

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

FACILITATING LANGUAGE TEACHING THROUGH LITERATURE: A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

V. Hemalatha M.A., M.Phil., (Ph.D)

Assistant Professor
Department of English
Saveetha Engineering College.
hemalatha@saveetha.ac.in

D. Sunitha Deva Kumari M.A., M.Phil., (Ph.D)

Assistant Professor
Department of English
Saveetha Engineering College.
sunithadevakumari@saveetha.ac.in

**V. Hemalatha M.A., M.Phil., (Ph.D), D. Sunitha Deva Kumari M.A., M.Phil., (Ph.D);
Facilitating Language Teaching through Literature: A Pedagogical Approach to English
Language Teaching and Learning process -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of
Egypt/Egyptology 17 (7). ISSN 1567-214x
KeyWords: Language, Literature, Learner-centric, Facilitate, Methods, Approach**

Abstract

The Contemporary world has witnessed myriads of changes and challenges in the methods and utilization of materials in English language classroom. With the help of improved technological supports, the teachers and learners are advanced in their expectations in receiving the methods and approaches of learning the language using literature. Literature is generally said to be any piece of art such as stories, poems, and plays especially those that are considered to have value as art and not just entertainment. There are many good reasons for using literature in the language classroom. Here are a few:

- Literature has got an authentic material. It is good to expose learners to this source of unmodified language in the classroom rather than the modified materials.

- Literature encourages interaction. Literary texts are often rich in multiple layers of meaning, and can be effectively used for discussions and sharing opinions.
- Apart from all these, literature encourages and motivates the whole person by instilling the importance and values of attitude.

There are different models used in teaching literature in language classroom. They are cultural model, language model and the personal growth model. The following article aims to focus various methods using such models and materials to teach and facilitate the learners towards learning a language through literature.

Communication has become the very basic qualification for anyone in today's challenging scenario. In order to move ahead of the competitors like China and other such countries, we need to equip ourselves with the powerful tool of communication skills especially in English. Though Indian youngsters are good in academics, when it comes to communication they completely lag behind. This is not mainly because they lack the fluency of the second language but because they lack the required training for effective communication. Developing communication skills helps one to excel in the field of profession and improves their quality of life. It is indeed a vital life skill to learn the ability to communicate information accurately and clearly.

The Effect of Communication

The current world of employment and recruitment demands this magical word "Effective communication." The essential qualities of a good and effective communication skills are (1) the ability to converse with wide range of officials or people from varied cultures. (2) Maintaining good eye contact (3) Manipulating appropriate vocabulary that tailors language skill (4) effective listening skill (6) Presentation of vivid ideas (7) clear and concise writing style (8) mingling and working well in groups. These qualities help to sustain the employees in the workplace as an asset. This powerful communication skill helps one to speak, listen, question and write with clear and concise manner. That makes one to climb their career ladder with piled up promotions. Effective workplace communication is essential for personal and professional success. Histories and politics recorded many strong instances for the power of communication that paved way for incredible changes.

The demand on novel methods and techniques of facilitating literature for Communicative purpose throw light on the importance of "Communicative Language Teaching." It is very popular and led to the need of "authentic language" that involves real life materials in the field of ELT currently. Literature, as referred from Macmillan English Dictionary, is a record of stories, poems and plays, especially those that are considered to have value as art and not just entertainment. It is also mentioned in another source as "literary texts are products that reflect different aspects of society. They are cultural documents which offer a deeper understanding of a country or countries"

Literature in Language Classroom

Facilitating literature in the classroom encompasses myriads valuable reasons. Firstly, literature is a genuine source of material. Taking the risk of exposing the language learners to this sort of unmodified materials is indeed real language training for them to face the realistic world outside their arena at the earliest. The experience they gain from literary languages help them to confront the outside world which is completely different from classroom. Secondly, Literature enkindles and supports interaction among the learners. The multiple layers of hidden meanings in literary texts arouse a spark of exposition to different emotions and sharing of opinions. Thirdly, Literature develops language awareness by prompting the learners to handle the delicacies of language proficiencies used in the literary works.

Literature educates and motivates the learners with its varied records of different cultures and values of human life and perspectives. The teacher guides the learners to examine values in the literary works that would help creating and attitude towards them. Such values and attitudes mould them to suit the space outside the classroom. Meanwhile the learners are introduced to different countries cultures and life styles that gives them the sense of achievement about the knowledge they get from other literature.

