

English Literature: An Authentic/Interesting Teaching/ Learning Material/Resource for English Language Development

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Abstract

This study is focused on finding how English literature assists to ameliorate English language in English language teaching (ELT) class attempting to analyze how literature attunes students with various language skills in ELT classroom. Commencing with the debate about teaching English language whether using only exponents of English language or teaching English language through literature, it proposes to research on how English literature assists as both content and language for ELT. Furthermore, it quests to answer many queries concerned with the relationship between language and literature. The research project is library based research utilizes secondary source of required data. Regarding the debate on the basis of analysis and discussion of the secondary data, it is argued that as an authentic teaching and learning materials, literature imparts knowledge about language, cultural, and religion entertaining readers assists to ameliorate language skills and knowledge of culture and religion of the target language. So, understanding its authenticity, it is prescribed in ELT courses of Nepali universities under Bachelor and Masters of Education English program but that is limited portion. To increase learners' awareness about language, culture, religion and philosophy, it seemed necessary to increase portion of

literature in ELT courses. Furthermore, for effective learning, it is better to prioritize Nepali writers' literary writing in English or their authentic translated versions from Nepali to English too.

Key words: ELT, English, Literature, Language, Learning, Authentic source

Introduction

In ELT arena there is ongoing and never ending debate that is some of academicians argue that in language teaching class only language exponents should be taught and the materials should be designed accordingly. On the contrary, some academicians are opposing the view and have come up with the argument that in ELT class English literature should be prescribed and utilized as it is the source of authentic material composed by native speakers not for teaching purpose that enlightens with vast scale

of artistic language and philosophical knowledge as well as culture encouraging students to accomplish the best. These two opposing ideas are segregating each other in the academic arena as they are guided by their own ideology. They are valorizing one over another on the basis of their academic area and experience from the respective field as people are somehow influenced by the area of study that we involve in. Our area of study constitutes ideology and we engage in the debate guided by our ideology for ideological apparatus trying to establish our area of study as superior than others' (Althusser, 2006). However, the role of English literature in ELT class should not be understated rather it should be excavated that how it is supporting in ELT class. This study tries to examine the role of literature in ELT class searching the answers of the following research queries.

Research Questions

1. How English language, culture and religion were taught simultaneously in the colonization period in India?
2. How and why English literature is preferred and prescribed in ELT courses and how is its congruity in ELT regarding its language exposure and development of four language skills?
3. How is the preference of English literature in Nepali Universities under Bachelor level of English Education program?

To answer these questions, based on library research, utilizing secondary data, I studied relevant documents about history of commencing teaching English literature in India by colonizer, contribution of the Bible for language development during The Dark Age in England, history of teaching English language and culture, English literature's role to surpass English language, its role for development of four language skills, authenticity of literature for language development, preference of literature in ELT courses in Nepali universities. Finally, the research is concluded with summarizing of key findings with suggestion.

Methodology of the Study

Based on library research, this research project focused on the issue that whether English literature is an authentic source for ELT and English language development or not that has been problematized by debating that in language class only language should be taught through exponents of language rather than utilizing literature as they are charging literature as artistic and deviated language rather than realistic one. To find out how the preference of English literature and its utilization in ELT classes under the Bachelor level English education programs under some of Nepali universities, the researcher studied and utilized the secondary source of data that are ,books ,research articles and courses of Bachelor English Education program for the completion of the research.

Debate: Language should be Taught through Language Exponents or Language should be Taught through Literature

There are two contradictory arguments regarding teaching language and reading English literature in ELT class. Regarding the issue, academicians seem segregating to each other's opinion and understanding being essentialist and non-essentialist (Bista, 2018). Generally, there is ongoing debate regarding language teaching and learning. Some academicians and scholars take language teaching and learning and teaching and reading literature separately claiming that they are different entities. Some of them emphasize in teaching and learning only language and grammar in language learning classes

ignoring value of literature to promote linguistic competency and skills. Rigidly, some English language teachers emphasize that in ELT classes English literature should be excluded and only languages, exponents of communicative English, English grammar and linguistic elements should be prescribed and taught charging literature as artistic and creative writing in which deviated form of standard language is used to gain artistic value, goes far from the real use of language that makes it irrelevant in real communication, its lengthy for reading breaks readers' concentration that does not fulfill the requirements of the ELT class (Naji, et al., 2019). In the contrary, another group of scholars argue that as literature and language have reciprocal relationship, literature is the source of the authentic material for the enhancement of the linguistic skills and competency. Stressing on the value of literature in ELT classes, they take literature and language as two sides of the same coin. Therefore, they stress on prescribing literature in ELT class for the overall enrichment of linguistic skills and knowledge. Furthermore, literature is not only confined with amelioration of language because it covers the whole life (Hall, 2005). On the basis of the discussion made above, my argument is that English literature is an authentic and reliable means to mastery over on linguistic skills as it ensures the authentic exposure to the learner and as it is artistic it motivates, encourages, and inspires to study it and inspires to be a creative writer too. So, instead of segregating English literature from ELT class, it should be highly utilized in ELT class that not only enriches linguistic skills with artistic and realistic language but also ensures the authenticity of the means for ELT making the readers hilarious.

