

METHODOLOGY OF INTEGRATED TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Safarova E'zoza Furqat qizi

Jizzakh State Pedagogical University

1st stage graduate student of the Faculty of Foreign Languages

Abstract: In recent years, the role of literature as a basic component and source of authentic texts of the language curriculum has been gaining importance. Among language educators and ELT experts, there has been a hot debate and discussion on how and when literature should be incorporated in ESL / EFL curriculum. There are discussions of how literature and ESL / EFL instruction can work together and interact for the benefit of the students and how language can be taught through literature. This discussion leads to the development of interesting ideas, methods and techniques of ELT through literature.

Keywords: Foreign Language Teaching, Literary Competence, Literature, Teaching Literature, Teaching of Language Skills.

In the present global context Learning of English has become inexorable when English plays an important role as world's link language or lingua franca. Hence English became an important part of the Indian curriculum in schools and colleges and is taught as second language. In this context the English teachers and the students of Indian schools and colleges face many problems in teaching and learning. It has become a Herculean task for the teachers to improve essential skills in students to express themselves in English in academic as well as real life contexts. As a part of giving thrust to language teaching, literature has been relegated to secondary place. Nevertheless, the role of literature in the ELT classroom has been recognized and even the linguists view literary texts as an important teaching material. Literature, with its rich linguistic input serves as effective stimuli for students to express themselves. Needless to say it serves as a potential source of motivation to the learners. Among language educators and ELT experts, there has been a hot debate and discussion about how and when literature should be incorporated into ELT curriculum. There are discussions on how literature and language teaching can work together for the benefit of students. This discussion or debate leads to the development of innovative ideas, methods and techniques of ELT through literature.



Literary texts that can be studied in the ELT include the genres like poems, plays, novels, short stories, prose pieces and one act plays. Literary texts can be studied in their original forms or abridged versions and they can be divided into classical texts and popular texts. The classical texts include the works of great writers like William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, John Milton, Francis Bacon, Charles Dickens etc. Popular texts include the literary works produced by the writers of contemporary period and native writers. Language can be effectively taught by using texts from English literature and literatures in English. These literary texts are available in different forms like printed books, e-books, audio files, videos and films. The language teachers can take the students to the English language lab and give them access to these e-resources.

- Literary texts provide opportunities for multisensorial classroom experiences.
- They enhance the literary and language horizons of the students.
- Literary texts are representational rather than referential (McRae, 1994). Hence, the literary texts appeal to the emotions and feelings.
- Literature helps the students to understand varied cultures, compare and develop the ideas of tolerance and understanding.
- The literary texts deal with universal themes such as love, compassion, humility, humanity, humor, anguish, pain and loss. Hence they appeal to everyone.
- These texts help in moulding a man into a universal citizen.
- Literary texts offer a rich source of linguistic input and help learners to improve the four skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- They also develop the grammatical structures and add new vocabulary.
- Literary texts motivate the students to be creative and imaginative in their thinking, speaking and writing.

In spite of their uses, the literary texts may pose a number of challenges such as such as text selection, length, cultural difficulty and cultural appropriacy.

4.1. Text selection - Texts need to be chosen that have relevance and interest to learners. For instance the short story 'The Loaded Dog' prescribed for UG students has universality in its theme and the narration is all absorbing. Hence the students evince interest in reading and enjoying the story by themselves. On the contrary, the short story 'My Beloved Charioteer' presents two conflicting characters, one bound for culture and acceptance of traditions and the other, westernized, perverted, gloomy, who shuns the society. This story is not interesting for the students. Difficulty level of the topics needs to be considered while prescribing texts.



4.2. Length - Shorter texts may be easier to use within the class time available, but longer texts provide more contextual details, and development of character and plot. In UG syllabus the Court scene from Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice' is prescribed under the area one act play. Instead of choosing a part or an excerpt from a five act play, a one act play may be prescribed.

4.3. Cultural difficulty – The students can easily follow the texts, which represent their native culture. If texts, which deal with western culture and traditions, are prescribed, sufficient inputs may be provided for comprehending the texts.

4.4. Cultural appropriacy - Learners should not be offended by textual content. For example, teaching a story like 'Interpreter of Maladies' in the Indian class room for UG students is difficult, because it offends their sentiments. It is also difficult to teach the content which does not fit into the Indian cultural context as the theme of the story is alien to Indian culture.

While designing and framing the syllabus, the subject experts may take into consideration the age, understanding level and cultural background of the students. Duff and Maley (2007) stress that teachers can cope with many of the challenges that literary texts present, if they ask a series of questions to assess the suitability of texts for any particular group of learners:

- Is the subject matter likely to interest the learners?
- Is the language level appropriate?
- Is it the right length for the time available?
- Does it require much cultural or literary background knowledge?
- Is it culturally offensive in any way?
- Can it be easily exploited for language learning purposes?

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