

## **Blending Of Literature And Language For Language Learning**

**Dr. B. Deepa**

Assistant Professor in English, Department of H & S,  
CMR Institute of Technology, Medchal Road -501401  
deepahyd@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

Language is interwoven with culture and contributes to the richness of vocabulary. Culture and life experiences form basis for language and literary learning. We could see therefore culture, language and literature are closely knit. The co- existence of this togetherness is the beauty of literature. Language learning especially second language acquisition could be made with the short stories and fables. The taste of literature is what exposes to the aesthetics of language. Social media stories and films are all are the picture forms of literatures. Songs and music have a lot of influence and play a vital role in learning language. In fact the modern way of digital teaching has greatly guided in socio linguistic method of learning language with the exposure to the relevant language culture. The syntax and semantics of the language demand a structured study to understand. Semantics is the study of the meaning of the words and sentences and interpretation of words, the construction of sentences and the literal interpretation of the text. Language in the beginning is learnt through repeat ion and recapitulation. Later stages provide an insight into how a person builds ability and understanding the language. Syntax being the fundamental part of written language needs correct choice of words, phrases in the right order and proper usage of grammar. Reading literature unconsciously trains and tunes the mind towards picking up the exact vocabulary and suitable grammar and apt circumstances which are the prerequisites for the acquisition of language. Due to globalization and increased business activities and usage of machines have modified the language function. This has brought up the division in the language learning based on the specific purpose of the language. The age of digital learning has opened the gateways of learning the language at a quicker pace with knowledge being available at a click of a button and numerous websites, blogs and animation has made the virtual world so close to everyone and the images could make the learning easy. We infer from all this is the story form is more attractive but the length has been shortened. Teaching through literature changed the mode of teaching and reduced the text but retained the literature.

**Keywords:** *Literature, LSRW skills, teaching of literature, teaching poetry, use of short fiction*

## Introduction

Literature text appeals to the learners as they are direct or indirect experiences of the authors who produce it. Curriculum enriched in literary topics provides exposure to the dialects in language improves their writing and reading skills and offers insight into the grammar of the particular language and culture for the target language learner. Literature is constituted by language and it represents one of the most recurrent uses of language. Language and linguistic analysis can also be employed to access literature from the learner's point of view. Broom Fit and Carter (1986: 1) already emphasized the role of literature as "an ally of language". This technique is by no means novel, since literature has been a widely used teaching tool in different language teaching methods. However, here the perspective changes giving more relevance to the literary text as a work of art. Mixture of genres, represent the cultural movements in the historical period. These genres unfold us to the diverse writing like prose, poetry satire, allegory or pastoral.

Literature is authentic, accepted world- wide, it is universal in the sense of human perception, in the feelings like love, hatred, life and death, the difficulties undergone in a life. Reader develops empathy towards the character or sometimes gets influenced by the character or identifies himself with the protagonist. Popular literature benefits in exposing to catchy phrases and new words and occasionally takes to the word etymology. Literature has suggestive power as words lead us to go beyond what is implied and said. It suggests many ideas with few words and supports us generating more words. The use of literature as a technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays. Moreover, in translation courses, many language teachers make their students translate literary texts like drama, poetry and short stories into the mother tongue, Since translation gives students the chance to practice the lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic knowledge they have acquired in other courses, translation both as an application area covering four basic skills and as the fifth skill is emphasized in language teaching.

Literary texts can be studied in their original forms or in simplified or abridged versions. An increasing number of stories in English are written specifically for learners of other languages. The types of literary texts that can be studied inside and outside the ELT classroom include short-stories, poems, novels, plays and song lyrics. Literary texts provide opportunities for multi-sensorial classroom experiences and can appeal to learners with different learning styles. Texts can be supplemented by audio-texts, music CDs, film clips, podcasts, all of which enhance even further the richness of the sensory input that students receive. Literature is the mirror of the society. Literature appeals to all ages of students. It gives Permanent happiness to the one who reads. So, a teacher needs to understand the significance of teaching English language through literature in order to make language learning an enriching experience for students.

