



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

English

ENHANCING LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The four skills in the English language are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are interdependent. One must develop these four skills not only for communication but also for mastering the English language. Language and literature are interrelated. Literature is a group of works of art that are made of words. Language is the study of words and sentences. Literature is the study of written work. Literature is rooted in language and language gets life through literature. Literature helps the students to understand language devices like metaphor, simile, hyperbole, etc. It also helps to learn vocabulary, grammatical structures, and writing styles. Literature helps the students to practice the language. To understand literature, language fluency is a must. Language skills are a must to understand what the writer wants to convey his or her message in a work of art. All these skills are necessary for students to communicate and to be employed. To develop these four skills, teachers help the students build confidence and modify their communication abilities through Listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This article analyses how to develop students' proficiency level based on grammar, usage, and composition through literature to inculcate human values.

INTRODUCTION

Communicative competencies in English are one of the most essential and desired qualities of the students who are aspiring for a successful career. To teach different genres of literature with a purpose will help the students learn all four skills. Studying various genres of literature is important for individuals to comprehend the beauty and value of literature. To achieve this, one must have a strong grasp of language skills. The purpose of this research paper is to improve and develop English language skills that help students to understand literature. Literary texts help them to learn and express the meaning they get from the text. Encountering words in different contexts expands the vocabulary and increases the understanding of students.

Teaching of Prose

The main aim of teaching prose is both language and literary development. Since teaching prose is an intensive study of language, learning prose helps the readers to learn the English language easily. In teaching prose, a textbook is a must-have tool in the hands of teachers. Apart from learning thought-provoking lessons, students also learn singular, plural, tense and verbs.

"Reading maketh a full man, Conference a ready man, and writing an exact man." ("Of Reading"- Francis Bacon, 1984.) In the above statement, apart from meaning, the teacher teaches articles to students as in a full man, a ready man, and an exact man and also teaches singular and plural, man and men. Reading helps a man to get more knowledge. While teaching knowledge, the teacher should teach abstract noun - knowledge. Conference came from the original word 'confer' which means 'comparing views'. If a man shares or discusses his knowledge with others, he can talk about any matter. Writing makes an exact man because students and scholars can focus on a single topic with a lot of ideas.

"To err is human to forgive divine." (Alexander Pope- An Essay on Criticism, 2016.p. 104) While teaching the above, the teacher explains the difference between human and the divine, the mortals and the immortals. And it is the habit of God to forgive the faults of humans. It is natural for humans to commit mistakes and humans need to forgive the faults of others.

In prose class, students are taught to read and memorize quotes from English literature. This practice not only enriches their vocabulary but also helps them to appreciate the beauty of the language and understand the philosophy of life. As they listen to these quotes in class, they begin to repeat them, which helps them to develop their speaking skills.

Additionally, the process of memorization and analysis of these quotations helps to improve their reading and writing skills as well. Therefore, all four language skills are developed in prose class.

Teaching of poetry

The objective of instructing poetry is to impart happiness and delight to pupils. Just like prose, poetry captivates our senses. It is a fun way of learning a language. A textbook serves as a vital resource for teachers to facilitate their students' understanding and admiration for poetry. Through memorizing and reciting significant verses, students can attain a more profound appreciation of poetry. Additionally, teaching poetry can aid pupils in enhancing their abilities in listening, reading, and speaking.

"O I am tired of strife and song & festivals and fame." (Summer Woods -Sarojini Naidu, 2022). When teaching the above, the teacher teaches subjective and objective expression in poetry along with alliteration and rhyme, scheme pattern. In teaching Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", the teacher teaches not only philosophical ideas about life but also about opposite ideas pessimism, and optimism. One can easily teach the students about the four seasons and the activities of nature in the particular seasons. For example, "The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind, If Winter comes, Can Spring be far behind?" (Ode to the West Wind - Shelley).

While teaching the below lines, the teacher differentiates between two types of sentences statement and exclamatory sentences. And also encourage the students to live a life with nature. Through the below lines, the students easily learn articles, singular, plural, and rhyme, schemes.

Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed.
(Ode to the West Wind - Shelley, 1820)

When teaching Tennyson's poems **Ulysses** and **Lotus Eaters**, the teacher not only explains the two different ideas but also about optimistic ideas. Both work and rest are essential in life. Death is the end of life: ah, why should Life all labour be?
(Lotus Eaters -Tennyson, 1907)
"... to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."
(Ulysses-Tennyson,, 1907)
"Death closes all: but something ere the end
Some work of noble note may yet to be done."
(Ulysses-Tennyson, 1907).

The above sentences are examples for interrogative sentence, statement and optimistic ideas. The following lines are appreciated by Jawaharlal Nehru, first Prime Minister of India.

The Woods are lovely, dark and deep
But I have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep.

(Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening - Robert Frost, 1922). Even though these lines are appreciated for their philosophical ideas, one can easily teach grammar to students. Teachers present a pictorial image of woods to students. Through the above sentences, the teacher gives a simple exercise to find out verbs, concord, and prepositions in the above sentences.

In short, teaching poems helps the students to learn correct pronunciation, intonation, article, concord, rhyme, and scheme and also helps them to develop listening, reading, and speaking skills. In poetry class, students not only enjoy the poems but also get the content of the poem. In short, teaching poetry helps the students to understand the intricate relationship between language and artistic expression.

The Teaching of Fiction

Reading novels and sharing stories is a good practice for language development. In the teaching of fiction, a story is retold interestingly. It helps the students to pay attention to minute details about characters, narrative techniques, images, symbols, themes, and points of view of the writer as well as characters. It also helped the students to develop their comparative skills in books and films. Studying novels kindles the imagination of society in the minds of students. While studying novels, students associate real-life incidents with those described in the novels they read or study. It also stimulates their curiosity. The main aim of teaching fiction is to inspire and entertain. By studying fiction, their listening, reading, and speaking skills are developed.

The theme in fiction is about life and human nature is illustrated. The decision of characters is observed by students. And it should be expressed in statements. While teaching fiction, the teachers use the techniques of connecting, describing, interpreting, and judging the characters. In teaching fiction, the teacher explains the difference between personal narrative and fiction narrative. And also introduce a problem and the solution.

Teaching of Plays

Teaching drama can enhance students' vocabulary, reading, and speaking skills. Teachers improve the language skills of students by showing videos of Shakespeare's plays and immersing the students in listening to English language news. While teaching Shakespeare's famous words in Romeo and Juliet, the teacher teaches oxymoron: "Parting is such a sweet sorrow". (Romeo and Juliet - Shakespeare, 1623). Here, both pain and pleasure are combined in a single sentence. In, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears." (Julius Caesar - Shakespeare, 1623), one can quote an example for extempore. And, "ears" in 'lend me your ears' is a metaphor for listeners to pay attention to Mark Antony's speech.

In, "The course of true love never did run smooth", (A Midsummer Night's Dream - Shakespeare, 1623) Shakespeare uses personification and imagery. Another example of a metaphor from Shakespeare is, "All the World is a stage, and all the men and women are merely players." (As You Like It - Shakespeare, 1623). In the above line, Life is portrayed as a stage. Men and women are portrayed as players. In the following line, antithesis is used. Because contrast ideas are balanced in the same line. "To be or not to be that is the question." (Hamlet - Shakespeare, 1623). While teaching important lines in Shakespeare's plays, a teacher easily

teaches students figurative speeches like similes, metaphors, oxymorons, and antitheses. In Wole Soyinka's "The Lion and the Jewel", the lion refers to Baroka and the jewel refers to Sidi. Lakunle, the school teacher expresses his love for Sidi as:

"oh SIDI. I want to wed
Because I love.
I seek a life companion....
Sidi, I seek a friend in need.
An equal partner in my race of life".

(The Lion and the Jewel - Wole Soyinka, 1963). Apart from the expression of love, the above lines are examples for punctuation and different types of expression and sentences.

Summation

Literature and language are two sides of a coin and they are intertwined with human expression and communication. Teachers should create interest by using different strategies. Practicing these strategies in literature class, by using language games helps them to learn these four skills easily. Apart from usual classroom teaching, Virtual learning, LMS (Learning Management Systems), Google Class, Blogs, e-books, mobile apps, video, audio, using animation techniques help the students to learn all four language skills to a considerable degree. All these techniques enable the students to participate actively in the unconscious process of language learning through literature.

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