



LITERATURE IS THE SOURCE BEHIND THE PROCESS OF LEARNING LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This paper elucidates the inter-link between Literature and the process of learning English language in Schools and Colleges of India. Literature is part and parcel of learning any language. To enhance language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as sub-skills: pronunciation, intonation, comprehension, vocabulary development, perception, composition, etc. one needs to depend on Literature. Surprisingly there is an inter-link between life and literature, literature and language and language and life. For making a literary work, the writer should have a command over the language and readers of such work automatically get mastery over language by analyzing and applying. An understanding of the nature and structure of language would enable us to appreciate a literary work much better because language and thoughts are the raw materials of literature.

Key Words: English Literature, Process of Learning language in Indian schools and colleges.

Literature is an effective technique for learning language. Kramersch comments, "Rather than a straightforward grammatical or functional syllabus, we should think of a contextual syllabus, one through which learners gradually acquire not only the ability to produce and understand the forms of the language but the capacity to reflect on how the choice of these forms in spoken and written discourse both defines and is determined by personal relationships, social situations, and cultural presuppositions." (*Proficiency plus: The next step*. p. 4).

Literary writers use language in their works. Literature can be used to teach language, for instance, drama and poetry can be used for the teaching of speech while prose can be used to teach summary and comprehension. New words and expressions are acquired





through literature. Through this means, vocabulary development is enhanced. In literature classes, when students are made to tell stories their speech fluency is sharpened. Literature is generally defined as a collection of writings on any given subject or field of endeavors. However, there also exists some technical definitions of literature. Literature plays an important role in teaching four skills like Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

Collie and Slater (1987: 3-6) state 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.

“The ability to create, imagine, and express an idea or composition through a definite method and the study of the method itself” defines Alorams about literature (1981). In other words, literature is seen as a subject which is unique in contents and methodology. *The Oxford Concise English Dictionary* also defines literature as “written works, especially those whose value lies in beauty of language or in emotional effect”. The definition only portrays literature as an expression of ideas, thoughts and feelings with emphasis on the aesthetic values of language. In another perspective, literature is essentially seen as an expression of the cultural experience of a people and language is part of this cultural experience. To know people's language, their literature is highly indispensable. Literature is an art of language and words are the essential ingredients of language. Literature is a tool through which language propagates itself. The relationship between language and literature is an interdependent. Literature does not and cannot exist independent of language because language is the conveyor of literature.

McGraw and Tomlinson (1997) examined whether the collection of children's and adolescent literature with the theme of children and war could successfully be used as learning material in the adult EFL classes in France. They also investigated how willingly these mature, college-level adults would accept and actively respond to literature written about and for young readers. Their study presents a compelling result. The students were enthusiastically engaged with the books and were highly motivated to respond to the



literature through writing and group oral debates. Moreover Literature based instruction plays a major role. "LBI originally often encompasses the following elements: the use of natural text, discussion and collaboration with others on books, reading aloud, sustained silent reading, teacher modeling as a reader, emphasis on changing attitudes, self-selection of reading materials, meaning orientation, process writing and other output activities around literature." (Turnell & Jacobs, 1989).

In the article *Enhancing students' performance in the English language through Literature-in-English in the secondary schools* Amuseghan Sunday Adejimola and Momoh Adenike Ojuolape comment, "New words and expressions are acquired through literature. Through this means, vocabulary development is enhanced. In literature classes, when students are made to tell stories their speech fluency is sharpened." (p. 2242). To a certain extent, the activities such as Role Play, Jam, and Group discussions can enhance the ability to acquire the language English. Above all it is the literature that plays a vital role for learning language. "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).

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