

Learning English Language through Literature at BS level: A Case Study at The Institute of Southern Punjab Multan

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Abstract

Literature plays a vital role in our society. It advocates and reflects the different aspects of our society. Literary studies as an independent discipline is providing different academic and professional opportunities to the students and academia in its own right. In linguistics, literature is seen as a tool for language teaching as literary works involve real-life language. Literature provides an exciting and interesting platform for learners. The current study is intended to examine the opinions and attitudes of university students about the usefulness of literature to learn the English language at the Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan. It is a small-scale quantitative study comprising a population of 20 students of the BS English program. The data was collected through convenient sampling from the students. The structured interviews were conducted to collect data. Close-ended questions were developed to obtain the views and opinions of the university students about the effectiveness of using literature to teach the different segments of language. The findings of the present research suggest that most of the students have positive perceptions towards the usage of literature for learning English. The findings also suggest that integrating literature can contribute to the development of the particular language of the learners of the English language if it is implemented and planned properly.

Key Words: Language teaching, language learning, literature as a learning tool, teaching methods

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1. Introduction

Learning a foreign or second language formally is a highly complex and sensitive enterprise that requires all the relevant elements to be in place appropriately to obtain positive results at optimal levels. The elements per se include an ideal sociolinguistic milieu e.g. the language

classroom fitted with all the modern gadgets to teach the language with all the relevant audio-visual aids; (2) teacher trained in the teaching of foreign language efficiently but the most important of all in the entire enterprise is the selection of teaching material to be used as a syllabus for the teaching of the foreign language. The

present study which of course is a pilot work was carried out at ISP with a selected number of students to gain initial information as to learn English as a foreign language at the BS level via literature. The study as such involved 40 students. The data from collected through structured interviews using the qualitative method for the study.

2. Significance of the Study

The study as such is perceived highly useful in the sense that students are expected to find this approach useful because they are already familiar with the study of literature in previous stages of learning. Learning a language from a new perspective can be more exciting for the students and relatively easier for the teacher to handle the intricacies of the language. The learnability of the students can further be facilitated by using literature. They will become familiar with the content and context.

3. Objectives of the Study

The current pilot study has the following objectives:

- to examine the beliefs and opinions of university students about the usefulness of literature to learn the English language
- to interpret the beliefs and opinions of the university students about the application of literary texts to learn the English language at the BS level

4. Literature Review

Studies of this kind have already been undertaken in countries like India, and Malaysia with useful results even in Pakistan. This pilot study as such showed an

appreciable potential for extrapolation into a full-fledged study which of course will require an increase in statistics regarding data on student responses as well as that of teachers.

According to Obediat (1997), literature aids students to obtain a native-like aptitude in English, expressing their thoughts in a good way, acquiring the features of updated and valid English rules, learning how language structure is done for communication, perceiving how colloquial expressions can be used, speaks clearly, exactly and briefly, and turn out to be more skillful in the target language, as well as turn out to be inventive, critical, and logical learners.

Literature encompasses the whole life. In English language teaching literature plays a pivotal role in inculcating students with different spheres of life. Teaching English through literature is teaching students the whole culture of English speaking and in some cases the colonial world. The teaching of literature is essentially the way of transmitting the ample treasure of the culture of antiquity. It is also a source of students' overall awareness about culture, economy, language, religion, and more importantly life itself. Literature carries emotive and aesthetic aspects to appeal to its audience. Literature appeals to the intellect and emotions of people through its imaginative power. Literature is an art that used words and captivates readers to judge and appreciate the beauty of language. Literature molds the perspectives of people through its aesthetic dimension to look into their matters with a literary and aesthetic lens.

Kelly (1995) described enjoyment, information, cognition, understanding, imagination, and language itself as the core values of literature. The choice of text for the course is of vital importance because it can arise something in students to relate it to their life and kindle their interest in the course. It can also be helpful to lead students to healthy discussions on various aspects of their interests.

The process of learning seeks motivation to get itself completed. Literature is an essential source to develop a sense of motivation and involvement among students as literature is capable to bewitch its reader. Literature in this way strengthens both learners and the learning process. Literature also develops an emotional attachment and pleasure among learners. According to Hill (1988), literature constructs an apparatus for instructors to involve pupils in education by monitoring and regulating their emotions.

