

WHY TO TEACH LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE?

DR. CHANDRAKANT R. MANDLIK

Head, Department of English
Shri Shiv Chhatrapati College
Junnar.

ABSTRACT

Learning a language and literature are the basic aims of English classrooms. Literature gives an opportunity to the learner to develop critical thinking. It also gives a chance to express his comment on the particular topic freely and enthusiastically and can justify his thought with evidences. By opening a literary text the teacher motivates the learners and makes a classroom a living process of learning. The main purpose behind teaching literature is to create interaction among the students on the text they have been dealing with. Everything reaches to his mind and the class can improve communicative competence. Literature also brings to the notice different aspects of language teaching. By teaching literature even the teacher knows importance of contextualization. It is accepted truth that Literature teaching is one of the best methods of language teaching which makes the pupils to learning English language through entertaining. Tirelessly they can take effort to reach very close to the goal of language learning.

Key Words- *Literature Teaching, Learner's Comment, Interaction, Communication*

Introduction

English is not our native language. It is second language. Therefore a question rambles always in the mind of the students whether they are able to grab English language. If one understands teaching strategies and literature the talk of acquiring English language becomes very easy. In this process students have to pay more attention on reading poems, stories, novels, plays and write reviews on them in their own words. How big they have understood by reading the text is immaterial. What they have appreciated may be in brief but correct and not irrelevant. They have to express in their own language instead of borrowing readymade material. It is possible if we teach language through literature. Sirajul Chowdhury in this regard aptly writes 'to try to teach language without the help of literature is doomed to be ineffective'. (Yadav, 2010:160) Study of English language in absence of literature make the students fell tedious and bore. Learning of literature helps them to acquire and enrich vocabulary and capacity of appreciation.

Speaking and writing are the two major functions of language. Students stumble in these two functions as they join higher education. Weakness in communication is considered as the obstacle in their learning activity. They learn English for more than 7 or 8 years still they are

unable to establish proficiency in English language. The teachers have to use such strategies which will help the students to grasp textual subjects matter.

Functions of Literature

Literature is a motivating force for learners of English language. Opening new world to the students literature remains a way of contribution in the work of creating and developing attitude of the students to critical abilities. It helps them to read and think independently on the text they read. The students can easily understand human dilemma, conflict, plot of short story, and dialogues of a play. Study of literature invites learner's personal response and their individual experience about the text. If it is done it means that learner is interested and involved in the system of language learning. Literature opens a new space to the students to question the statement, interpret the text and explore new things from the text.

Collie and Slater (1987) also focus on the positive contributions of a literary text as it exposes the learner to different registers and types of language use. The short story or a poem which is full of emotions and feeling appeals to the mind of the readers. The learner becomes spontaneous and enthusiastic towards the course of learning. Dialogues in literary text develops learner's creative mind through the study of language and its aspects involved in the text.

Literary study and comprehension

Study of literature inspires the learners to comprehend the meaning of the text which expands their thinking power and abilities of language. Literary aspects, cultural views, higher order of thinking and motivational benefits are provided to the learner by the study of literature. From this study the students can learn and develop skills of language learning system i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening. Study of literature gives a chance to the learner of learning vocabulary asking questions and getting answers, evaluation of evidences, group discussion and power of analyzing the text from different angles. Study of novel can explain system of language learning. While teaching of novel the teacher has to give stress on the following important factors so as to let the learner know the text from literary background as well as language context.

To give background before reading actual text

The teacher in the language class room has to tell background of the text he is dealing with. He can explain in brief socio-economic, political and cultural background related to literary text. At the same time he may focus on the writer's biography, his publications, various themes, style, language and types of the text. Knowing this the learners are able to prepare a picture of the writer and his writings. They will realize intention of the author behind writing that particular kind of text. All this, the students will be able to put on a piece of paper. They begin to write few sentences from their own understanding of the literary text.