## **Review of literature**

Development of language proficiency can be achieved by making both language learning and literature work in tandem. Numerous studies have been done on this subject by many researchers. According to the study of Povey, literature has been given a vital part in the curriculum of teaching and learning English as a foreign language designed by most of the universities worldwide (Povey,1972). The study of Henning and other researchers asserts that,

“Every act and it’s text construction and reconstruction based on the conceptualization of available linguistic and cultural data” (Henning et.al, 1993).

The study of Fein highlights the point that bridging the gap between the language and literature in the language learning process can help the learners to build self-confidence. He says that,

“They gradually build the vocabulary power, the linguistic facility, and the self-confidence to discuss the text” (Fein, 1999).

The learners can reap so many benefits from blending the literature to the language attaining process on their learning platforms. The study of Barrette, Paesani and Vinalli in 2010 shows that the development of language proficiency is not followed by an integrated uniform curriculum rather it only maximizes the learning periodical knowledge. At the same time the study of Davis and others in 1992 says,

“The postponement of blending of literature to language learning happens because the learners feel that the literary texts include highly abstract vocabulary, complex syntactical patterns and sophisticated style and content” (Davis et al., 1992).

The necessitate of instilling interest in literature among the language learners is recommended by the researcher Bretz(1990) as his studies encourage them to become autonomous readers so that they should achieve a cognizant power of literature.

The study of Elliot says,

“The learners of English as a foreign language can achieve a linguistic advantage if they are exposed to authentic texts which are created to fulfil the real social purpose in the language community for which it was created” (Elliott, 1990).

As they are designed for the native speakers some of the researchers argue that they present linguistically normed language and not in simplified form, exposure to linguistically decoding is essential for comprehending the inputs. According to Swaffer,

“Authentic reading materials allow the learners to analyse the messaging system and they capitalize on these materials for being an indispensable tool for attaining language proficiency” (Swaffer, 1985).

It is found that most of the studies agree that the literature can motivate the language learners by engaging and providing them with the adequate linguistic learning resources.

## **Language Enrichment**

Literature provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Students become familiar with many features of the written language, reading a substantial and contextualized body of text. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences,

the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Students also become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn and begin to make use of some of the potential themselves. Thus, they improve their communication and cultural competence in the authentic richness, naturalness of the authentic text.

### Personal Involvement

Literature can be useful in the language learning process owing to the personal involvement. It forsterite reader, once the student reads a literary text. Once the student reads a literary text, he begins to inhabit the text. He is drawn into the text. Understanding the meanings of lexical items or phrases becomes less significant than pursuing the development to the story. The student becomes enthusiastic to find out what happens as the events unfold via the climax; he feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. This can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process. At this juncture, the prominence of the selection of a literary text in relation to the needs, expectations and interests language level of the students is evident. In this process, he can remove the identity crisis and develop into an extrovert.

### Class Activities for Developing Language Skills

The language learners can involve in numerous types of interesting class activities in order to improve their language proficiency. Literary discussions after reading a story or novel, presenting book reviews and in-class reading activities can be conducted in the presence of the language teachers in the classroom. The given figure shows that among all the other skills development activities, language development occupies the major part and it can be achieved by different types of activities in the language classrooms.

