



English Language Teaching / Learning (Elt) Through Children Literature

Khushbu Kumari, Prof (Dr.) Suman Sinha

Research Scholar, Research Guide

B.R.A. Bihar University, Muzaffarpur

Department of English

R.N. College, Hajipur (Bihar)

Abstract

The purpose of writing this research paper is to investigate the convenient methods of learning English as a second language/ foreign language and explore how children literature can facilitate in creating an environment for the learners of English. English Language Teaching/Learning (ELT) is a process of teaching and learning English to non-native speakers as well as the native speakers. English has become the part and parcel of our life due to its wide - spread use in the field of science and rapid growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In this globalized world of ICT, the proficiency in communicating in English opens the doors for all sectors such as commercial, political, social, educational, cultural, psychological etc. Children Literature includes fables, fairytales, myths, fantasy, comics, folk-tales as well as fictional short-stories. The stories from Children Literature help a learner, especially the young ones, to learn English effectively. It is formed up for the growth of children's mind, as well as to create an imaginary environment to stimulate interest in storytelling, reciting the poem, learning the complex structure of language evolution. It may develop the learners' or readers' cognitive, artistic, linguistic competence and performance, along with the intellectual and moral abilities. The different genres and styles of children literature are indited in such a way that the mind of any reader or English language learner can be easily transferred to an imaginative or a fictional world to create a pleasurable and favourable environment as well as inquisitiveness for language learning. The litterateurs use very easy language in children literature that helps readers to understand the pattern of language and develops cognitive and communicative skills. This research paper will facilitate and promote the language learners' four communicative skills- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) through different genres and styles of children literature.

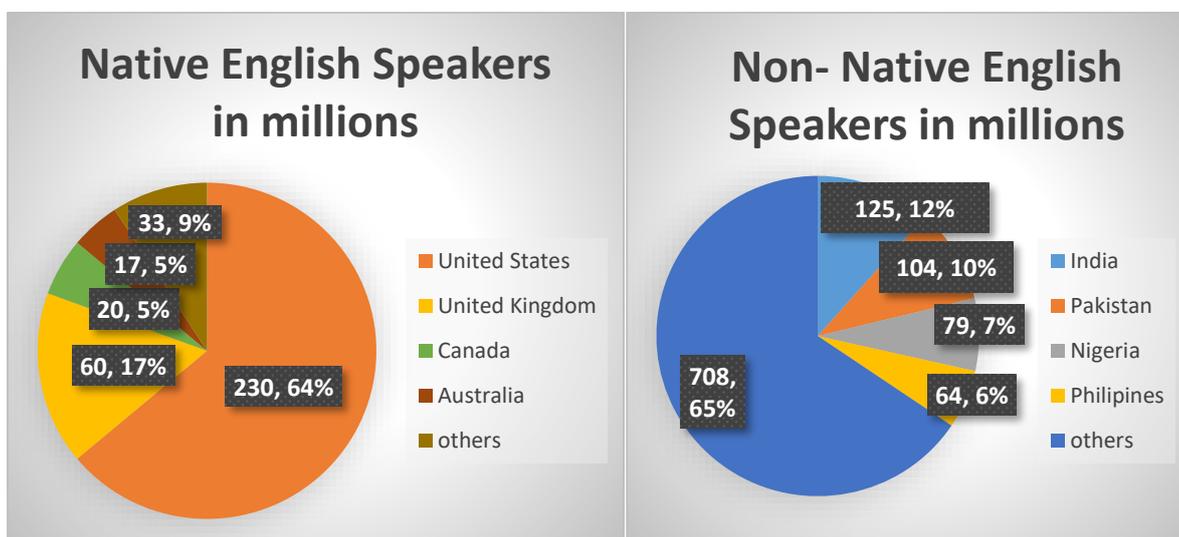
Key-words: - Communicative skills, Global Language, Genres and Styles, ELT, Literature, Linguistics competence, Second Language.

