

# USING LITERATURE IN AN ESL CLASSROOM: A SURVEY

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## **Abstract**

Language is a measure of conveying the ideas, facts, figures, particulars, solitudes, compassion and love from one individual to other. Although it is roughly calculated that bisection of sphere's inhabitant is multilingual. The accession of additional languages has been associated with cognitive benefits in all respects of life span. These days English language is contemplated as an indispensable as it is frequently manipulated throughout the sphere as a measure of communication. A good grasp of English to higher standard andragogy is to gain better professional slots and a well-respected status in society. Teachers are perhaps the most critical component of any system of education. How well they teach depends on motivation, qualification, experience, training, aptitude and the environment. The stimulus for the present study derives from the view that the teaching of language should be taught by using literary pieces and should move away from a teacher-centered approach towards a student-centered one. The present study illustrated the impact of literature teaching in an ESL context at university level. It was designed to encourage students to experience literary texts directly as a part of a process of meaning creation that develops their thought processes, imaginative faculties and interpretative skills and ultimately has a strong impact on their learning ability. Such a systematic approach to literature teaching in developing learners' reading skills is likely to enable teachers to have a more student-centered classroom. The present study also utilizes the devised teaching activities based on prediction initiating personal growth, in an actual teaching learning context in a selected research environment and explores students' responses to the proposed approach. The obtained data of the present study was collected through questionnaires which were analyzed descriptively. The findings suggested that application of teaching approach proposed by the study notably changed the classroom dynamics in a positive way. The researchers' conclusion with suggestions and recommendations was also summed up at the end of the study.

**Key Words:** Literature, ESL Classroom, Survey, Student-centered, Explores.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a measure of conveying the ideas, facts, figures, particulars, solitudes, compassion and love from one individual to other. Although it is roughly calculated that bisection of sphere's inhabitant is multilingual. The accession of additional languages has been associated with cognitive benefits in all respects of life span. These days English language is contemplated as an indispensable as it is frequently manipulated throughout the sphere as a measure of communication. A good grasp of English to higher standard andragogy is to gain better professional slots and a well-respected status in society. At secondary level in Pakistan

educationists launch ESL in their education system. Language acquisition possibly be a tiresome and mind blowing task for them who acquire English language as their second language. Taking in consideration the significance of English language, educationists delineate English language as a foreign language that must be acquired at undergraduate level. It has derived more attentiveness in Pakistan primarily in edification, pedagogy and andragogy. Predominantly the primary education at the elementary level in Pakistan is composed of eight years of continuous teaching. Secondary education appears after it for the duration of two years. It is actually a study sequential track of two years where a student is permitted to select either academic or vocational programs. Here comparatively a wider exposure to target language can be outlined for the learners. Inside the classroom, the leading role is played by the teacher who can provide students adequate exposure to practice the target in variety of ambience. A qualified language teacher can proffer practical usage of language by introducing input from television, cassettes, videos, books, magazines and websites regarding their profession and subjects. But predominantly the general language exposure is referred to communicate outside the classroom. Anthony (1997) some people described ESL as simply being the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified. Others, however, were more precise describing it as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes. Benson (2001) expounded outside of class language exposure as “any kind of learning that takes place outside the classroom and involves self-instruction, naturalistic learning or self-directed naturalistic learning.” So here the question arises what could the form be of outside classroom language exposure can include: it could be listening to English programs, watching movies speakers and using English language in real life, surfing interest by using English as a source of communication and by reading English literature books. As by using literary text in ESL classroom deliver more awareness of language to students than other sources as it is near to life. Literature has the situations of quotidian life only with the difference of names and places. Further it helps and develops skills and strategies that could be applied to different circumstances, conditions and milieu. Such literature that captures the picture of quotidian life would interest learner’s interest and motivation and make the language learning more effective, quick and entertaining. It helps them to make use of their imagination intensifies their ability to understand and share the feeling of others and escort them to develop their own creativity. According to Boas (1931) “Literature is the record of experience interpreted by personality that behind every book which the race has preserved is a human being’s eager effort to give life meaning, to create beauty, to express vivid emotions and ideas, to make men aware of themselves and the life they lead”. The above extract presents an integrated meaning of the value and the importance of literature. To certain limited extent of linguistics cultural and personal growth considers literary texts could be more motivated than referential ones, frequently used in ESL classroom. It provides learners the knowledge of socio political background of target language community and develops the learner’s understanding of communication that takes place in the particular English community. The focus of research was on use of literature, literature choices, and methods that are used in class rooms. The researcher preferred to discuss what regulatory documents for secondary classes have to say about teaching and using English literature in ESL classroom. So teaching English language to the secondary level learners via Literature would be more beneficial. Most of the English teachers and linguists are not in the favor of teaching literature in ESL class as they are of the view that grammar translation method is the perfect method to teach language in ESL classrooms. That’s why they remain stuck to the old methodologies and don’t want to turn over the new methods and techniques. The students

