



THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the use of literature as an effective technique for teaching both basic language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) are emphasized. Reasons for using literary texts in foreign language that is English and the main criteria for selecting suitable literary texts in foreign language classes are stressed as the only language in which all subjects travel is English.

Literature plays an important role in teaching four skills like Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Collie and Slater support the inclusion of literature in the language classroom as it provides valuable authentic material, develops personal involvement and help contribute to readers' cultural as well as language enrichment. These advantages, they move on to assert, can be achieved provided teachers use relevant and appealing material to learners through the use of activities that promote involvement, reader response and a solid integration between language and literature. Following this trend, Carter and Long propose three models to justify the use of Literature. The first model in their discussion is the CULTURAL MODEL which represents the Literature that brings into the picture as regards of the understanding and appreciation of different cultures and ideologies together with the developing of one's perception of feelings and artistic forms. The second model is the LANGUAGE MODEL. This model emphasizes the fact that language is the literary medium and that literature could be seen as an instrument to teach specific vocabulary and structures. Last, their PERSONAL GROWTH MODEL entails students engaging with the reading of literary texts, appreciating and evaluating cultural artefacts and, in broad terms, the understanding of our society, culture and ourselves as we function within. As English teachers, Literature that is the literary text is one of the tools ready in our hands to offer them language acquisition and contribute cultural knowledge and understanding. It acts as a catalyst to acquire and stimulate learning. It at once appeals to the feelings and to their thoughts which in turn pave the way for the student's language enhancement and growth. It makes aware of:

1. The broadening of students' horizons by giving them a knowledge of the classics of literature;
2. The student's improvement in general cultural awareness;



3. The students' creativity and literary imagination and to develop their appreciation of literature;
4. The psychological stress and attitude of the mind
5. The historical truths of life.
6. The philosophy of life.
7. The innate, inborn goodness of man.
8. The required changes in individual, society and even in history.
9. The masterpieces in British and American literature as an educative experience, and to add to students' knowledge of the world at large.

Teachers are challenged daily with students who do not fit into the curriculum. In a classroom, there are many students with special needs, language differences and with different learning styles. It is in the hands of the readers to make their sources interesting. As such, Literature is an amalgamation of prose, poetry and dramas. Prose: Prose text will be used to teach language, vocabulary, phrasal verbs, contemporary issues, theories like psychoanalytical issues, communicative skills which further facilitates to discussion among peer members and most probably reading. Poems in English Language Teaching: The accomplishment of poetry lessons depends upon on the teacher's level of creativity, enthusiasm, reading aloud with tone variation, a lecdem or with the approaches he/she implements to generate the learner's interest in the poetry. It should be learner-centered so the teachers should make in a way so that they come to know. Poetry can pave the way for the learning and teaching of basic language skills. Most poetry consciously or unconsciously makes use of metaphor as one of its primary methods and it serves as a great source for the students to understand the author's interpretation. For example, Sylvia Plath's poem „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

The teacher when reading the poem aloud with tone variation, she/he can reach the students. Together with that she/he can appreciate the poem by asking questions like...

1. What is the riddle in nine syllables?
2. What are the images used in the poem?

The students would answer as elephant, a melon, fat purse, a cow in calf, a bag of green a apples and the train.

3. Why the author has used these images?

The students might not answer, by reading the poem again and by telling them to imagine the nature of the images used. The teacher would continue...

4. What is meant by boarding of train?



5. Why has she referred as „there is no getting of“?

The students might not answer. The teacher has to explain with reference to the author's biography and insist the students to analyze her further, to explore the poem. Saraç (2003:17-20) also explains the educational benefits of poetry as follows: provides 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 in 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. As Çubukçu (2001:1) mentions, poetry is a rewarding and enjoyable experience with the properties of rhyming and rhythm both of which convey "love and appreciation for the sound and power of language." And according to Sylvia Plath, "Poetry is an outlet of emotions". At this juncture, it can be stated that students become familiar with different aspects of the target language, such as stress, pitch, juncture, intonation by studying poetry. Through poetry, students can also study the semiotic elements in the target language. Moreover, poetry employs language to evoke and exalt special qualities of life, and suffices readers with feelings. Particularly lyric poetry stirs one's emotions. Poetry is one of the most effective and powerful transmitters of culture. They could even dramatize with their own dialogues and characters. All of these group activities develop the speaking abilities of the students, give importance to pronunciation practice and enhances their creative and knowledge skill. Teachers could indicate their errors in their act or in their pronunciation in a positive manner. We can engage them in also poetry writing in class, publish them in magazines, learning context using Skype in the classroom to collaborate with schools all over the world, or fully online Edupunk page.

Conclusion:

Literature plays an important role in the English programs of many non-English speaking countries. However, there are some problems encountered by language teachers within the area of teaching English through literature. First, there are very few pedagogically-designed appropriate materials that can be used by language teachers in a language classroom. Second, there is a lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching in TESL / TEFL programs. Third, there is the absence of clear-cut objectives defining the role of literature in ESL /EFL. The teacher has an important role in teaching English through literature. First, he should determine the aim of language teaching in relation to the needs and expectations of the students which means Student-centered. Moreover, since the students spend most of his time in the school/college, it is the teacher"s duty to insist them to talk in English and he/she can be a little multilingual so as to express some terms in the student"s language so that he/she can sustain the student to converse in English. In sum, literature provides students with an incomparably rich source of authentic material over a wide range of registers. If students can gain access to this material by developing literary competence, then they can effectively internalize the language at a high level (Elliot 1990:198). Literature is not only a tool for developing the written and oral skills of the students in the target language but also is a window opening into the culture of the target language, building up a cultural competence in students.



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