

---

## TEACHING VOCABULARY IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM THROUGH LITERATURE

M.VANISREE, DR.G.MOHANA CHARYULU

---

**Abstract:** English has been used in India before Independence and after Independence with changing aims and status from time to time. However, there are some general aims of teaching and learning English, which remain unchanged. These aims relate to the fact that English is a global language. It acts like a link between different countries and with different language groups. Now, in the world English is learning as a library language for acquiring knowledge of Science and Technology, Trade and Commerce. It acts as a window on the world of several branches of knowledge including its rich literature, arts and music. Especially, in the professional colleges the main aim of teaching and learning English was taught so as to enable the students to appreciate and enjoy literature. Now-a-days English has become a specific purpose of developing communication skills rather than giving importance to learn literature. In this context, a teacher also should change according to the contexts of the learners and at the same time a teacher should keep in mind that literature is a tool which not only amplifies the LSRW skills for the learners but also develops the cultural competencies. Literature acts as a powerful tool and a motivating source of learning and writing. There are several techniques of teaching language in ELT classroom using literature is adopted to improve or to strengthen the communicative approach of the learner which leads to successful and meaningful language learning.

**Keywords:** Approach of a learner, Develop Communication Skills, Literature as a tool, Meaningful language learning.

---

**Introduction:** English has been used in India before Independence and after Independence with changing aims and status from time to time. However, there are some general aims of teaching and learning English, which remain unchanged. These aims relate to the fact that English is a global language. It acts like a link between different countries and with different language groups. Now, in the world English is learning as a library language for acquiring knowledge of Science and Technology, Trade and Commerce. It acts as a window on the world of several branches of knowledge including its rich literature, arts and music. Especially, in the professional colleges the main aim of teaching and learning English was taught so as to enable the students to appreciate and enjoy literature. Now-a-days English has become a specific purpose of developing communication skills rather than giving importance to learn literature. In this context, a teacher also should change according to the contexts of the learners and at the same time a teacher should keep in mind that literature is a tool which not only amplifies the LSRW skills for the learners but also develops the cultural competencies.

**Role of a literature:** Literature acts as a powerful tool and a motivating source of learning and writing. Literature can be studied in the original version or in the edited form. Many literary texts can be studied in the language classroom such as – novels, short stories, prose, biographies, plays, poetry and so on. Literature is an excellent rich source for the learners to develop their LSRW Skills and also to build up their vocabulary and grammatical structures. It helps the learners to know about our cultures, traditions,

customs mythical and mythological elements which make the learners to develop the strengths and attributes like patience, understanding, ability, etc., which are becoming an extinct one in the today's generation. It also develops the learner's imagination, critical thinking and creative use of language and also acquires exposure to a variety of literary texts. This exposure provides an affluent linguistic input and effectively incite for the learners to impart themselves in other languages and a potential source of learner motivation.

**Importance of Vocabulary:** Literature enriches the learner's language. In order to have the ability to read with speed and comprehension and to make notes a learner needs to have a large vocabulary. Vocabulary creates opportunities for the learners to communicate effectively in English. It also helps the learners to absorb the value expressed in literature and also stimulates the interest in the extensive reading of literature. Learners/Professional students need to have a good vocabulary that is commonly used for study and work purposes. Learning vocabulary helps them to become familiar with more and more words and their definitions, pronunciations and also how to use them precisely which will make them confident about functioning in different situations. A teacher will make the learner to learn and practice some vocabulary with the learner come across and also make them to learn and practice new words from different areas. By this, the learners will become familiar with many features of the written language. They not only learn about the syntax but also the discourse functions of sentences its possible structures and different ways of connecting ideas

which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Learners also become more prolific when they instigate to perceive the affluence and diversity of the language they are endeavoring to ascertain and instigate and to make use of some of that potential by them.

**Role of a teacher:** The teacher plays an important role in teaching vocabulary through a short-story. The aim of teaching vocabulary in English language classroom through literature is different. Literature develops the learner's power of imagination and favorable attitude towards the language which is essential for learning any language and in the context of the present position of the language in our country, the lack of this attitude seems to be the major problem. It is very important for a teacher to update himself/herself of the latest developments, changes and trends in language teaching and also adapt in his/her teaching methods to suit and fulfill the learners' needs. The present day requirement and trend suggests that there is a need for more creativity and innovation with regards to the teaching procedures. Only then, language learning can become a fruitful and meaningful exercise. The method, approach or technique used in the classroom should invoke the active participation by the learners in the teaching – learning process.

When a teacher is planning to teach a lesson (it can be a short-story, biography, etc.) his/her attention is focused on the language, vocabulary, structures, phrases, sentences, meaning, etc. The main objective of teaching a literary text is to develop the language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. This involves an elaborate set of procedures carried out through oral work, reading and writing exercises. The language in a prose/short story can be direct and simple. It can be in different forms like narrative, descriptive and dialogue forms. But, they can be absorbed and reproduced in communication. It also aims at training the learners to read and understand a passage. Vocabulary and Grammar is also taught through suitable contexts provided in the passage.

**Techniques:** Teaching vocabulary through literature has a different set of aims and objectives. The teacher will inspire and excite a sense of loveliness and wonder in the learners. At the same time the learners should feel the writer thoughts. The teacher will introduce the content and difficult language items with respect to the regional value of words, cultural, linguistic and intellectual elements, so that the learner does not miss the loveliness in the short-story.

For instance, R.K.Narayan's short-story 'A Snake in the grass'.

