

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROCUREMENT THROUGH LITERATURE IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUIREMENT**

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**Abstract:** Our objective of teaching literature should be very clear. We need not aim at introducing learners to the great masters of literature or to acquaint them with the history of English literature. Our aim is to develop language consciousness and communicative competence. Our major concerns should be to develop autonomous readers. This can be achieved by helping the learners to develop the skill of interpreting the meaning from this style of language. Literature exposes learner to a language rich in its use of metaphor, simile, symbols, image, personifications etc.

**Keywords:** acquisition of language, English Language Teaching, Literature.

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**Introduction:** English Language acquisition through Prose, Poetry & Drama (literature). Should literature be taught in a language class? Is a frequently asked question. The answer is yes. Basically, teaching literature and language are not two separate activities. Both are interconnected. Literature is written in language and study of language develops literary skills. Literature develops the skill of scholarly analysis and critical aesthetic sensibility in readers. It gives information, imparts skills and changes attitude of the learners to other's culture and language. Literature exposes learner to a language rich in its use of metaphor, simile, symbols, image, personifications etc. This makes it different from non-literary writings. Literary writers defy the conventions of the language and use of unorthodox structures.

Our objective of teaching literature should be very clear. We need not aim at introducing learners to the great masters of literature or to acquaint them with the history of English literature. Our aim is to develop language consciousness and communicative competence. Our major concerns should be to develop autonomous readers. This can be achieved by helping the learners to develop the skill of interpreting the meaning from this style of language. The learner should be able to understand the special conventions of literary language. The language of literature often deviates from the normal one. The deviation enhances deeper meaning to the text. For this, the learner of second language should be taught to compare and contrast literary and non-literary text.

Literature provide readymade source material to develop language skills. Selection of the material becomes very crucial for the second language learners. As our aim is to develop communicative and linguistic competence for learners,

the selection of the material should be based on linguistic rather than an aesthetic grounds. The selected material should be interesting, motivating and challenging for the language learners. We have to remember another important criterion of teachability too.

Initially, we have to choose the material, which is stylishly simple and culturally Indian. The learners will be able to identify with it. Diction should not be very difficult for our learner of English as L2. Text should be very modern and not very lengthy. We should select from a wide range of texts that are successful and highly significant to those that are commonplace.

Selection of material will decide the methodology in the classroom. The biggest problem the teacher has to face with the learners of English as L2 – is their poor linguistic competence. This creates hurdles in reading literary texts. We cannot rely on the traditional lecture mode of teaching. We have to opt for the communicative and activity based approach. Traditionally, teaching of English literature was exam oriented where the basic purpose was to give information about the content, author and his life and times, critics' comments on it etc. the teacher had to explain difficult words, paraphrase every sentence and give summary of the text and the critical appreciation of the text. This method had a drawback. It made learners the passive recipients of the information. If the teacher explains everything, the learner's understanding is affected by the teacher's views. Later on, the stance shifted to linguistic approach for literature teaching. This encouraged subjective interpretation of the text based on the linguistic clues. Here the language is analysed to reach to the inner core of the meaning. In learner centred methodology, the learners are expected to understand the meaning following the communicative approach based on problem solving activities. The technique should be pair or group work. The teacher should frame questions and exercises to facilitate language use. Either he or she has to devise different methods to teach prose and poetry. Some of the activities for teaching literature are as follows.

**Teaching Prose:** To understand the difference between literary and non-literary text, three to four short texts of these varieties should be given to the learners. They should be asked to compare and contrast the two texts and explain the features that differentiate the two. This can be a good group work activity.

They should be given different types of the texts such as expository, narrative, descriptive, argumentative etc. The learners should be asked to locate topic sentence, theme and sub-themes of the topic. Sentences and paragraphs should be jumbled and given to the learners and asked them to re-arrange them. These kinds of activity helps them to understand coherence with the help of cohesive in the sentences.

For short stories, Novels and Drama, the title can be given for group discussion to anticipate the theme. Even the first sentence of the story can be given for the

same purpose. This motivates the learners of English to the content. The inquisitiveness of the learner should be heightened by suspense building. Let them anticipate for the forthcoming events and the actions and reactions of the characters. Even if they know the story in advance, they can be asked about the peculiarities of the characters, or why a particular character has behaved in a particular way. They should be asked to take the verbal clues from the story. They can be asked to think of the alternate climax of the story with proper justification.

They should be able to understand the role of the dialogues in developing the story and also should explain the role and the relationship of the characters following the norms of discourse analysis. This will help them to understand the social status of the characters. The learner can be asked to explain the plot, setting and the communicative purpose of the text.

It is difficult to complete a long story or a novel in one class. Teacher should divide the text in sense group to retain the sense of the whole. Similar characters or events can be grouped together and discussed in the class. The teacher should prepare questions and exercises in advance to facilitate language use by the learner in the classroom. The teacher has to devise different techniques and activities for teaching to make the students and class in an interesting manner.

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**Teaching Poetry:** For teaching poetry in the second language learner's classroom, there is no need to discuss the poet, his life or his works. Even if necessary arises the learners can be asked to do the reference work in the library to get the desired information. Actually, a poem stands on its own. Poetry reading should be a delightful experience and the detailed explanation by the teacher bring the charm of experience.

We should also pave way for the learner to discover the meaning with the help of verbal clues. The teacher should give a very small introduction. If required the teacher should gloss the difficult patterns or words and unfamiliar cultural context before the learners read it.

Whereas the prose is best to read silently and a poem should always be read loudly. Sounds, rhythm and intonation plays a very important role in English language learning. Good reading can create magical effect on the listeners. Right pitch, proper intonation helps to open up the meaning of the poem. Loud reading of the poem is difficult for us because Indian languages do not have the stress pattern as like English language. Very few teachers are good readers of poetry. If the teacher can get a good reader of the poem, he or she should invite him to read the poem in the class. Otherwise, the recording of good poems

should be played for them to understand the significance of stress pitch and intonation.

When the teacher is reading the poem the learners should concentrate on listening it. This can be a very good auditory experience that will give the feel of reading the entire poem. The teacher should frame some global questions on the theme of the poem.

The teacher should frame some global question on the theme of the poem. A question can be asked to decide the tone of the poem whether it is a sad or a cheerful poem.

In the second, loud reading of the poem by the teacher, the learners should also read the poem while listening it. At this stage the teacher can draw their attention to particular grammar structures, which are significant for the meaning of the poem. He or she can ask them to identify the key words denoting the theme of the poem.

The teacher should concentrate on teaching the use of tense, grammar, rhythm, metaphors etc. he can also ask for the words and structures that reflect auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory sensory perception. The correct process of reading a poem is going backward and forward. In poem the meaning is not always explicitly stated. The reader has to find the implicit meaning by reading between and beyond lines. Reader's personal experience of the world also adds up to the understanding of meaning. It is important that the reader should be able to justify 'this' meaning and explain 'how' has he reached to this implicit meaning with explicit clues. This discovery of the meaning makes poetry reading a memorable experience.

**Conclusion :** Thus, we see that literature can best be exploited in language classroom. It can be taught as a content and be used for developing the language skills. We have to make our learners the autonomous readers to discover the meaning of their own. We have to agree with Brumfit (1985) that literature provides a valuable basis for a communicative advance work in language learning. It also provides problem solving tasks and opportunities for discussion, hence, covers fluency in speech. Literature thus becomes both product and process in second language teaching and learning situations.

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