

Exploring Life Skills through Literary Texts

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Abstract

Focus on cultural-understanding helps people become more culturally aware by focusing on how people see different aspects, such as life skills. Literature is a way to talk about people, their culture, and their traditions. But literature is much more than just a piece of history or culture. Literature opens up new worlds for us to explore. We learn about books and literature by reading the comedies and tragedies of poems, stories, and plays. We do this by enjoying the hidden skills of the poet/writer, absorbing the ideas beyond the lines, and praising the writer's art and the reader's heart. We may grow and change through our literary journey with the books. Ultimately, we might figure out what a piece of writing means by looking at what and how the author says it. We may be able to figure out what the author was trying to say beyond the level of the reader's heart. In academic circles, this decoding of the text is often done with the help of literary theory, which can be based on mythology, sociology, psychology, history, or other things. This paper looks at how literature helps ESL reading classes teach students about different cultures. It talks about how literary texts can be used to introduce a foreign language and how to read them.

Key words: Culture, society, life skills, literature, ESL reading classes, English language learning etc.,

Introduction:

Language is a mixture of many aspects such as culture, communication, behaviour, lifestyle etc. so Language is not only related to communication but also many aspects. Talking about a particular language resembles one specific culture in our mind. Ex Urdu – we get thought of their dress, people, and culture. When a student learns language, he knows not only language but also culture, behaviour and many aspects which are helpful to his life. Those are life skills, in my perspective, which are included in the language. The source of language is literature then. Ultimately, literature is an abundant source or treasure for any language. My research is to find out or bring to limelight life skills from literary texts such as Keats's poetry, words worth poetry, Shakespeare's dramas and

Paradise Lost etc. There are many ways to get command over the language. One could learn language through literature. Literature is an abundant source for learning the language. Great Novels, Dramas, Poetry etc., are available to English learners. Moreover, the one who reads literary texts gets pleasure and acquires language skills simultaneously. Language skills are improved through literary texts, and at the same time, the character is moulded.

Literature review

Keshavarzi, A. (2012) stated that literature is culture because a student connects to society by reading literature. Students gain Knowledge of culture and society through literature, especially in English as a Second Language Teaching. Literary narratives reflect real life, so the Language used in the texts is accurate. Multiple forms of structures were used in literature because it expresses diverse people's moods, so students are passionate while reading literature. By learning language through literature, Learners acquire language and other aspects like improving critical thinking, knowing about culture, and connecting to society. As literature is culture while narrations are experienced individually, sometimes conflict may be prevailed in reading literature. The one who reads the poem, etc., might have a chance of misunderstanding the author's intention of meaning in the verse or narratives. However, It is widespread that any English as a Second Language curriculum is based on literature. Hence, students connect and get an overview of English culture and society by reading literature. Students of non-native countries study English as a Second Language, so one should consider including non-native literary texts. Moreover, students connect to society by including folktales, superstitions, and religion.

Critical perspective

Literature helped develop students' inner speech as the subject source, leading to verbal practices like thought full activities and self-talk. Literature permits transit teaching methods from teacher centred to student centred. Here the researcher had not explained clearly how literature transited from teacher centred to student centred.

The stated line in the article, "Students gain awareness on society is only through reading literature", is not acceptable because students gain social awareness through other experiences apart from literature in English as a Second Language Teaching and Knowledge is everywhere.

Another stated line, "It can be said that they acquire the English knowledge through literature, just as children acquire their native language". In English as a Second Language Teaching, Language learning is unlike the mother tongue because a child acquires the mother tongue, but in English as a

second language teaching student learns. Therefore, it is baseless to state that literature makes students develop language in their mother tongue.

Though the article has laggings, the point of view is pursuable, like literature stimulates students' imagination with unfamiliar content in learning etc.