"On a sunny afternoon, when the inmates of the bungalow were at their siesta, a cyclist rang his bell at the gate frantically and announced. A big cobra has

got into your compound. It crossed my wheel. He pointed to its track under the gate, and resumed his journey. The family consisting of the mother and her four sons assembled at the gate in great agitation. The old servant Dasa was sleeping in the shed. They shook him out of his sleep and announced to him the arrival of the cobra. 'There is no cobra', he replied and tried to dismiss the matter. They swore at him and forced him to take an interest in the cobra. The thing is somewhere here. If it is not found before the evening, we will dismiss you. Your neglect of the garden and the lawns is responsible for all these dreadful things coming in". (Symphony – English Literature Reader, 5, 6)

After reading the story, the learner learns the essential parts of the story such as about the writer and also the background and need of writing this short-story. Like, here the author R.K.Narayan depicts the Indianness in the story such as – Indians will give preference to their families, cultures, traditions, superstitions and rituals. The narrator depicts all these things with a story of a family living in southern India who faces a problem of a snake. The story also shows the India's joint family system i.e., mother and her four sons with their old servant Dasu. The story also shows several superstitious, traditions, customs and rituals such as snake is treated as Lord Subrahmanya and Abhishekam with milk is a ritual performed to the snake to pray or honour Lord Subrahmanya. The teacher can also create suspense in the story to make the learner to listen the story more interesting asking the learners "What happens next? Can you guess the rest of the story?"

The learners can list the words which are associated with snake and grass. Above all, the learners must get a feel of the story by adding their expressions and thoughts. The learner identifies the words and phrases and also picks out the adjectival phrases in the story. The learners also learn the frequency of use of words, its usefulness, its structural value, productivity of the words such as prefixes, suffixes, etc., universality of the words and regional value of the words, range of applicability of the words, simplicity and its meaning, grading of words in the poem. They also learn the classification of vocabulary such as active and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary or functional vocabularies are the words that the learner knows intimately and can use correctly and effectively in speech and writing. These are used at the early stage of learning and Passive vocabulary or recognition vocabulary are the relatively large number of words that the learner understands and make out the meanings of the words from its context and finally Ad-hoc vocabulary or stranger words comprise the vast number of words. The learners also learn new a word implies

pronunciation, meaning, spelling and usage of the word which improves the confidence levels and also shares their ideas in writing.

The learner also learns how to expand the vocabulary such as learning –

- Associated Words–E.g: Garden: blade, bush, creeper, lawn, shrub, trim  
Snake: bite, crawl, glide, hole, hood, reptile
- Formation of words – E.g: mate – inmate, miss – dismiss, believe – disbelieve, agreed – disagreed
- Formation of compound words – E.g: Sunny + Afternoon = Sunny afternoon
- Synonyms – Eg: Blade – flattened cutting part of a knife, sword, chisel, etc.

Sunny – bright with sunlight, luminous, sunlit, etc.,

Siesta – nap, rest, midday sleep, etc.

- Antonyms – E.g: Agitation – Relaxation, Dreadful – Lovely, Arrival – Departure
- Homonyms : Force - a group of people who have been trained to protect other people

Force – violent action, physical strength

Homophones: Great - enormous, huge, famous

Grate - scrape, irritate, annoy

Homographs: Consist -/kən'sist/ - be composed or made up of

/kɒnsɪst/ - the set of vehicles forming a complete train.

- Families of words – Eg: Interest - Interested, Interesting, Disinterest
- Idioms–Consist of - to include people or things/to have something as component
- Acronym – Consist of – C/O
- Formation of Linkers –Present/Future - Swear, Past - Swore, Present/Past/Future Participle – Swearing, Present Perfect – Sworn
- Formation of words by adding preposition to verbs and adverbs –

Eg: take an interest in– to become concerned or interested in someone or something

- Building compound words – Eg: Sunny Afternoon, Big Cobra
- Collocation of words – Eg: rang his bell, big cobra, crossed wheel
- Words of size – Eg: Track – path, pathway, footpath, lane, trail, route, way, course, road
- Learning Technical Vocabulary – Eg: coaxing – persuade or gently to do something diminuendo – a decrease in loudness in a piece of music.
- Word Origin – Eg: Siesta – Originated from Latin “sexta hora” which means “sixth hour”. Later transferred to Spanish “Siesta”. Later transferred to English same as Spanish “Siesta” which means “a mid day afternoon rest/nap”.
- Word games – Like Learning Prefixes and Suffixes through word strips & Preparation of own dictionary so that the learner can enter the lists of new words with their meanings.

Eg: force-forcing

- Technical Vocabulary – E.g: Track – line/route which the train moves (Blanket, Block, Alignment, etc.)

**Conclusion:** Teaching new words is not an easy task. It requires that a teacher plans with number of techniques for the presentation of the new words. Various ways or techniques like by using objects, symbols, gestures a teacher can be presented new words and the learners can learn and use new words in a given passage/story. Thus, several techniques of teaching vocabulary in ELT classroom using short-story/literature is adopted to improve or to strengthen the communicative approach of the learner which leads to successful and meaningful language learning.

## References:

1. Naik, N.Shantha, Teaching English Language Through Literature, Sarup Book Publishers Pvt.Ltd, New Delhi: 2011. Print
2. Symphony – English Literature Reader, Allied Publishers Pvt.Ltd, New Delhi:2010. Print
3. The Illustrated Weekly of India, Volume 106, Part – 3, P.No: 106
4. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english>.Web
5. <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com>. Web
6. <http://www.enotes.com/homework-help/366385>. Web
7. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/phrasal-verbs>. Web
8. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/phrasal-verb>.Web

\*\*\*

M.Vanisree/research scholar,KLU, Associate Professor/ Department of English/  
S.V Engineering College for Women/ Tirupati/vanisrinivas14@rediffmail.com

Dr.G.Mohana Charyulu /Assessment Committee/ Department Of English/ KI University/ Vijayawada