History of Teaching Language Through The Bible

English language was developed through translation of the Latin Bible into English to expose it to ordinary people who could not speak and read Latin language and also used to teach Greek language too. The Bible was first written in Greek and later on during the Renaissance, it was translated into plain English language to expose it to British ordinary people in English language to develop their English language (Carter, et al, 2010). However, it was changed during the Renaissance, at that time the Bible was translated into English language from Latin and English language was learnt through The Bible (Allen 2008). So, it is regarded as the source of English language development. John Wycliffe translated the Bible from Latin into English language that eased to recite the Bible to those people who could only read English language (Thornley, et al, 1999). Printing press, gunpowder and compass' invention assisted to flourish English literature, philosophy, culture, and Christianity expanding from England to around the world as English people started their voyage in the name of exploration of the world. Further, wherever they reached, they disseminated English version of Bible to indigenous people, and taught to recite its verses threatening them showing their gun to expand their English language, culture, and philosophy through it that is epitomized in Daniel Defoe's fictional autobiography *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe asked Friday, an indigenous African man, his slave, to listen his recitation of The Bible's verses and asked him to repeat to teach him English language for the easy communication and to command him in his English language as well as teach Christianity, its culture and philosophy (Defoe, 2013).

History of Teaching English Literature for Language and Culture

Because of colonizer and colonized distinct languages and cultures, colonizers found difficulty in communication with colonized people to continue their colonial mission. Therefore, some of

colonizers stressed about the importance of teaching English literature to install indigenous people's English language skills. However, there was controversy in teaching English language and literature, regarding that Goodwyn argues that teaching English as teaching English language and English literature in higher education approached through hesitation achieved its value and place in higher education only after England deserved its imperial power (2014). In the controversy, literature should be taught for language development expansion of knowledge on English culture and philosophy won the debate. The power exercise is epitomized by introducing and implementing of "Minutes on Indian Education" by Macaulay in the colonized country. Macaulay, a colonizer scholar argues that English literature and language must be taught to Indians as it is the useful literature and language of the wisest nation of the world utilized and ameliorated by generations and generations of so-called great western community. Furthermore, valorizing own language and literature he adds that English literature and language should be taught to indigenous people because they do not have sufficient resources on teaching language and literature as well as it is the granary of knowledge and philosophy that consists vast knowledge on philosophy, history, geography, and many more (1998). Similarly, Hewings, et al. also argue that English literature (literature composed by British people) is taken as the content to trace out the historical development of English language that is primitive way of learning English language and culture (2016). Of course, from the initiation epoch of colonization, colonizers utilized English literature as the reliable source to teach English literature, language, culture and religion to indigenous colonized.

Likewise, other critics also locate the politics behind teaching literature to colonized people. Still English literature is taught under ELT program in numerous universities of outer circle and expanding circles to study how English language developed. Furthermore, guided by colonizers' political ideology they canonized only Anglophone literature as English literature and utilized it to teach not only target language but also their culture, religion and value and assumptions to colonized people (Hewings et al., 2016). It clarifies that colonizers were focused on teaching English language, culture, politics, and religion to indigenous people through English literature written by British writer. It was found that they were teaching English literature to Indian indigenous people to produce fluent English speaking administrative elite who could assist to govern their colonialism (Walsh, 2007). However, beyond language teaching, in depth, they were teaching Christianity, expanding their religion dominating Hinduism, and Buddhism, their culture as well as their value and assumptions. So, their mission and politics was not associated with only teaching English language through English literature to produce mediators but it was also associated with teaching Christian culture, and expanding Christianity colonizing other indigenous languages, cultures and religions.

Finally, English literature grew up as a subject to study in India then after its full phase of growth they transplanted, introduced, preferred and implemented it in Britain after the Newbolt Report emphasized the importance of teaching English literature to British. Newbolt focused that English children must acquire knowledge of English language and literature because they are superior to other language and literature; they are interrelated and inseparable as well as the basis of national education lies upon them (1921). Valorizing own English language, literature, and culture, the Newbolt report has dominated other language, literature and culture of non-England (literature written in English by outside of England). However, even before the Newbolt Report, English language was taught from 1828 in England which was in embryo but not much emphasized as it was emphasized after Newbolt report.

Further, regarding the initiation of teaching English literature and language in England, Barry argues that in London, University College was founded in 1826 and from 1828, English was offered as a discipline under that English language was taught utilizing English literature as the source of studying linguistic with the First English Professor of English in 1829. Regarding teaching English literature, he further adds that King' College, London begun teaching English literature in 1831 that later on changed into London University (2002). Though they taught English language separately they utilized English literature for teaching English language.