Khatib, M., etc. (2011) appreciated major development in language teaching through literature by observing primary and high school teachers and their concern towards literature in English language teaching. Though teachers have misconceptions surrounding literature use in English as a Foreign Language Teaching, the researcher took the study to fill the vacuum. Teachers in English as a Foreign Language Teaching make students competent in linguistic and pragmatic aspects. Still, some teachers, in the process, make student bored, not using literature with fun or increasing interesting ways to students. Hence, the task based approach through literature gives a beautiful experience to students in learning a language through literature by acquiring linguistic and pragmatic competence in English as a Foreign Language Teaching. Literary texts are greatly advantaged in English as a Foreign Language Teaching syntax, lexis, pragmatics and culture. It could be challenging to find non-literary texts though some teachers not considered the significance of literature in English as a Foreign Language Teaching, especially Iran junior high school teachers. They have not embraced literature enthusiastically, and literature's role is unquestionable in English as a Foreign Language

Teaching. Still, some leggings to literature in EFL teaching, as the use of grammar and lexis obstructs the creative use of poetry and prose, and some lexical and syntactic words make students challenging to understand literary texts. Ex: thee, thou

The researcher proposed that teachers should consider students' proficiency, age, and knowledge while selecting materials, and students must be prepared psychologically, cognitively and emotionally to embrace the prescribed textbook. The student has to get satisfaction or pleasure by reading or listening to prescribed text. Students could learn a language fast through immersion and deep involvement, but such things must be created in English as a Foreign Language Teaching.

The study introduced a task-based approach as a technique in the communicative approach in the English as a Foreign Language Teaching process. A task is an activity or drill, or exercise

Teachers are involved and involve students by handling procedure in task-based techniques implemented through literature. The procedure is in three phases, pre-task, during –task and post-task. The approach is proposed to teachers who are sceptic about the advantage of literature in English as a Foreign Language Teaching and delivering literary texts that are uninteresting and

unenthusiastically and unable to embrace the literature. The task-based teaching technique helps make teachers effectively provide literature in the classrooms.

Mart, C. T. (2012) elevated the importance of reading stories to young students. One of the approaches in language teaching is storytelling which is widely used and accepted. Children's literary texts are imaginative, and fantasy elements to bring curiosity and interest in students, and the child acquires language and other aspects in the reading process. Children share their literary reading experiences with the peer group. Authentic texts are necessary to develop academic and thinking skills, so three aspects are essential when selecting a text for a child in language teaching. Those are curriculum objectives, children's age and intellectual level. Children are interested in listening to stories and are delighted in fantasy and imagination while listening to and reading novels. Second, stories fill gaps in language teaching. Children learn more by repeating the same stories and getting accuracy. So stories are important in language teaching so selecting suitable text is an important aspect of language teaching. Third, behavioural and emotional development occurs in children apart from language development by habituating to reading at an early age, so one could not deny the importance of selecting apt storybooks for children.

Hişmanoğlu, M. (2005) emphasised the use of literature in language teaching to develop listening, reading, and writing skills and other language elements like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Literature role in EFL and ESL teaching is abundant, but researchers found some problems which language teachers encountered in teaching language through literature. The intention of using literary materials in language teaching is to develop the students' language, culture, and personal involvement. Literary texts are authentic and literary texts reflect real-life aspects. Most of the literary texts are not written for teaching language so while selecting literary texts for language teaching; teachers should consider students' language level, cultural background, and interests. Literary plays play a significant role in imparting listening, reading, writing skills, and other advantages with academic materials. The researcher proposed pedagogically designed appropriate material that could solve the problems. The teacher's role is significant in English as a Second Language Teaching and English as a Foreign Language Teaching.

Life skills through a literary text

It is common to teach language through literature and learn language through literature. In student life, one has to acquire or learn the language and other aspects like life skills which are important in life and communication. Life skills play a significant role in goal setting and achieving the goal and leading life pleasantly by contributing something to society through work. It is finally helpful to adopt the best philosophy of life. One could learn life skills through some literary texts apart from

language skills. Therefore, it is necessary to select and incorporate such types of literary texts in syllabi. The researcher presented some of the literary texts which provide life skills apart from language skills.