Introduction

In present time, English is spoken all across the globe due to its vital use in all discourse of knowledge and in the world of advance science and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as well as all aspects of life. It is not only an international language but also a link and global language. It is recognized as an official language by law in 55 countries. In 21st century it has become ‘Lingua Franca’ in other words, language a common means of communication began its journey. Its root has delved deep into ancient time that is after the arrival of three Germanic Tribes- Anglo, Saxon and Jute in 456 B.C. It belongs to Indo-European Family. This language became rich by borrowing the many words from other language like Germany, Greek, Latin, French etc. It was developed at the time of Alfred the Great specially in England and gradually it spreaded all over the Europe due to the development of science and art, popularity of Christian Missionaries, source of entertainment, medium of communication of military, law, cultural, commercial and social activities, the translation of a work of art, mode of literary work etc. In India English became popular during the East India Company. Though it was introduced for official purpose but it gradually became the expression for English writer who wrote short- stories, fables, myths, and so on. Gradually, English Language took the form of link, global and international language in this globalized world. The existence and growth of language depends on human consciousness because wherever they go, they accompanied their language, culture and tradition. Later on it created challenges and problem as well as difficulties for non- native speaker due to compulsion and worldwide use of English.

Significance of ELT

In 2013, according to a report issued by the British Council, English was spoken worldwide by 1.75 billion people. Now it projected that there will be more than 2 billion speakers of English language across the globe in 2022 including non-native speakers. English is spoken as a native or first language in almost 88 countries like England, USA, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, European Union etc. The development of any country cannot be possible without communication and communication cannot be proceed without language. English Language is used in two main ways – firstly, as a medium of communication in various sectors, such as government sectors, journalism or mass media and print media, the court of law, the educational system, tour and travel, business organization, engineering and management system, military and security sector, pharmacy, research, science and technology, etc. and the language of communication occurs in these domains are called formal or second/ foreign language; secondly, when language has no official status and becomes a matter of interest and desire for commercial, social, cultural and technological activities. 373 million Native speakers who use English as first language find it convenient because they acquire it naturally in childhood itself. Hence, it becomes a convenient means for expressing passions and desires. 1,080 million Non- native speakers use second language/ foreign for official as well as professional or business activities and it depends on the demand of time. Due to dire need and emergence of common medium of communication English language has become lingua franca in all sector of human activities at national and international level.



The global use of English language has been creating problem for second/ foreign language learners since the time of origin because learners have no proper environment for English language teaching/learning. Due to lack of government support, foreign aids and improper language teaching policy, learners as well as teachers are facing trouble in the achievement of language teaching and learning goals. The core of language learning starts from the process of memorizing text and vocabulary because in India from the ancient time, memorizing and imitation methods were used for language teaching and learning as Pali and Sanskrit. But in present scenario the adaptation of same method regarding ELT is not appropriate due to availabilities of many methods, approaches and techniques. The ways and methods of learning English as second language is as David Crystal marked – “Language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When users succeed, on international stage, their language succeeds; when they fail, their language fails.” --- (Crystal, David; “English as a global language”)

In 21st century English language has the greatest impact on international economic development scale and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It brought revolution in the field of research, film industry, art, higher education, science and technology. It opened the competitive job market and to fulfill these requirement English language learning has become essential need for English language learners; English language teaching has become very challengeable to teach the learners who have no environment and lack of communicative skills. To teach or learn any target language communicative skills as listening, speaking, reading and writing are very important.

The Role of Communication and Language in ELT

“Language is the most massive and inclusive art we know, a mountainous and anonymous work of unconscious generations.” --- (Sapir, Edward; “Language: an introduction to the study of speech.”)

The need to share or to communicate had been felt by human being from time immemorial. Many channels and mediums were identified for the purpose of transmission of ideas as well as concepts and Language was used by Human beings for interacting with each other and communicating ideas or concepts. For an effective and successful communication, it is necessary to understand the art of communication and apply or modify it in suitable way. The term “Communication” has been derived from the Latin word ‘Communis’ which means ‘to share’. As Robert Anderson defines the term ‘Communication’: “Communication is interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information, by speech, writing, or signs.” Allen Louis has emphasized the various process of communication as “Communication is the sum of the entire things one person does when she or he wants to create understanding in the mind of another; it involves a systematic and continuous process of speaking, listening and understanding.” No language communication is possible because Language is a medium of communication that expresses our feelings, emotions, ideas, views and concepts to others. Language is conventional, arbitrary, vocal, modifiable, symbolic, systematic, multilayered, structurally complex, psychological, behavioral, and human in nature.

