
Developing Language through Literature

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Abstract

Literature plays a vital role in developing linguistic skills. Literature is basically written by person who knows the language very well. He or she has deeper understanding of morphology, syntax and semantics of the language in which he or she produces literature. Hence, it an authentic and most appropriate source of developing the target language. Literary texts are the rich treasures for enhancing vocabulary, understanding of grammaticality, syntax and semantic of the target language. The four skills of language like speaking, listening, reading and writing can profoundly be improved through teaching and reading the literary texts. Therefore, use of literary texts in learning a foreign language is of greater importance. It is necessary on the part of the teacher to select most appropriate texts and indulge learners in the activity of reading them. All the domains branches of language may be introduced while teaching the literary texts. The major aim of this paper is to highlight the use of literature in developing vocabulary in particular and developing a foreign language in general.

Keywords: Linguistics Skills, Morphology, Semantics, Syntax...**Introduction:**

It is universally acknowledged that in order to speak any language under the sun it is essential the speaker must be acquainted with its words. Acquaintance and the skill of articulating words in the language is the basic requirement of learning any language. The linguists assert the fact that vocabulary of any language can't be taught in the air. It requires a solid, authentic material with the teacher. There is no other material as authentic as literature in teaching vocabulary in the classrooms. Students need vocabulary to learn a new language, without which no learner learns any language. According to Swan and Walter, **“Vocabulary acquisition is the largest and most important task facing the language learner.”** (Swan and Walter 1984) David Wilkins summed up the importance of vocabulary for language learning: **“Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.”** Hence, developing vocabulary is the foundational

task. Literature acts as a dynamic and potent catalyst in language development, offering a rich context that moves beyond the sterile, and often decontextualized, confines of traditional grammar exercises. Linguists like Brumfit and Carter rejected the idea that there is a special, separate "literary language" that stands apart from normal communication. They argued that literature uses ordinary language in creative and compelling ways, and that engaging with it helps students understand the full expressive potential of the language. The focus shifted from studying *about* literature to using literary texts as a vehicle for language learning, especially reading. By immersing learners in authentic literary texts—such as novels, poems, and short stories—educators provide exposure to a vast and nuanced vocabulary, varied sentence structures, and complex syntactic patterns in a natural, meaningful way. This contextual exposure is particularly effective for enhancing vocabulary and solidifying grammatical knowledge through incidental learning, rather than rote memorization. Carter and Long's work *Teaching Literature* is most recognized for incorporating literary texts into language teaching. Moreover, literature uniquely engages learners' cognitive and affective faculties, fostering empathy and critical thinking as they analyze characters, themes, and societal issues, which deepens their understanding of the language and the culture it represents. The interpretative nature of literary analysis encourages students to engage in higher-order thinking, explore multiple perspectives, and articulate their thoughts, thereby developing their expressive language skills in both spoken and written forms. Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities by Joanne Collie and Stephen Slater, published in 1994 serves as a highly influential and practical guide for teachers seeking to integrate literary texts into their language teaching. Collie and Slater provide activities that require students to engage directly with the text and with each other, fostering discussion and personal interpretation. Ultimately, the study of literature provides an enriching and motivating experience that cultivates a profound appreciation for language and its expressive power, equipping learners with the linguistic and intellectual dexterity to navigate the complexities of communication in real-world contexts. *Using Literature to Learn and Teach Language: The L3 Approach*, published by Springer in 2024, is an accessible and practical textbook by Carol Griffiths that advocates for the use of literature to create integrated language lessons. Griffiths introduces the "L3 approach," which uses literature as a central resource to integrate the development of all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—and foster overall language awareness. Gillian Lazar's 1993 publication, *Literature and Language Teaching: A Guide for Teachers and Trainers*, is a highly regarded resource for educators seeking to integrate literature into the foreign language classroom. Brian Parkinson and Helen Reid Thomas's 2000 book, *Teaching Literature in a Second Language*, provides a comprehensive look at the relationship between literary study and language acquisition.

How literature develops language:-

Literature exposes learners to authentic language, vocabulary, and grammatical structures in a meaningful and contextualized setting, as opposed to decontextualized textbook exercises. Engaging with literary texts, including prose, poetry, and drama, helps to

improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated manner. This includes strengthening writing capabilities through exposure to varied styles and structures. Literature provides exposure to a wide range of lexis and syntax. By encountering words and grammatical patterns repeatedly within a story, students can learn new vocabulary and internalize complex language structures naturally through a process known as incidental learning. Literary analysis requires students to interpret and evaluate a text, make inferences, and think critically about themes, characters, and the author's message. This process helps learners develop higher-order thinking skills that are transferable beyond the language classroom. Literature serves as a window into the cultural, historical, and social context of the target language. It exposes students to diverse ways of life and values, promoting intercultural competence and empathy by allowing them to engage with characters from different backgrounds. Intrinsically interesting themes and topics found in literature can motivate and engage students on an emotional level. When students can relate to the content, they are more likely to participate in classroom activities and develop a lifelong love for reading. Each of the language skills plays its due role positively to enrich language. Reading helps the learner to understand the codes of language, the reader recognize the graphic counterparts of phonological items. He comes to know the orthography of the language. During the process of reading the reader analyze the syntactic relationships of the items. Lastly, the reader tries to interpret the process of formations of words, phrases and sentences. In this way, literary texts develop language skills of the learner.

Limitations of teaching language through literature:

Although teaching English language through literature is of paramount importance yet it is full of challenges. One of the challenges is of scarcity of the trained teachers who have passion for literature. It is also a big task to select appropriate literary texts. Many classic or even contemporary literary works can be challenging for language learners due to complex syntax, advanced vocabulary, and figurative language. This can be overwhelming and demotivating for students, especially those with lower proficiency. In multicultural classrooms, a literary text that resonates with some students may be culturally irrelevant or unfamiliar to others, leading to disengagement. Teachers must navigate selecting texts that are both culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible. Inadequate resources, such as access to diverse literary texts, can be a major challenge. Additionally, many language teachers may lack the specialized training needed to effectively integrate literary analysis into their language instruction. Language curricula are often packed, leaving limited time for the in-depth reading, discussion, and analysis that literary study requires. This can pressure teachers to rush through texts or focus superficially on language forms rather than holistic understanding. Students, particularly reluctant readers or those not used to a literature-based approach, may be intimidated by literary texts. Overcoming low motivation and a focus on memorization rather than interpretation can be difficult.

Strategies for integrating literature in the language classroom:

A big responsibility lies on the shoulder of the teacher in the class. He has to have that kind of passion to inculcate the habit of reading amongst the learners. The learner have

got to be motivated to read best of literature available at their disposal. The teacher must know the level of students and accordingly has to choose texts based on students' proficiency level, interests, and cultural backgrounds. The classifications of learners are important. Lower level learners can be given simple literary texts while good learners must be provided best of literary texts. The teacher has got to adopt different and result oriented teaching methods. It is true that teacher should not depend upon one single method. Teacher has to apply different teaching models, including the language-based, cultural, and personal growth models, to address diverse learning needs. Approaches like thematic, stylistic, and reader-response methods can enrich the learning experience. The teacher needs to be alert to provide support to help students navigate complex texts. This can involve pre-reading activities (introducing vocabulary and context), while-reading support (guided discussions), and post-reading activities (creative writing or debates). The teacher has to arrange several post reading activities like making students to summarize the texts they have read this will help them to learn to interpret the texts. Creative tasks such as role-playing, writing alternative endings, journal writing, and multimedia projects based on the text can make learning more dynamic. The teacher can use group work and literature circles to create a collaborative learning environment. This allows students to share interpretations, learn from diverse perspectives, and practice their communication skills. The teacher has got to be a friendly with ICT and AI and other digital tools and resources like audio books, online discussion forums, and multimedia content to support literary study. This can extend the learning environment beyond the classroom and cater to different learning styles. The teacher must have freedom to apply his imagination and creative skills. Hence, emphasize training and professional development to equip teachers with the skills and confidence to effectively teach language through literature.

Conclusion:

This research paper shows the significant place of literary texts in the development of English language. It also focuses the important role played by the teacher in the process. The teacher has to plan his lesson to decide what part of language he is to teach to the learners. The paper points out the fact that the teacher has got to be competent enough in all areas of language like Phonology, Phonetics, Morphology, Syntax and Semantics. The teacher must focus to develop language skills like listening, reading, writing and speaking. Learners are to be encouraged to read more and more original texts in English so that they can come to know native English and formal and informal forms of communication. The teacher must prepare the list of literary texts which are interesting and can involve learners in reading. The teacher has to use the literary text rather brilliantly in the classroom situations. The present study also exposes that language skills like listening, reading, speaking and writing can be developed in an effective and systematic way. The paper explains the fact that by using a literary text while teaching English language may yield positive result. Learning becomes fun when learners read text and get authentic knowledge of language. Developing language through literature is a powerful, multifaceted, and authentic approach that moves beyond simple memorization and rote exercises. Literature

serves as both a mentor and muse, offering a rich and engaging context that simultaneously enriches linguistic skills, fosters critical thinking, and nurtures cultural and personal awareness. Its effectiveness relies on a dynamic, student-centered methodology and a thoughtful selection of texts. Literary works expose learners to a vast and authentic variety of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and idiomatic expressions in context. Engaging with a literary text requires more than surface-level comprehension. Students must analyze, interpret, and evaluate characters, plots, and themes, which directly cultivates their critical and analytical abilities.

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