The Skills which are necessary or desirable for full participation in everyday life are life skills

Some of the essential life skills identified through the Delphi Method by WHO are:

- Decision making
- Problem-solving
- Creative thinking or lateral thinking
- Critical thinking or perspicacity
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationships
- Self-awareness or mindfulness
- Assertiveness
- Empathy
- Equanimity
- Coping with stress, trauma and loss
- Resilience

Exploring soft skills from Shakespeare tragedies

Hamartia in Shakespeare tragedies

In Shakespeare tragedies, one could find Hamartia (tragic flaw) which means a fatal flaw leading to the down fall of a tragic hero or heroine. Only one internal imperfection of a person would bring him/her down.

Romeo and Juliet - fancied the wrong person

Hamlet – indecisiveness

Othello – doubt/scepticism

Macbeth – over ambitious

King Lear – innocence/self-delusion

Exploring soft skills through Hamartia in Shakespeare's tragedies

"Othello" – doubt/ scepticism –Othello's tragic flaw is jealousy which flared at suspicion, which tuned into action unchecked by common sense that he has been misled and killed Desdemona. Then, later in despair, he killed himself.

After reading or watching Othello, Every human being comes to know that scepticism is dangerous to us, especially to the one who married. Everyone learns through this play that husband and wife should believe in each other.

"Hamlet"– indecisiveness- Hamlet's indecisiveness is the cause of all innocent deaths and his death.

Hamlet cannot make a proper decision after knowing the truth that his uncle killed his father. That indecision leads to a tragic end for the one who loves him.

Decision-making is the most critical aspect in everybody's life so one should know after reading this play. I am not suggesting one kill somebody who makes the mistake. However, if that occasion happens in the present scenario, one should immediately approach the law.

In real life, we are in dilemma and indecisive so we can't take decisions immediately.

Through this play, we come to know that decision making is the most important aspect.

"King Lear" – innocence/self-delusion – King Lear is flattered by his eldest daughters Goneril and Regan then he wills all property to them. Cordelia the youngest daughter speaks only the truth but King Lear is unable to take truth because of his innocence. Instead, he believes in flattery that leads to the death of many people.

Innocent people like flattery, they do not give importance to truth and they can't digest reality so they will face problems later on the one loses everything like in King Lear.

Innocent people come to know that flattery makes us harm and reality are good for life.

"Romeo and Juliet" - fancied the wrong person – on going feud between the Montague (Romeo) and Capulet (Juliet) families.

Romeo and Juliet are great lovers but not reunited because their families do not belong to one community.

Youth come to know through this play that one has to face many hurdles when he /she falls in love with other community/ religion/cast one.

"Macbeth"– over ambitious

Over ambition leads to tragedy in the play Macbeth so one could observe through this play that ambition is good in one's life but over ambition leads to complications.

A few quotes from the great epic Paradise Lost we could bring out life skills through these quotes

Elevating soft skills from John Milton's "Paradise Lost"

"Paradise Lost" is one of the great epics. Milton gave a clear picture of heaven and hell and explained the relationship between man and god wonderfully, how world is created, how to be obedient to god, etc.

- "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."
- "What hath night to do with sleep?"
- "Better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heaven."
- "Solitude sometimes is best society."
- "Long is the way and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light."
- "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.."
- One could learn through this line pleasure and pain is within us.
- "Solitude sometimes is best society."
- We are the social animals even though sometimes we can't adjust with circumstances or people so we get thought of stay alone.
- "Awake, arise or be forever fall."
- Awake and arise are the most powerful words inspire us to reach our goals.
- "Better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heaven."

It encourages us to do individual business, not to work under somebody or not depend on someone.

Conclusion

There are plenty of books and plenty of ways to learn language. Literature is one of the best ways to learn the language and acquire life skills. The study has taken some of the important lines and abridged versions from original texts as a source of the material. One could generate hypotheses from the study because it is an exploratory study. The generated hypotheses are helpful to continue research as it is a basic quality of any study where research never ends.

Teaching language through literature is a great advantage to students. But, on the other hand, literature is a great source of English as a Second Language Teaching or English as a Foreign Language Teaching. Some aspects (like student age, proficiency and knowledge level etc.) are

important in selecting or prescribing literary materials and considering the balance of native and non-native materials because literary texts are not written for English as a Second Language Teaching or English as Foreign Language Teaching.

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