Models and Methods

Carter, Long and Lazar suggested different models on the teaching of literature to ESL students. Literary texts are used depending on the model that is chosen. These models are,

- 1) The Cultural model
- 2) The Language model
- 3) The Personal growth model.

In the view of cultural model, a literary text is seen as a product which acts like a source of information about the target language. As it is traditional model, academics usage of literature follows this model in University syllabus. This particular model inspects the social, political and historical background of any text along with different movement and genres of any literary piece. This method is considered as teacher-centric as there is no detailed language work done on the text.

The language model is considered as more of learner-centric. The learners' main focus is laid on the general awareness of English in the given literary text. They pay attention on the way language is used and comes in grip with the meaning through which learners are accustomed with the language by themselves. The teachers can handle the situation to focus on grammar and vocabulary along with the stylistics elements in the given literary texts. This approach to the text extracts more attention to the language and encourages meaningful interpretations of the texts. Thus it helps a competent study of literature from students' perspective.

As it is a process-based approach, the personal growth model is considered as learner –centric. It encourages learners to depict their own opinions, emotions, feelings and personal experiences. It induces the interaction between the text and the reader which supports the learning in English more memorably. The learners attempt to “make the texts their own.” This is later used in Activity based classroom teaching methods

The Transformation

Now there is a change in the trend of handling different types of students with different mindset. With the increasing challenge on the shoulders of the teachers, it is very crucial to look away from the normal, conventional way of handling the language classroom. The boom in the field of technological advance has also been utilized in many of the language classrooms. The latest introduction which is mentioned as ‘Smart Classroom’ facilitates the learners in all aspects of communication skills. The Personal Computer with a big size screen that is termed as ‘Smart Board’ along with the speakers and an integrated projector serves the multi-purpose task in Smart Classroom. Utilizing this latest technology one can make the language classroom very interestingly and very effectively. Literature and latest technology can join hands together to get into the practice of communication skills gradually.

A Poetic Approach

Before introducing any piece of literary art, the learners’ interest must be focused towards the material that the teachers use. To grab their attention, the teacher may:

- Formulate a warmer that induces the students to discuss and guess about the extract or poetry which is chosen to practice. This helps the learners to collect information about the background, setting, tone and mood of the literary work.
- After exposing the poem, they may discuss about the knowledge of the students about the poem, vocabulary used, parts of speech handled to add the essence.
- Develop the habit of reading the ideas between lines to get the symbolic meaning underneath the simple and superficial theme (If the poem has).

After the warmer gets over, students can be segregated into different teams. Each team should be given flashcards of different stanzas of the whole poem that should be shuffled in order to make them arrange in exact order. This act of shuffling the stanzas would provoke them to read the poem thoroughly word by word in order to get the connectivity of ideas. Meanwhile they can be given some target to achieve such as the different parts of speech used in the poem, the theme, the mood, the tone and the art of coherence of ideas in the poetry. Along with that students get an opportunity to mingle with their team mates

and listen to each other to get proper ideas. The art of listening and sharing would be encouraged through this **literary -activity**.

The teacher must do some field work prior to the classroom session. The teacher can show some sample from the literary work by few famous poets. Poets like Robert Frost and Wordsworth are best to choose. For instance Robert Frost's 'Stopping by Woods in a Snowy Evening' can be shown as an example to Students to follow, because the poem has simple vocabulary but heavy ideas to analyse.

Sublimity of a Short Story

The teacher can use an excerpt from literary work especially the genre called 'Short story'. They must choose whether it is comedy, tragedy, thriller or any detective stories. The result of this attempt depends completely on the chosen genre of Short story.

- After the team members are assigned, each and every team should be given different type of short stories.
- They must find the settings, theme, the genre, and characterization; indications of cultural (social and political) background, twists and turns in the given particular short story.
- They can be given a task to be creative like writing a different ending to the story.
- They can also be asked to imagine that they are the director and ask them to write a screenplay of the given story with limited changes.
- The teacher can go further by asking them to convert the short story in to a play (if the story permits).

To do such activities as mentioned, teacher should show some sample by taking an excerpt from Sherlock Holmes' detective stories by Arthur Canon Doyle. Such detective stories have mysteries to solve, hidden characters, unexpected twists and turns and a thrilling suspension to solve along with subtle problem solving techniques. Through this activity, the students are encouraged to focus their attention into the integral part of the given work; their latent talent in creativity and imagination is enkindled. As the current generation is very keen on creating stories, they will be highly interesting in involving in such activities. When they come forward to present their ideas in front of the class, their individuality is exhibited.