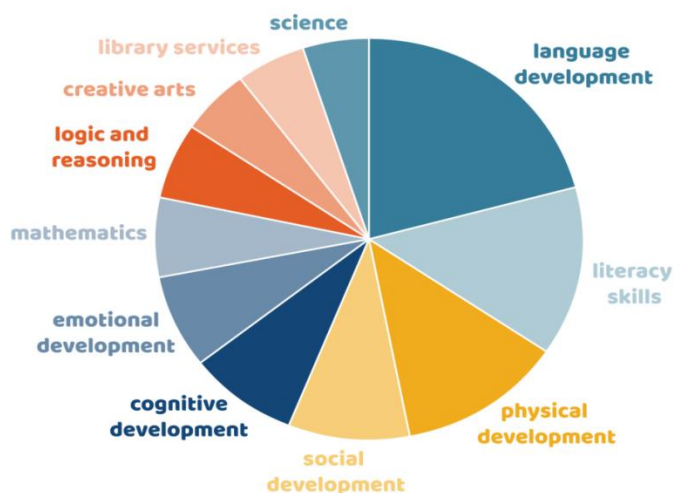
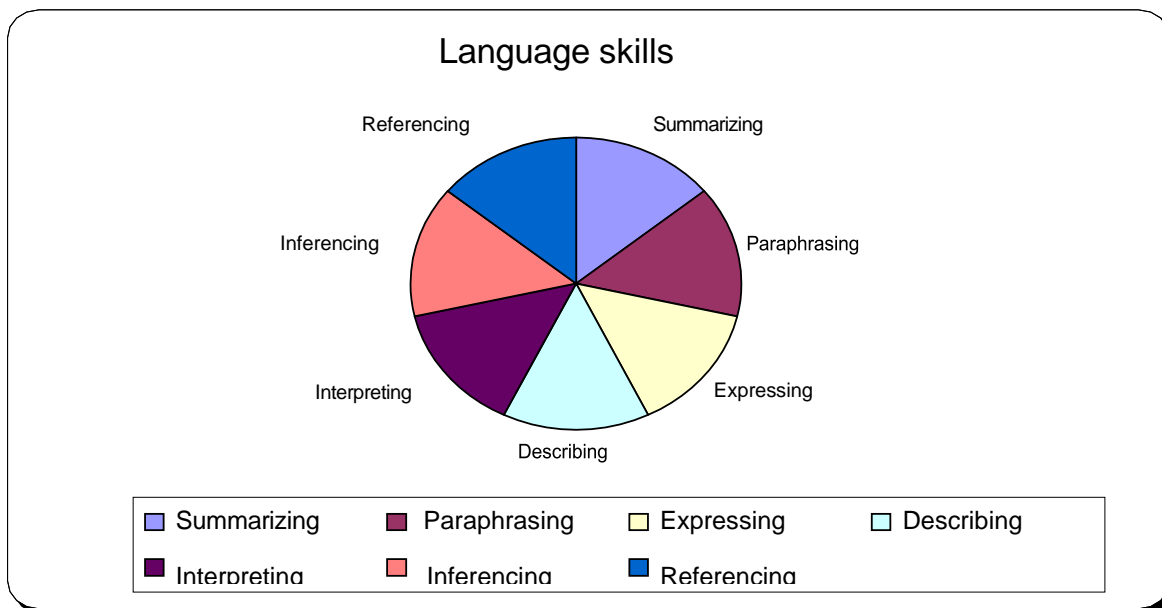


Figure 1 : Skills Development in Classroom



## Language Skills

A Language classroom should be a place where students can involve in a language learning experience in which all the four language skills are integrated together. The four skills are



Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. When the learners use literature in their classrooms, they read texts, stories or poems, interpret them, reflect on and then respond orally. In such a way they can develop their cognitive skills and also their language proficiency. The complete strategy for reading and discussing literary texts such as stories and poetry will promote the creative thinking skills of the learners. The students can foster their thinking skills by involving in such kinds of learning activities. Numerous activities that focus on reading and discussion of literary works can create opportunities to enforce creative thinking among the learners. The activities such as summarizing, paraphrasing, expressing thoughts, describing ideas, interpreting, inference and referring can be used for developing the four language skills.

**Figure 2: Language Skills Activities in Classroom**

### Listening Skills

Listening is an active process involves receiving, understanding, evaluating, remembering, and responding. Listening constructs meaning from both verbal and nonverbal messages. Listening to the story aids in remembering and responding, creates interest in the text, allows them to guess on the plot, theme, and about the protagonist. Listening assists in evaluating and assessing the received text both qualitatively and quantitatively. This provides scope to form an opinion and draw conclusions, on the received information.