always behave somber in learning and using English language not only inside the classrooms but even outside the classrooms when they are having conversation with friends they hesitate. This is the reason that our most intelligent students are not able to use the English language accurately and confidently even after passing the masters degrees. In our government schools, the great number of the students cannot grasp the words they have been taught. This study will drag the heed of the teachers to make use of Literature to enlarge the proportion of positive results and to stimulate their students' interest in learning English language with profound interest and to improve their incentive. It will also inquire how the use of Literature in ELT classrooms make it easier and possible for the learners to get the better of their deficiencies of learning English as second language. This use of literature has been contemplated to be an effectual and productive fecund seed. It will intensify the learner's thirst for learning of English Language. To learn a language as second language is only possible if the learner finds it interesting, this interest leads him toward self-motivating and competency. What the teacher has to do just to build up the interest and confidence of the learner, learning would be done 50% by its own and this can be achieved by the use of literature in ESL classrooms.

### **1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Based on the background of the study, the main objectives were:

- To determine the impact of literature in ESL classroom.
- To determine the suitable types of literature for ESL learners.
- To determine the methods and motives for reading literature in ESL classroom at university level.

### **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Aim of this survey was to look over and present how the use of English literature in ESL classroom with an emphasis of personal experiences expands the learner's capabilities to learn second language. This survey inspected and talked about the use of literature, choice of literature for ESL classroom and teaching methods and motives with reading literature in relation to the curriculum for BS classes. The current research was based on the following questions:

1. How literature is beneficial in ESL classroom?
2. How does teacher precede literature in ESL classroom?
3. What methods are employed while using literature as a teaching tool?
4. What type of literature and which genre are used by the teacher?
5. How should the specific literary text be selected for ESL classroom?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 THE STANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

Keshavarzi, Abdullah (2012) Teachers generally and English teachers particularly are always anxious with the variety of content which they are going to present to their learners. Literature is considered one of the most challenging kinds of material for English classes. However some scholars have talked about the drawbacks of literature use in practice, it is so extensive and so practice able that mentors cannot stop using it. Language learning needs developing four skills reading comprehension, writing, listening and speaking. Some sources come up with material

that can meet up with some of these abilities, but literature has shown to be a true source that can help in attaining these four skills. Also language acquisition bestows with culture and consequently with social grasp. It is this aspect of language that bids material dealing with culture. Literature is culture, it is not to suppose that literature bestow with culture. But it should uttered that literature is a culture of people wielding that language. Aside from this it can be asserted that “use of literature in ESL classroom stimulates more pensive and resolute language acquisition. In this respect the language learner are not only wide open to the actual use of language, but also they become critics.

## **2.2 VARIETY OF LITERATURE FOR ESL CLASS**

Mckay, Sandra (1982) literature undeniably has a deposit in the ESL classroom. For learners, literature is a source to provide an incentive key to read in English. It is a classic wheel for embellishing language use and for establishing cultural speculation. The positive results in using literature definitely to a great extent rely on the relation of text which must not be overly difficult on both linguistic and conceptual level. Nevertheless if we approached efferent but in a mode which initiates a peculiar and aesthetic interconnection of a reader and a text.

## **2.3 LESS EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON LITERATURE AND LAND LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Khatib, Muhammad (2011) literature at the outset was a main fount of input for language teaching in the epoch of Grammar Translation Method. But since then has been dropped down podium. Actually with the emergence of structuralism and audio-lingual method, Literature was disregarded and further heed was proffered to dialogues and conversations which were considered more practical and visible in modern word conditions. Melay (2001) asserts that this vintage point toward literature is due to dearth of empirical research establishing the significance of literary input for ESL classrooms. Melay further adds that what stay alive today as empirical research on literature and language teaching are cramped to action research at minor scale. Taking notice of all these disapprovals in the mid of 1980s some practitioners ad language intellectuals revived literature as a content language for acquisition after a long period been abandoned.