Literature gives us a language teaching model. It plays a model role in language teaching. In the thinking process, cognition and language are interrelated. This is a determined kind of language that is exposed to learners. Comparatively to the conversation as an author, literature seldom finishes a richer model of language. It is frequently used to elaborate sentences and sumptuous words as well. At the same time, speakers focus on employing the same words over and over in conversation.

5. Research Gap and the Rational of the Study

The current research highlights the role of literature in language teaching in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, literature is used as a tool for language teaching. Apart from O-Levels and A-Levels teaching systems, literature is being used as a core tool to teach language from grade one to higher secondary level. English till the higher secondary level is taught as a subject. The students are familiar with language learning through literature. Literary texts of different genres like poems, short stories, and novellas are incorporated into the syllabus of English subjects. These genres are used to make students familiar with the main components of the language. These components include grammar rules i.e. tense rules, parts of speech, punctuation, translation from English to Urdu, use of articles, etc. The teaching of English through literature till the higher secondary level mainly focuses on the development of reading and writing skills only; it does not train students to have a good command of listening and speaking. As the students are very well aware of the use of literature to learn the language, the same strategy can be used at the BS level to enhance second language learning. The syllabus of BS programs includes different literary genres which can enable the students to learn language effectively. The current study is aimed to highlight the importance and usefulness of literature in Pakistani classrooms to teach language at the BS level at the Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan. This study is intended to describe the beliefs and opinions of university students about the current syllabus having particular literary texts to learn the different components of language in Pakistani classrooms.

6. Methodology

The current study is a pilot work that is intended to examine the beliefs and opinions of university students about the usefulness of literature to learn the English language at the Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan. It is a small-scale quantitative study. The researcher himself is an instructor at the Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan. It was convenient for the researcher to collect data from his institute. Therefore, a convenient sampling technique was used to obtain the data. The population for this study comprises the respondents from the researcher's institute. Specifically, the data is collected from the 20 students of the BS English program studying in the final semester. The structured interviews were conducted to collect data. Close-ended questions were developed to obtain the views and opinions of the university students about the effectiveness of using literature to teach the different segments of language.

7. Findings and Discussion

In analysis, findings are attained through close-ended questions. The question as the first one was Is literature beneficial for English language learning? Results drawn through responses indicate a higher frequency (90 %) of those who think that literature is useful in English language teaching while only 4 students hold contrary views. It highly indicates that plenty of participants recognized the importance of teaching literature in English language teaching.

Table 1: Q No. 1 Is literature beneficial for English language learning?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	36	90 %
Not Agreed	4	10 %
Total	40	100

If we talk about the second close-ended question which tries to explore the use of literature in English language teaching classes, most of the participants talk about the texts they used to analyze in their class. Here look at the comment made by a respondent: Classics, as well as modern texts prepared for the level of students accordingly, will draw the attention of the audience. Some participants also shared their views that short stories and poems also could be used for the said purpose. Read the following remarks of a participant: Poems with rhymes and short stories with interesting themes are interesting to read and easy to learn in a language. Drama activities also proved useful in an extraordinary way to captivate the audience's attention. It made the course easy and interesting. After evaluating the responses of participants it's highly assumed that cultural aspects must be taken into account to make students more aware of the cultural aspects of a language.

Table 2: Q No. 2 How literature can be used for English language learning?

	Frequency	Percentage
Reading and analyzing literary texts i.e. Drama and Novel	13	32.5 %
Extracting information about the renowned	09	22.5 %

literary figures		
By adding poems and short stories in the classroom	10	25 %
Promoting cultural awareness	08	20 %
Total	40	100

Table 3 illustrated the reaction to the third close-ended query which asked whether the candidates get help from literature in learning. A profuse of partakers (67.5 %) state that they get help from literature in English language learning which is greatly extended in line with the reaction to the first close-ended query.

Table : 3 Q No.3 Does literature help in your English language learning?

	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	67	67.5 %
Not agreed	13	32.5 %
Total	40	100

The fourth close-ended query was asked to see whether the partakerwork' educational Background work has affected their basic use of "literature subjects in English language learning". Table no 4, brought out that the education system level of the candidate has been a greatly significant effect on their fondness for using "literature subjects in English language learning".

Table: 4 Q No. 4 Are the literature subjects included in the BS English degree very effective for language learning?