### Reading Skill

Reading engages various parts of brain. It stimulates imagination. It flares the curiosity specially to know the climax of the plot. Reading exposes us to the different world and allows explore our

imaginative skills. Reading makes us better writers as we tend to analysis and comprehend the text along with the syntax and semantics of the text we are exposed to.

### Speaking Skills

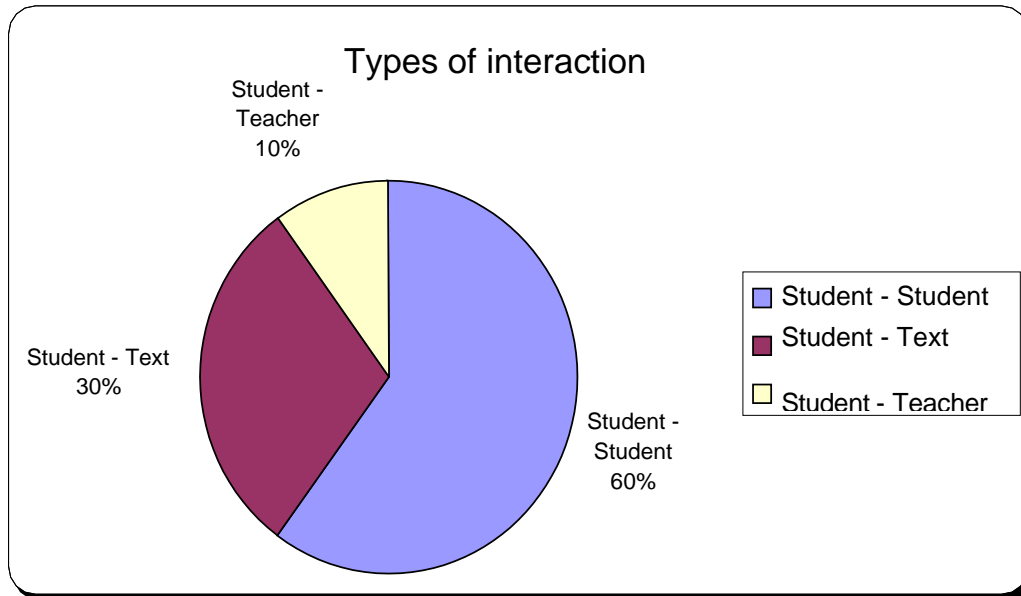
Listening and reading benefit in picking up vocabulary and support in speaking skills. Growth of Vocabulary and consistent improvement in the vocabulary enhances the fluency in speech. Continuous and consistent speech reduces the errors in speech.

### Writing Skills

Listening skills, reading and speaking are all the required skills to build the writing ability. Writing needs Organized thoughts. To have clarity in thought the learner needs to have inputs, like ideas from others, on the text and guidance from the teacher in understanding the context and the times in which the book published, along with subtle details possible and listening. To understand the literary text one should read, analyse, comprehend the text lesson and frame an opinion on the read text.

The major advantage of blending literature and language learning is that during the participation in the classroom activities, the learners interact to other learners, they interact to the teachers and also they interact with the texts. The following figure describes the various interactions that happen during language learning through literature.

**Figure 3: Types of Interactions**



### Benefits of using Short Stories to Language Teaching

Short fiction is a supreme resource for observing not only language but life itself. In short fiction, Characters act out all the real and symbolic functions people carry out in daily lives, and do so in a variety of registers and tones. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives, makes the students reading task easier due to being simple and short when compared with

the other literary genres. It projects views about different cultures and different groups of people.

- Provides more creative, encrypt, challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge for advanced level readers.
- motivates learners to read due to being an authentic material,
- offers a world of wonders and a world of mystery,
- gives students the chance to use their creativity,
- promotes critical thinking skills,
- Helps students coming from various backgrounds communicate with each other because of its universal language and to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings.

In brief, the use of a short story seems to be a very helpful technique in today's foreign language classes. As it is short, it makes the students' reading task and the teacher's coverage easier. An important feature of short fiction is its being universal. To put it differently, students all over the world have experienced stories and can relate to them. Moreover, short fiction, like all other types of literature, makes contribution to the development of cognitive analytical abilities by bringing the whole self to bear on a compressed account of a situation in a single place and moment.