According to C. Paul Verghese-

“Language is one of the most important characteristic forms of human behavior.” --- (Verghese, Paul, C.; “Teaching English as a Second Language”)

All creatures like animals and birds also communicate to each other by the use of signs and symbols to express their hunger, fear, happiness, pain as well as instant desire but they cannot use words or sentences as human beings. The ability to use language makes human being stand unique among all other creatures on the earth. A linguist Noam Chomsky describes the human mind in his book ‘Universal Grammar’ that only humans have Language Acquisition Device (LAD). They can acquire or learn any language by using LAD and also train their communicative skills through literature.

The Significant Role of Literature in ELT

George Steiner defines literature as follows “Literature is studied not for the sake of information; the message in literature is not verifiable as true or false because all literature is fiction; literature is not paraphrasable. The language of literature is not cryptic like language of science; the language of literature is Delphic i.e. obscure, ambiguous, oracular, in another words it is poetic or emotive.” During the 18th century a separate genre children literature was formed up with the evolving of the concept of childhood because it is basically designed for children’s use. In present scenario litterateurs use different literary genres like fable, fairytales, folktales, fantasy, cartoons, short and moral stories and many more in children literature and characters like Robin Hood, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Harry Potter, Mowgli, Pip, Tom, Peter Pan etc. and plots are created in this literature that are the counterpart of children’s real life situations and problems. Language of Children literature promotes English language learners to create an environment or an imaginary as well as a fictional world to learn target language according to their desire and interest in pleasurable and favourable environment. Litterateurs use common vocabulary, simple sentences, idioms and phrases for enhancing specific language skills that helps readers to understand the pattern of language and develops cognitive and critical thinking skills. In the words of Charles C. Fries, “A thorough mastery of a language for practical communication with real understanding demands a systematic observation and recording of many features of the precise situations in which the varied sentences are used. Such a systematic observation and recording must be minute and sympathetic, not for the purpose of evaluation in terms of one’s own practices, or of finding the ‘quaint’ customs, but in order to understand and to feel, to experience as fully as possible.” --- (Verghese, Paul, C.; “Teaching English as a Second Language”)

The Interdisciplinary Approach of English Language in ELT

The literary style used in the genre of children literature plays a crucial role in children’s life as it provides both education and entertainment means ‘edutainment’. English language learners enhance their linguistics competence and promote their language skills through children literature. Linguistics is the scientific study of language and learners’ keen observation and analysis of structure of English language process improve their four communicative skills- listening or speaking skills can be trained by frequently listening or reading short, moral as well as fictional stories, poems or folk-tales and fairy-tales etc. Once the learners are habituated and started to take interest in reading literature then they would start remembering the vocabulary, idioms and phrases by stress free and their pronunciation will also be revamp. LAD stimulate the learners’ cognitive skills to understand the sentence formation by studying regularly. Due to studying regularly learners strive to correlate language of stories or poems with their own experience of life and situation and they begin to form sentences in their own mind by and by. Speaking and writing skills can be revamped by using formed sentences in parallel or correspond situation. Literature is too enriched with cultural, societal, behavioral, historical, moral, psychological or political orientation and provide ample opportunities to readers or listeners to know the complexities of language and correlate it in the same situation in the form of narrating stories, reciting poems and writing or expressing their feeling, emotion, thought and to reduce stress as well as pain. The subtle observation and analysis of the involute structure of English language will cultivate learners’ communicative skills and shape their sustainable growth of mind in context of theoretical as well as applied linguistics. Theoretical linguistics is concerned with developing model of linguistics knowledge like Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics as well as Pragmatics and applied linguistics is concerned with the application of linguistic theories to evaluate the language problems arises from other disciplines as Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Ethno-linguistics, Geo-linguistics, Neuro-linguistics, Bio-linguistics, historical linguistics. In other words theoretical linguistics deals with how language is articulated or used in speech and applied linguistics deals with how language is represented in art and science means in multidisciplinary knowledge or aesthetic representation of language in literature.

