently engross readers owing to their enduring significance and profound subject matter. The expressions introduced in these literary pieces, such as "All that glitters is not gold," "All is well that ends well," and "The game is up," continue to be employed in contemporary times.

Hedge (1985) posits that literary texts can augment pupils' linguistic proficiency across multiple dimensions, encompassing vocabulary acquisition, structural comprehension, and textual arrangement. (22)The importance of literature in language schools has shown a notable rise over time, as it offers valuable insights beyond conventional classroom exercises. Literature provides learners with the opportunity to observe and appreciate the manifestation of creativity and heightened levels of imagination in ordinary experiences, hence facilitating the enhancement of reading, writing, grammatical, and vocabulary prowess. It enhances general linguistic proficiency, including syntax, phonetics, diction, and other related aspects. Although students may face initial difficulties in comprehending poetry because of its use of figurative language and imagery, English language instructors can generate significant interest and assist students in overcoming any reluctance they may have.

There is an undeniable correlation between literature and language. According to Brumfit and Carter, literature is seen as a valuable asset to language, underscoring its essential function in the realm of language instruction. Throughout history, teaching methods have changed, but literature has consistently served as a prevalent instrument for attaining educational goals. The grammar translation method and structural approach, in their earlier iterations, placed significant emphasis on rules and translation, often disregarding the literary substance of texts. In contrast to the literature, the functional-notional approach prioritised

practical communication. Drama and literature serve as excellent assets for language instruction, promoting the acquisition of language, fostering cultural comprehension, and fostering the growth of linguistic abilities. The study of drama captivates students and imbues language with vitality, whereas literature enhances language using its artistic manifestations and wide range of genres. Teachers can establish dynamic language classrooms that promote creativity, critical thinking, and a heightened understanding of language and culture through the proper utilisation of drama and literature.

In recent times, there has been a surge in scholarly attention towards literature and its significance in the instruction of language and the cultivation of critical thinking abilities. Literature is an invaluable asset that comprises an extensive assortment of narratives, theatrical works, and poetic compositions, with a primary emphasis on language and capable of enhancing language proficiency. It offers valuable perspectives on diverse civilizations, locations, socio-cultural elements, and historical contexts, empowering learners to cultivate a more profound comprehension of the globe. Literature functions as a means of enhancing language proficiency in several areas such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Additionally, it promotes cultural integration and individual development (Collie & Slater, 1991; Carter & Long, 1991).

Bloom's taxonomy prioritises "comprehension" as the fundamental level and "evaluation" as the highest level. The development of critical thinking abilities relies heavily on the processes of analysis, synthesis, and assessment (Kennedy et al., 1991). The concept of critical thinking is not novel, however it has garnered increased attention in contemporary times. From an Oriental perspective, it has been included in the Vedic system of education. Enhancing students' cognitive abilities is seen as a primary objective of education. Nevertheless, there is an increasing apprehension regarding the deficiency of advanced cognitive skills among graduates. The prevailing emphasis on language and memorization within our educational framework may impede students' capacity to engage in critical thinking and information processing. The recognition of the significance of critical thinking and its cultivation in learners is of utmost importance.

Literature, encompassing narratives, theatrical productions, and poetic compositions, not only augments linguistic proficiencies but also furnishes learners with authentic situations. Engaging with literary works in the language classroom fosters the growth of language proficiency and enhances cognitive acuity. The act of engaging with literature involves the active participation of readers in the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas. The text invites readers to engage in critical thinking and promotes attributes such as self-assurance, analytical thinking, and receptiveness to new ideas.

Critical thinking encompasses the processes of analysis, inference, evaluation, and decision-making. Literary writings present a multitude of language possibilities, serving diverse purposes. The act of reading books offers both enjoyment and enhances the reader's linguistic abilities. Fiction, non-fiction, and poetry serve as mediums through which readers gain awareness of events and individuals from diverse historical epochs, thus facilitating their comprehension of global cultures and shared experiences. Literature catalyzes readers'

imagination, empowering them to engage in creative and productive endeavours. The act of reading facilitates interpersonal engagement, character evaluation, and the formulation of suitable choices and judgements. Creativity and imagination are intricately connected to advanced cognitive abilities, allowing learners to assimilate knowledge and utilise it proficiently. Literature additionally facilitates the exploration of science via the lens of imagination, especially in the absence of considerable familiarity with science and technology.