Reading the text

During his actual teaching of the text he must explain the learners four reading techniques like reading hastily, examine the text closely finding out by reasoning and presenting. The teacher has to make the students to read the text loudly. By doing so he can share with the learners views, ideas and feedbacks. The students must be asked to relate their own

experiences with the text and explain the same with other students. This will surely help the learners to develop skill of interpretation. The teacher is able to find students improvements in language fluency and they will begin to explain the text from critical point of view.

Improving Writing Skills

Answering questions does not mean the learners have skill of writing. Student's purpose will become more effective if they are completed by the teacher to focus on writing activities like statements, multiple choices, and précis writing. Such tasks can be linked to the text that has been taught to the students. In order to develop skill of writing the students may write their comments on what they feel while reading the text, which event of the text they like most. They have one more chance to elaborate their views about the character that appeals most to them and why. All these techniques if are followed by the learners of language they will be able to develop creative and imaginative faculty of their brain.

Co-operative Learning

After teaching of particular literary text the students may be divided into different groups. They are asked to visit library in order to collect critical resources related to the text they have been studied recently. By reading resources of the different critics and the authors the students can exchange their views and thoughts on the text. It is only an opportunity to the learners to accumulate analysis of the text from different point of views. It helps them to develop their reading habits which will contribute to enrich their ability in learning different skills of language.

Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary of language can eradicate fear of speaking and writing skills. Due to large vocabulary students are able to frame sentences correctly. They will understand use of right word at right place. So they can narrate the story of a novel or any type of literature in their own words meaningfully. If they find difficulty in knowing meaning of the word they can consult standard dictionary by Horn by. They can also understand correct pronunciation of words through reading transcription of each word such dictionaries provide meaning with pronunciations of words. Literature learning therefore increases learner's vocabulary and gives chance to them to know correct pronunciation of words.

Teaching Grammar

The grammar aspects like noun, pronoun, prepositions, verbs, adverbs may be chosen from the text. The students will realize how they are used in the sentences. They will also understand types of sentences. This practice will leave powerful impact on the mind of the learners. They will also remember sentences for ever. The teacher can tell the learners to use same method for the study of other grammatical aspects such a articles, tenses, subject verb agreement, direct indirect, question tag. The literary text is more useful for the study of grammatical aspects. The learners once understand will attempt grammar exercise independently.

Teaching of Diction

Diction of the novel helps the learners to accept the language and its recurrent use. The study of figurative language, diction, style and point of view are important in the study of them in



language is also valuable. While studying them the attention of the learner is automatically grabbed. It helps them to establish command over language. The teacher uses such teaching strategies in a language class room to find the class remain lively and interactive.

Teaching of Communication

Real communication in the class room makes class less boring. The literary text provides an opportunity of communication to the learners. While teaching literature communicative language teaching strategy must be used in a language class room. Study of literary text will be boring without contextualization to socio-political, historical and biographical. Braj B. Kachru's (1986:140) observation is that if we are using a particular piece of literature for language teaching it has to be "contextually appropriate". Literary text gives delight and motivation to the learners. These will lead learner to recognize different world created by literary text. Lot of reading of the literary text helps the learner to have competency in language.

Conclusion

If language is taught through literature it leaves great effect on the mind of the students. There must be appropriate selection of the literary text while teaching language which matters most. Students of language can express their thoughts through languages. It will help them to develop critical thinking. Literature is the best medium to expand learner's language skills like reading, writing, speaking and listening. It is also a source of cultivating their mind in the context of culture and sensitivity. The grammatical aspects are taught very effectively by using literary text. Literature entertains the learners at the same time gives change to learn language with joy and less boredom.

REFERENCES

1. Yadav, B. L. (2010) Critical Response to R.K. Narayan, Delhi: Mangalamm Publications.
2. Singh, Namvar. (July 1999) 'Namvar Singh in Conversation with Avadesh Kumar Singh'. Indian Literature. 192.
3. Sommer, Dorris (March 1993): 'Textual Conquests: On Readerly Competence and 'Minority' Literature'. Modern Language Quarterly. 54-1:141-153.
4. Spivak, Gayatri. (1993rpt 2001) 'The Burden of English' in Gregory Caste (ed.) Op. Cit.54-72.