Descriptive Analysis of Linguistic and Language competence of Children literature

Children literature provides immense pleasure and stimulate curiosity in English language learners to read and comprehend a literary work. To boost creativity learners may do some creative activity by the use of children book like finding rhyming words, remembering vocabulary for solving jumble or puzzle words,

completing the sentences with suitable words by the help of stories or poems, discussing the stories with other learners, reciting poems, remembering some dialogues of favourite characters, learning moral lesson and developing logical analysis or reasoning skills from literary work and so on. To refine behavioral, cultural, psychological and social understanding learners may select some genres of literary books for instance a fictional story book for entertainment “The Jungle Book” is written by Joseph Rudyard Kipling – the stories are set in a forest in India’s state of Madhya Pradesh and most of the characters are animals such as Sher Khan – the tiger, Baloo – the bear, and the other character is the boy – “man cub” Mowgli etc. ; George Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant” is autobiographical short story. It was written in Burma or England when Orwell used to serve as a police officer in the British Raj/ Empire from 1922 to 1927 and published in 1936. Orwell is the only named character as well as narrator in this story. He is conflicted about his complicity in British Empire – on the one hand, he recognizes that it is a reprehensible and oppressive institution. On the other hand, however, he detests the resentful local who abuse him because of his work. The experience of shooting elephant gives him insight into the way imperialism warps the colonists’ freedoms as much as it oppresses the colonized. Orwell illustrates that “when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroyed. From this story learners may develop their political, historical, moral and logical understanding; other famous fairy tales like “Cinderella”, “Snow White”, “Snow White and Rose Red”, “Beauty and the Beast” and many more. These fairy tales help the learners to create imaginary world to learn language very smoothly. The characters of mythological tales Ram & Ravan in “Ramayana”; Sons of Pandu and Druyodhan in “Mahabharata” will develop their curiosity in morality and spirituality and these interests will contribute in English language learning. William Blake’s poem “The chimney Sweeper” from the collection poems – ‘Songs of Innocence and Experience’ illustrates the pain of slavery, desire for freedom as well as the destruction of innocence of a little boy Tom Dacre who weeps at night after a hard day as a Chimney Sweeper. He sleeps and has a dream of angel who assures him that his suffering and pain will vanish one day and he will be welcomed into an afterlife without pain. This poem touches the heart of readers and indited in very simple language. There are so many literary works for children which can be used for ELT.

The students of middle school are close to story and Children literature is a medium for providing new information about the world, enriching vocabulary and enhancing specific language skills. It also nurtures communication between the storyteller and the listeners. Childhood is a crucial stage for language development. Reading a children literature can be a joyful way for language training and help them to overcome all the possible learning barriers. Stories of children literature are also very much familiar with the situation and experience of children and stimulate the cognitive development, problem solving as well as logical-reasoning skills of the learners of second language. Children are attach with the fictional characters, imaginary places and the literary genres of children literature. Generally, children imitate the dialogues, understand the lesson and play the actions of favourite characters of fairy tales, fables, comic and many more. English language teaching/ learning becomes very easy through the process or action of imitation.

Conclusion

The role of Children Literature can, thus, be seen in facilitating the learners to develop the four language skills. Children Literature plays a wider role in ELT because literature opens the door for English Language Learners or non – native speakers in mainly two ways – one for the use of office and other for the purpose of desire, entertainment, expression of feelings and so on. The literary style of language can enhance the outcome of ELT in all sectors of life because ELT fulfills learners’ all need and will of life and it is too much essential at part of motivations. It promotes the learners to know the complex structure of language and how a group of words forms a meaningful sentence. The selection of words is the most important steps in the context of speech. English Language Learners take advantage from children literature because litterateurs use very simple vocabulary, accurate sentences and appropriate parts of speech in their literary work. Learners must have to imbibe the observational and analytical learning skills in daily routine. All four communicative skills can be trained by studying Children literature. Some activities like reading stories or reciting poems will revamp learners’ pronunciation skills, use of vocabulary according to context, accent of words. This observational and analytical skills boost the cognitive skills to recognize the appropriate use of

sentence in real life conversation. The frequent study of children literature keeps the learners on track in English Language Learning.

Bibliography and References

Crystal, David. *English as a Global Language*, 2nd edition, New York CUP 1997

Lyons, John. *Language and Linguistics An Introduction*, New Delhi CUP 2019

Larsen – Freeman, Diane, and Marti Anderson *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching*, 3rd edition, New York OUP 2019

Meyer, F. Charles. *Introducing English Linguistics*, New York CUP 2009

Rayudu. C. S. Communication. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House 2016

Debasish, S. S. and Das Bhagban. Business Communication. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited 2010

Verghese, Paul, C. *Teaching English as a Second Language*, New Delhi, 1990

Websites:-

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>

www.ethnologue.com

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/learning-english-through-childrens-literature>

http://www.researchgate.net/publication/children's_literature

<http://www.ecenglish.com/en/school>