	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	22	55 %
Modest	07	17.5 %

A bit	08	20 %
Not at all	03	7.5 %
Total	40	100

The fifth close-ended query was asked to see the proper ways of literature used by the teachers. According to Table 5, 16 participants state that their teachers used few types of "literary texts" accurately to improve their proficiency level. 17 students said that their teachers use literature to improve their learning i.e. novels, short stories, and poems. 5 participants illustrated movies adapted from literary works as resources used by their teachers. Participants stated that novels, short stories, and poems are used by teachers to emphasize the fact that these literary devices used in these genres enhance learning in the classrooms as they make the lesson more interesting and effective. Only 2 students stated that their teachers do not use any text in class for improving English language proficiency.

Table 5: Q No. 5 Do your teachers use literary texts for your language learning specifically?

	Frequency	Percentage
Use of literary texts by teachers	16	40 %
Use of novels, shorts stories, and poems by teachers	17	42.5 %
Use of movies	05	12.5 %
No use at all	02	05 %
Total	40	100

The result in the last close-ended question about the possible contribution of literature

regarding English language learning indicates that 25 respondents stated that literature helps to improve their skills of language like reading, grammar, writing, and vocabulary.

It is also derived by the 07 respondents that through the literature students become aware of gain culture awareness and target culture. 05 of the respondents also responded that the literature enables students to gain the ability to analyze, think, and evaluate thereby making them imaginative.

Table 6: Q No. 6 On what level, literature contributes to your English language learning?

	Frequency	Percentage
Literature helps to improve all skills.	25	62.5 %
Only helps in vocabulary and reading	03	7.5 %
Only gives cultural awareness.	07	17.5 %
Helps in critical thinking.	05	12.5 %
Total	40	100

In crux, the study and its overall results said that the overwhelming number of respondents believe that the use of literature in language learning has positive impacts. They further believe that the literature would be benefited in language teaching through literature. Based on the remarks of respondents, using poems, novels, and short stories in the classes of language can contribute more to enhancing the language

proficiency of students. It increases the ability to increase the grip over vocabulary learning, and the accuracy of grammar. Furthermore, it always contributes more to broadening the horizon of students and making them more intelligent. It increases awareness about the target culture. In the same way, a few respondents argued that literature does not affect students' language proficiency. There are many negative perceptions that rise day by day and these negative perceptions have arisen from several reasons likewise, the dearth of adequate educational records of mentors, instructors, trainers, and teachers on how to use literature for teaching language. The content that is used by teachers and trainers is the perceptions of their students toward literature and language teaching.

8. Conclusion

The current study highlights the exertion of literature to teach language effectively at the BS level at the Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan. This particular pilot study was conducted to get insights into the views of students concerning the roles of literary texts in English language learning. The results of the present research demonstrate that the majority of the participants strongly agree that literature must be a component of English language learning and most of them said their teacher utilizes literature in the teaching of the English language. The majority of them also agree that the literature subjects included in their B.S. degree have a positive impact on their learning and they consider the role of literature as good for language learning purposes. It is clear from the results of this

research, the majority of participants think about literature use is helpful in different ways like improving vocabulary knowledge, increasing cultural consciousness, and building the language abilities of learners, especially in writing and reading. Additionally, they have different views on how you can make use of literature within English language learning like examining classical literature works, using stories and poems that are short, and presenting information regarding the key figures in the literature.

Collectively, the results of the current analysis seem to be a bit of proof that most of the students belonging to the present research have good perceptions towards the usage of literature for the teaching of the English language reasons. Nevertheless, the results of the present research should be interpreted with extreme caution because they just reveal the participants' good perceptions of the usage of literature-wearing English language learning. Almost two-thirds of the individuals highlight the advantages of genuine works and texts of classical literature. Producing cultural awareness is extremely uncommon. getting knowledge regarding literary texts is also seen to become very rare. Almost three-fourths highlight the effective consequences of their responses that belong to their background of formal education.

The researcher is of the view that integrating literature can contribute to the development of the particular language of the learners of the English language, but this is challenging and demands serious things to consider of a selection of elements coming directly into

play if the likely advantages in the addition of literature to their lessons are to become accomplished within the process. These elements include thorough planning consistent with the training goals, well-chosen literature depending on the requirements, passions, and language level of the learners, and well-designed activities. Without considering these kinds of aspects in the beginning, literature usage for language teaching might risk time as well as energy spent and also fall short of reaching anticipated and desired final results regardless of the positive perceptions of instructors and language teachers towards using literature in their language classes. A paradigm shift is essential to accomplish it effectively.

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