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## **2.4 LITERATURE IS AN ENCOURAGING INSTRUMENT FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Khatib, Muhammad (2011) apart from this applied linguistics fueled the homecoming of literature for language teaching. Literature is contemplated as an encouraging instrument for language acquisition motives. Literature is permanently an authentic source and issues authentic input for language acquisition. Literature shares out things which are personally significant and pertinent to them. Authenticity is a standard contemplated highly vital in the contemporary literature in ESL that clearly have existence in the literary text. It can clearly be contemplated in novel and drama. Contextualized expressions, conversations, functional phrases and expression of feelings could be clearly observed in drama. Literature in novels descriptive writing across with other sort of writing builds on the imaginative nature of learners and consequently language straightforwardly engraved on learner’s mind.

## **2.5 LITERARY TEXTS ARE UPSHOTS OF DIVERSE FACETS OF SOCIETY**

Clandfield, Lindsay (2011) Literature has been a subject matter of the study in many states at a secondary level. But prior to a recent time much attention has not been given to ESL classroom.

It has been started since 1980s that this zone has evoked more fascination among ESL teachers. Mostly linguists' authors' and critics get confused when the term literature is used. But the answer is that literary texts are upshots which throw back different facets of society. They are cultural indenture which proffer an intense understanding of society. Other linguists are of the view that literary text does not hold any kind of inherent quality, it is only an interpretive kind of justification that a reader gives to the text. Literature is selected as a material for language class due to its authenticity. It is a sort of unmodified language. When the learners get exposure of it, they would be able to decode it outside the classroom as well. Literature enlarges the language awareness when the learner would expose to unsophisticated and standard language. They would get the knowledge of language norms. Literature proved to be a good source of teaching values as well. By reading literature language learners consciously and unconsciously would start to develop themselves as well. And these values relate to the world out of class. Literature is a source of motivation. It holds high place. When the learner would go through such highly respected literature they may feel real discern of achievement at getting full understanding of it.

## **2.6 LITERATURE, "AN ALLY OF LANGUAGE"**

Irene, Koutsompou Violetta (2015) in language classrooms literature comes up with adequate expanse for students to remark, explain and reflect themselves. By using literature as a content in English language classrooms transpired to be stimulating and prompting. Keeping in mind in the last decade, there has been increase of heed in how literature can be employed with language students. Language and literature are adjacent connected, literature is comprised by language and it appears one of the most periodic utilization of language and linguistics study can also be availed to approach literature from the learner's stance. Brumfit and Carter highlighted the role of literature as "an ally of language". The proficiency is by no mean novel since is an extensively utilized teaching instrument in several language teaching techniques. Nevertheless here the standpoint occurs differently and provides more pertinence to the literary text as a project of art.

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## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The researchers were going to apply quantitative approach. For that the researchers gauged the level of students in the form of close-ended questionnaires. The quantitative approach helped the researchers to assess the success of different activity tools and teaching techniques to the class. For this, questionnaires were distributed among the students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, Spring 2021, Department of Law at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur-Pakistan.

### **3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

Population of the study was the students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, Spring 2021, Department of Law at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur-Pakistan.

### **3.3 SAMPLE OF THE STUDY**

For this study, 100 students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, Spring 2021, Department of Law at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur-Pakistan participated.

### **3.4 RESEARCH TOOLS**

The self-developed Questionnaire, reading proficiency test (RPT) was used by the researchers. In addition, the students' current knowledge test sheet was used. The factors that were kept in mind

while making the research questionnaire in the form of factors. They were reading habits, understanding, confidence increased, drawing meanings and interest in reading ability.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed with the help of using SPSS version 23. The mean distribution was calculated by using frequency table and standard deviation. The following table showed the different sources that were used by the participants for improving reading skills through literature.

1. Enhancement of motivation in reading English is due to use of Literature.

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Neutral	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
Agree	36	36.0	36.0	40.0
Strongly Agree	60	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 represents answers related to the question; Enhancement of motivation in reading English is due to use of literature. The above data represents frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percentage of the values thus giving clear picture of data distribution. From 100 responses, no one was on the option of strongly disagree and disagree whether only 4% neutral, 36% agree and 60% strongly agree. Thus illustrating the complete data range from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the majority being agree at 36% and strongly agree at 60% which is the highest range from other all scales.

2. Literature has absolutely affected my English reading proficiency.

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	4.0
Neutral	4	4.0	4.0	8.0
Agree	44	44.0	44.0	52.0
Strongly Agree	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 defines answer related to the question; literature has absolutely affected my English reading proficiency. Here in the table data illustrates frequency, percent, valid percent and

cumulative percentage which is providing vivid picture of data distribution. From the 100 responses, only 2% disagree, 4% neutral, 44% agree, 50% strongly agree and no one strongly disagree. Thus illustrating the complete data range from being strongly disagree to strongly agree with the majority being agreed at 44% and strongly agree at 50%. The highest range favored the objectives of study.