The development of readers' creative ability is facilitated through the presentation of varied characters and views in literary works. Occasionally, readers can establish a connection with the narratives and characters, uncovering hints to resolve their predicaments or react to situations. Literature broadens the limits of imagination, nurtures novel concepts, and transcends basic factual information. It spans a diverse range of cultures and traditions, offering valuable insights into the emotional aspects of human existence and delving into the complexities of the human condition. This promotes cognitive engagement and inherently encourages inquiry, cultivating analytical reasoning. Hence, literature serves to not only augment linguistic proficiency but also to stimulate the cognitive capacities of learners.

Literature and Language Learning

Povey (1972) posited that literature can augment language proficiency through the provision of comprehensive and nuanced vocabulary utilisation, alongside refined and exact grammar (529). When confronted with academic or real-life problems, students frequently depend on their previous learning habits or experiences. By possessing critical thinking abilities, individuals develop self-assurance and devise inventive resolutions to challenges. Critical thinking promotes substantive conversations, enabling students to assess matters, scrutinise through adept inquiry, and amalgamate by developing novel viewpoints. These competencies are by the advanced stages of Bloom's Taxonomy and foster exceptional performance through autonomous cognition, as promoted by the concept of "Pari-prashna."

Inquiries are crucial in stimulating students' inquisitiveness and guiding them towards excellence. The objective of education is to cultivate learners' capacity for autonomous cognitive processes. English language instructors can choose passages that may seem straightforward, but they can create questions that stimulate students to engage in critical thinking, analysis, and decision-making. It is important to motivate students to go beyond superficial thinking, and giving them reading comprehension activities for unfamiliar sections might help them do this. Collaborative learning offers an opportunity for engaging in conversations, generating ideas, posing questions, seeking clarification, and assessing, thus fostering the development of critical thinking abilities. The integration of technology in collaborative learning can be utilised to augment critical thinking and problem-solving skills in situations where traditional methods may not produce the intended results.

Albert Einstein famously stated that the complex challenges we encounter cannot be resolved with the same degree of intellectual capacity as when we initially formulated them. In the contemporary dynamic landscape, pupils are unable to depend on antiquated cognitive frameworks for problem-solving. To attain higher education objectives in literature and English

learning, individuals must cultivate their critical thinking abilities and effectively integrate new material.

The study of literature enhances the language expertise of learners and provides them with exposure to intricate word usage and advanced grammar. Engaging in conversations inside literary works improves learners' ability to communicate effectively. Novels, plays, and stories offer valuable perspectives on diverse cultural contexts across history, aiding learners in comprehending language usage over various eras. Interacting with literary texts enhances writing proficiency and fosters analytical reasoning. Students have the opportunity to examine alternative conclusions for short stories or compose critical evaluations of their readings. Engaging in interactive sessions after the perusal of literary texts facilitates the interchange of ideas among learners, thus fostering a more profound comprehension of the text.

The incorporation of language in literature serves to encapsulate the fundamental nature of human existence. English literature has attained linguistic perfection through its refinement and beauty. Despite the impact of technological improvements and developments in numerous disciplines on language usage, the enduring allure of English literature persists.

Conclusion:

Drama plays a crucial part in English language programmes in countries where English is not the primary language. Nevertheless, language educators encounter numerous obstacles when integrating theatre into the pedagogy of English language instruction. To begin with, there exists a dearth of pedagogically-crafted resources that are appropriate for language courses. Additionally, there exists a deficiency in the provision of adequate preparation and training in the field of literary instruction within TESL/TEFL programmes. Furthermore, a notable deficiency exists in the extent of well-defined objectives that delineate the significance of literature in the context of ESL/EFL education. The function of the teacher is of utmost importance in the instruction of English through drama. It is necessary to determine the objective of language instruction by considering the requirements and anticipations of the students and employing a student-centric methodology. Moreover, given that students allocate a substantial portion of their time within educational institutions, educators must foster an environment that promotes English language proficiency. The teacher can enhance communication by employing terminology in the student's mother tongue, so enabling pupils to actively participate in English talks. To summarise, literature offers pupils a wide range of genuine resources in many genres. According to Elliot (1990), the acquisition of literary competency enables pupils to effectively engage with and assimilate the language at an elevated level. (198)The utilisation of literature not only functions as a means to enhance students' proficiency in written and spoken language but also as a means to gain insight into the cultural aspects of the target language, hence promoting the development of cultural competence among students.

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