### **Benefits of Using Poetry to Language Teaching**

Poetry can pave the way for the learning and teaching of basic language skills. It's metaphor that is the prominent connection between learning and the poetry. Poetry consciously or unconsciously uses metaphor as one of its primary methods; poetry offers a significant learning process. The learning benefits that can be derived from studying poetry

- The appreciation of the writer's composition process, which students gain by studying poems by developing sensitivity for words and discovery that may grow into a deeper interest and greater analytical ability to poetry.
- Provides readers with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond the known usages rules of grammar, and syntax and vocabulary,
- Triggers unmotivated thoughts in readers and allows to explore interpretations Feelings and heart and in mind
- Students get familiar with figures of speech (i.e. simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc.).

### **Conclusion**

Language and Literature are inter-woven and Literature is filled with human experiences whether directly or indirectly. Literature allows students to question, interpret, connect and explore. It



provides rich source of authentic material over with a wide range of registers, literary competence if effectively utilized, can internalize language at higher level for the learner with verbal intelligence. Literature in a foreign language class serves for creating a highly motivating, amusing and lively class room. Apart from developing language in the target language it paves way into the target language culture building up cultural competence.

The recent development in Technology has led to the bifurcation of Literature into literature and language to suit to the needs of the stake holders and to learn it at faster rate. Language is now made concise to fit to the formal use which we call as communication skills. Most of the non-native speakers' study this with a goal to obtain a job or doing business. Division of language based on the specific purpose for which language is studied has reduced the complexity of the structures to be mastered. Many countries use English as their official language also a lot of job opportunities are available whether online or offline if people are familiar with English language. To learn functional language it is easier since there are standard set of rules which make it easy to learn. Literature and language should be blended to achieve the language competency. The literature texts chosen must be brief fiction and if the learner is given the taste of it for sure they will pick it up by themselves. Giving a direction to self-learning would definitely makes the student more self-reliant and better individual.

### **Bibliography**

1. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319151798> LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE K KAVITHARAJ
2. <http://www.tjprc.org/publishpapers/1-31-1346334630-3-English%20-%20IJEL%20-%20Teaching%20-%20TK%20Santhi.pdf>
3. A course in English language teaching UR PENNY
4. Approaches and methods in Language teaching [www.boloji.com](http://www.boloji.com)
5. Methods of teaching English Krishna Swamy N Krishna Swamy Laltiha
6. A Profile Of The Indian Education System [Http://Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in](http://Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in)
7. Six step Approach teaching poetry asanthi V Ph.D
8. THE IMAGE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING Edited by Kieran Donaghy and Daniel Xerri
9. Barrette, C., Paesani, K., & Vinall, K. Toward an integrated curriculum: Maximizing the use of tar-get language literature. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(2), 216-230. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2010.01075.x>, 2010.
10. Davis, J.N. *Reading literature in the foreign language: The comprehension /response connection*. *The French Review*, 65(3), 1992, pp.359-370.
11. Bretz, M. L. *Reaction: Literature and communicative competence: A springboard for the development of critical thinking and aesthetic appreciation*. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23, 1990. pp.335-338.

12. Elliott, R. *Encouraging reader-response to literature in ESL situations*. *ELT Journal*, 44(3), 191-198. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/44.3.191>, 1990.
13. Fein, D. A. *Challenges of teaching literature: Reflections on the MLA teacher education project*. In P. Franklin, D. Laurence & E. B. Wells (Eds.), *Preparing a nation's teachers: Models for English and foreign language programs*, 1999, pp. 390–397.
14. Henning, S.D. *Integration of language, literature and culture: Goals and curricular design*. *ADFL Bulletin*, 24(2), 22-29. <https://doi.org/10.1632/adfl.24.2.51>, 1993.
15. Swaffar, J. *Reading authentic texts in a foreign language: A cognitive model*. *The Modern Language Journal*, 69(1), 15-34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1985.tb02521.x>, 1985.