3. ESL learners can overcome their reading mistakes after using literature.

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Neutral	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
Agree	40	40.0	40.0	46.0
Strongly Agree	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 illustrates responses of the respondents regarding the question. It not only presents frequency but also contains percent, valid percent and cumulative percentage of the values thus providing vivid picture of data distribution. Of the 100 responses, only 6% neutral, 40% agree, 54% strongly agree and no one response was found about strongly disagrees, disagree. The values in the given table covering the data range from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the majority being agreed at 40% and strongly agree at 54%.

4. Literature based environment is highly recommended as one of the most effective ways to learn English reading for ESL learners.

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	6.0
Neutral	8	8.0	8.0	14.0
Agree	34	34.0	34.0	48.0
Strongly Agree	52	52.0	52.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 exemplifies the responses of the respondents regarding the question; literature based environment is highly recommended as one of the most effective ways to learn English reading for ESL learners. It characterizes the frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percentage respectively of the values thus providing vivid picture of data distribution. From 100 responses, 4% strongly disagree, 2% disagree, 4% neutral, 34% agree and 52% strongly agree.

The values given in the above table is covering the data range from strongly agree to strongly disagree with the majority being agree at 34% and strongly agree at 52%.

5. The ESL learners can utilize various genres as supportive material for enhancement of English reading skills through literature.

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
Agree	44	44.0	44.0	46.0
Strongly Agree	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 illustrates the responses of respondents regarding question. It is providing the vivid picture of data distribution by showing frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percentage respectively of the values. From 100 responses, 0% strongly disagrees, only 2% disagree, 0% neutral, 44% agree and 54% strongly agree. The table is covering the data range of the values from strongly disagrees to strongly agree with the majority of being agreed at 44% and strongly agrees 54%.

#### 4. FINDINGS

The study highlights the impact of literature on reading skills. This study gave very fruitful results in answering the research questions rationalized in the start about impact of literature on reading skills. The results of this study are in line with Bhatti, (2013), Liu, (2015), Farrah & Tushyeh (2010), Rashid (2015) and Irshad & Ghani (2015). Bhatti (2013) explored that using literature to teach reading skills is more significant than a teacher's lecture and the study showed 35% difference between experimental group and controlled group. Liu (2015) explored that the experimental group had huge achievements in terms of reading comprehension ability than the controlled group due to the use of literature. Farrah & Tushyeh (2010), explored that using literature enhances the reading proficiency of ESL learners. Irshad & Ghani (2015), revealed that literature has pedagogical benefits for ESL learners and it helps to increase proficiency level of English language learning.

This research spotlights the general overview of the attitudes of the students towards improvement in reading. The respondents were found more curious and interested towards the implementation of literature in classes to learn reading skills. Literature also helped to enhance the motivation and interest level of the students. The effect of animated stories, dialogues and short stories cannot be negated in boosting up the interest in English language reading. Student centre approach enhanced self confidence in the learning of students. New feeling of liveliness made the students to love literature learning environment. Subsequently the tiresome, dry and unexciting environment was changed into interactive, participatory and excited one which increased confidence and self study of ESL learners.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS



To recapitulate, it can be concluded that for the teaching of English at university level, literature proved to be an effective source. This study recognized the efficacy of literary materials in their ability to produce results especially for the improvement of reading skills. Moreover it has created an innovative way for English language reading for the students of BS and gave new path to researcher to move on. Literature learning environment is most effective for learning English for all aspects of language. Literature has showed positive results for the enhancements of reading skills of ESL learners at university level. Using literature for reading skill has generated a lot of interest among the students for reading skills. The students enjoyed and never get bored during learning session because literature has variety of stories, novels and eye catching pictures.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Time may be increased for reading literary texts. The students should be encouraged to participate in reading activities. Medium of instructions should be in English so that they may practice the reading skills in their everyday life situations. Parents and teachers role towards the use of literature is significant. They should encourage their kids and students to read the literary texts regularly to keep themselves abreast of what is happening around them. Reading training courses may be arranged for improving reading habits of students. There ought to be sufficient daily time to quicken reading tendencies. This research empowers administrators to comprehend the significance of reading habits and enhances the students' communication ability.

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