The Dramatic Approach

It is in the hands of the teacher who chooses the appropriate excerpts to the language learners. Teacher can choose the powerful scenes starting from Shakespeare's powerful plays to the Oscar Wilde's reality records. Since this activity requires more time, the students can be given enough time to do it proper. One can also follow the same methods of Stories to deal with play as well.

Students can be regrouped and can be given their own choice to choose any scenes from the chosen list of the teacher. Teachers can give two days time to present it in the class. They should be informed to act in front of the class. The video form of any such excerpts should be shown prior to the students to understand clearly what they exactly have to do with regard to dialogue delivery, required intonation and different aspect of pronunciation. Students should be instructed to

- Observe the Characterization in the play
- Analyse the political and social background details
- Learn the storyline before and after the chosen scene.
- Practice the dialogues with appropriate Stress, tone, emotions and pronunciation.
- Analyse about the stage direction and theatrical dialogue delivery which should be louder than the normal tone to suit the classroom presentation.

Teacher can discuss about the powerful characters in the particular scene and how their performance runs the entire scene. For instance Portia's ingenious role in 'The Merchant of Venice' ; Othello's heart throbbing performance in the particular scene; Antonio's Public Funeral Speech in "Julius Caesar"; Dr. Faustus's pathetic acting; King Lear's Cry in the importance scene and so on.

Role of a Facilitator

The facilitator holds a paramount responsibility of any language teaching and learning process. It is similar to a child who learns and imitates the language from the surrounding ambience, especially from parents, every language learner tries to learn and imitate the language of a facilitator/teacher. The facilitator should focus on improving their profession growth parallel with their academic growth. Every classroom session should be considered as a time for a new research on new methodology. Though it requires lot of time and effort on the part of the teacher, they should take a firm decision to achieve their destination. One should update themselves with the latest technological facilities and must also update their students about the usage of it in an effective and correct way. They must make sure that the students are benefited in all the four skills inside and outside the classroom. With the demanding need for E-mail Communication, the students should be trained to draft a proper official letter without any flaws.

Conclusion:

The correct choice of literary works in teaching language rescues the learner from the boring 'Monotone method of language teaching'. Innovative methods of language teaching will help students and the facilitator to escape from the current stressful situation and move themselves 'far from the madding crowd' for a while. Even students would feel a great difference, especially in engineering colleges, and enjoy with the training and values they receive from literary works. This would definitely make a great impact even in their attitude

since they come across different attitudes of the characters in the given literary works. Ultimately they will become a confident and self-built communicator with the wisdom of human values.

References

- Anthony, E. M. (1963). Approach, method and technique. *English Language Teaching*, 17, 63-67.
- Alam, F. (2007) *Imperial Entanglements and Literature in English: Using Postcolonial Literature in ELT*. Dhaka: Writers.ink.
- Brumfit, C. J. and Carter R. A. (eds.) (1986) *Literature and Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Canagrajah, A. S. (1999) *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Carter, R. and Long, M. (1991). *Teaching literature*. London: Longman
- Collie, J. Stephen, S. (1987) *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press
- Erkaya, O. R. (2005). Benefits of using short stories in the EFL Context. *Asian EFL Journal* (8), 1-13
- Floris, D. (2004). The Power of Literature in EFL Classrooms. *K@TA 2* , 6 (1), 1-12
- Hess, K. (1999). *Poetry as an Intercultural Peace Bridge for Teaching ESL*. Alberta: University of Alberta Press.
- Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sarceni, M. (2003). "Literature in the EFL Classroom: Roses or Thorns?" In Subramaniam, G. and Vethamani M.E. (Eds.) *Teaching Literature in ESL/EFL Contexts*. Petaling Jaya: Sasbadi Sdn. Bhd
- Vethamani, M.E. (2003). *New Englishes New Literatures in English: Challenges for ELT Practitioners*. In Ganakumaran, S. (ed). *Teaching Literature in ESL and EFL Contexts*. Petaling Jaya: Sasbadi Sdn. Bhd
- Wade, S. E., & Moje, E. B. (2000). The role of text in classroom learning. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, D. B. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 609–627). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbau