

# Innovative Thoughts- Education, Management, Arts, Science, Linguistics *(Teaching & Learning)*

Volume 2



University of Malaya  
Department of Indian Studies



Kalaignaan Pathipagam  
Chennai

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**"INNOVATIVE THOUGHTS - EDUCATION,  
MANAGEMENT, ARTS, SCIENCE,  
LINGUISTICS"**

**(Teaching & Learning)**

**Vol. - 2**

Publishing Editors

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## Literature as an Effective Tool for English Language Teaching

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English language has become the paradigm for the effective means of communication. The English language teaching has evolved as a unique phenomenon in the globalised world as it helps to acquire jobs, promote business interests, education and opportunities in general. The aim of the language teachers is not to teach about language, but to develop learners' abilities to make them capable of using the language for a variety of communicative purposes. The gulf between knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge in terms of communication can be surmounted by framing a relevant syllabus based on the real life situations bearing resemblance to variety of social contexts. This awareness of the social context can be had from the world of literature which depicts society in all its hues and colors in a language as varied as it is authentic and natural.

Literature is an effective tool to teach English as it helps in honing the language learning ability of the students. It kindles and arouses the student's interest to learn the nuances of a language and acquire the skills necessary for communication. Moreover, it enables the readers to have cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. M. Moovendhan in the article "Impact of Teaching Language Through Literature" considers that "Language Learning through Literature is based on the principle that literary works of art can give students intellectual pleasure" (97). The inclusion of literature as a strategy in language teaching process offers various benefits to the readers:

the students get exposed to the real practice of communicative language.

Ø It enables the readers to contextualize the language to acquire grammar implicitly and discern the richness of the language.

Ø Develop the intellectual ability of the learners and expose them to a variety of linguistic and literary expressions and communicative functions of language.

Ø The process of reading the literary texts nourishes the creative power of the students.

The process of framing the syllabus has an inevitable role in the language teaching strategy. The language teacher should take into account the needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students before composing the syllabus for the learners. However, one major factor to take into account is whether a particular work is able to reveal the kind of personal involvement by arousing the learners' interest and eliciting strong, positive reactions from them. Reading a literary text is more likely to have a long-term and valuable effect upon the learners' linguistic and extra linguistic knowledge when it is meaningful and amusing. It is important to choose books relevant to the real-life experiences and situations.

Ø The texts should be chosen in such a way that there are no ambiguous grammatical, linguistic, and literary difficulties.

Ø Literary texts should include the structures and vocabulary previously learned.

Ø The texts should meet the demands of the learners and enable them to express themselves with conviction and ease.

Ø At elementary levels, for example, students should be given simplified or specially written stories.

#### **Literature and LSRW Skills:**

Literature plays an important role in teaching four basic language skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The training for the development of the individual skills should be taught in an integrated

way. The study of literature in a language class is mainly associated with reading and writing but it also plays an equally meaningful role in teaching both speaking and listening. Teachers should try to teach basic language skills as an integral part of oral and written language use, as part of the means for creating both referential and interactional meaning, not merely as an aspect of the oral and written production of words, phrases and sentences. Language teachers can make listening comprehension and pronunciation interesting by playing a recording or video of a literary work or by reading literature aloud themselves. The process of reading a work of art enhances speaking and listening ability. The exposure to wide variety of texts in turn sharpens the creative power of the students. The interest of the students' can be sustained by utilizing several literary devices like poetry, drama, short stories, novels, fables, dialogues, conversations, and interviews.

#### English Language Teaching through Poetry:

Poetry offers extensive opportunity for the learning and teaching of basic language skills. Poetry is a good starting place because the language is more concise, pure, and abstract. Poetry not only paves the way for a better understanding of the language but also enables the students to enhance and improve their language skills. The metaphor that is used by the poets makes poetry a significant learning process. The benefits of poetry reading process are,

- Ø The appreciation of the writer's composition process makes them to understand the structure of language.

- Ø It helps in enriching the vocabulary and the analytical ability of the learners

- Ø provides readers with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond the known usages and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary

- Ø Triggers up the imagination of the readers by offering different interpretations.

- Ø It makes the students familiar with figures of speech like simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc.

Moreover, poetry employs language to evoke and exalt special qualities of life, and suffices readers with feelings. It is particularly

lyric poetry which is based on feelings and provides still another emotional benefit. Poetry is one of the most effective and powerful transmitters of culture as it helps the learners to comprehend the cultural elements like allusions, vocabulary, idioms, tone of the language.

#### **English Language Teaching through Short Story:**

Short fiction is a supreme resource for observing not only language but life itself. In short fiction, characters act out all the real and symbolic acts people carry out in daily lives, and do so in a variety of registers and tones. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives:

- Ø Makes the students' reading task easier due to being simple and short when compared with the other literary genres
- Ø Enlarges the learner's ability to convey their idea within brief and precise sentences.
- Ø Improves the critical thinking skills and improves the imagination of the readers
- Ø Helps students to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings
- Ø Acts as a perfect vehicle to help students understand the positions of themselves as well as the others by transferring these gained knowledge to their own world.

The process of reading short stories is one of the helpful techniques of language teaching process. Moreover, short fiction, like all other types of literature, makes contribution to the development of cognitive analytical abilities by bringing the whole self to bear on a compressed account of a situation in a single place and moment.

#### **English Language Teaching through Drama:**

The process of reading plays in a language classroom is a good resource for language teaching. It is through the use of drama that learners become familiar with grammatical structures in contexts and also learn about how to use the language to express, control and inform. Learners should make use of drama to promote their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstances and make sense of their extra linguistic world in a deeper way:

- Ø Improves the interactional ability of the learners
- Ø Sharpens the mind as the mind keeps anticipating the response
- Ø promotes language development,
- Ø heightens effective listening skills
- Ø strengthens comprehension and learning retention by involving the senses as an integral part of the learning process

The use of drama seems to be an effective technique in today's communication-based, language teaching. Faruk Türker remarks in the article "Using 'Literature' In Language Teaching" that "[p]lays are always a good choice for beginners. They can be rather short, compact and emotionally involving. The student can also be guided into visualizing the plays as he reads the text, into imagining how a character would say a certain line. Thus he can have a sense of participation" (301-302). It helps students to promote their comprehension of the verbal and nonverbal aspects of the language. Since drama is the reenactments of social events, students improve their personality and code of behavior. Thus, they can achieve more meaningful and realistic teaching from which students can benefit to a great extent.

#### **English Language Teaching through Novel:**

The use of a novel as a tool in English language teaching is a beneficial technique for mastering the writing skills of the learners. In novel, characters reflect what people really perform in daily lives and so it enlightens the learner's knowledge of the world and of human lives in general. The practice of reading novels in classrooms

- Ø will kindle the reading habit in the students and arouse them to learn the language in its entirety
- Ø gives students the opportunity to make use of their creativity ability to elongate a simple idea into a complex theme
- Ø enables the learners to develop coherent logical progression of ideas
- Ø increases the concentration power of the learners as they inculcate the habit of recalling the plot line and the characters in the novel

literature. Qareeballah Hajoo Hamdoun and Syed Sarwar Hussain insinuates in the article "Teaching Language through Literature: A diagnostic study on the teaching of English as a Foreign Language" that the literary texts "takes into account the functions of language in different realistic situations outside the conditioned atmosphere of the classrooms" (3). The various genres of literature play a major role in promoting the language among students and making them understand the power and richness of language.

Literature plays a pivotal role in enhancing the language and personality skills of students and developing their ability to employ a language in different social contexts. In sum, literature provides students with an incomparably rich source of authentic material over a wide range of registers. It opens horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore. The real purpose of learning a language will be accomplished when the students learn to apply the skills learned in real life situations.

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