Role of English Literature for English Language Learning

Literature helps language learners to develop language skills making ELT class more interesting, entertaining and encouraging, stimulating them to share their knowledge and experience assimilating or synthesizing them in an artistic language either creating imaginary world or replicating the real one. Considering its importance and valorizing it, Nissani, et al argue that literature is valuable for language learning as it exposes linguistic skills to the language learners (2009). Likewise, as literature is vast, artistic, and authentic source of language, it ameliorates linguistic skills by exposing artistic language to language learners. Regarding further benefits of English literature in ELT class, Ellis argues that reading and writing literature expands readers' and writers' experience and linguistic skills embellishing language users' linguistic skills and their lives (2014). Literature, ameliorating linguistic skills, assists language learners to reach in the depth of knowledge expanding the horizon of understanding power of content providing full of enjoyment. Furthermore, literary texts are authentic resource for learning language and developing reading skills and understanding creative writing that help to acquire linguistic competency (Naji, et al, 2019). Further, it plays dynamic role on the language learners. Regarding dynamism of literature, Adhikari argues that literature does not only motivate, inspire, and amuse language learners providing pleasure while reading but also heals emotional hindrance that second language (L2) learners undergo while learning L2 (2019). Literature inspires foreign and second language learners learning language ensuring pleasure. However, there are limitations of literature too regarding utilizing it for language teaching. Babae, et al argue that there are limited appropriate literature to make teaching materials for teaching language, limited literature has addressed language curriculum, limited literature has defined the importance of literature in teaching language, limited trainings for language teacher to utilize literature in language classroom has discouraged to those teachers who effort for utilizing literature in language class (2014).

Development of Four Linguistic Skills through Literature with Entertainment

Reading literature makes its readers laugh and cry while going through it develops four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. So, nowadays, literary texts are preferred and prescribed in the ELT courses for the ELT and English language development. These four skills are also divided as input and output of the skills. Donald et al take linguistic skills as process and categorize listening and reading as input of linguistic skills as learners become receptive and speaking and writing as complicate linguistic skills as they are output of the linguistic skills affiliated with linguistic productivity (2001). In the language learning process, at first, we just listen and without that we can never learn language. Regarding listening skill Awasthi, et al argue that language learners' listening skill can be enhanced by recording literary texts in native speakers' voice and playing them in the language

class as that exposes authentic language to language learners (2011). Likewise, story based movies, drama and novel can also be played and shown in the ELT classroom for the exposure of an authentic language for learners. Similarly, Adhikari argues that language learners' listening and speaking skills can be enhanced by utilizing appropriate typologies of literature (2019). Furthermore, teachers can assign students listen/ watch audio/ visual of poetry recitation, story, novel, drama, autobiography, etc. that are available on the YouTube. However, listening L2 is complex skill because L2 learners are rarely exposed listening materials in the language learning classes because audio for listening materials are rarely developed and prescribed in the language courses. Moreover, if they are exposed L2, they get difficulty due to fast pace of speaking, due to difficulty in differentiating pronunciations and complicated sentence structure which they easily understand in written form but find difficulty in listening (Renandya et al, 2018).

Similarly, speaking skills of the language learners can be developed by assigning them to read diverse literary texts i.e. essay, story, poem, novella, novel, and drama that enhance learners' interest in reading. Thornbury argues that speaking skill develops when language learners obtain knowledge about language systems as well as acquire knowledge about production of speech and its communicative strategies (2012). Likewise, after reading literary texts they should be asked to make discussion and presentation on the texts that they are assigned to study. Likewise, performing the drama can be another wonderful way to ameliorate their speaking skills. Furthermore, panel discussion on the assigned literary text to read can also be conducted by the facilitator to develop students' spoken skill. Furthermore, Harmer argues that in outside of language class (real or face-to-face spontaneous communication) teachers need to expose to student variety of linguistic components from outside of the language learning courses (2008). As Harmer's argument students should be encourage to speak target language not only in ELT class confining exponents of communication but also outside ELT class too spontaneously that assists to ameliorate students' spoken skills.

Similarly, English literature is highly utilized in ELT class to expand reading skill and understanding power. Teachers either can use original versions of literature or simplification versions of literature composed for language learners according to their language skills. Furthermore, both versions become effective as original composer or adaptor rigorously or vigorously work for the selection of appropriate words and grammatical structures (Harmer, 2008).Teacher can prescribe the literary texts to the students according to their linguistic level and knowledge that simultaneously encourages learners to read more and more providing them pleasure too while reading. Furthermore, studying literature ameliorates students' vocabulary as well as assists to understand and excavate various layers of connotative meaning of texts (Adhikari, 2019).

Writing is another language skill that is comparatively complicated than other language skills, so majority of learners learn to write only after listening, speaking and reading. Without intensively acquiring those three linguistic skills one cannot write directly. As literature excavates students' creativity, it also inspires them to write what they have felt and experienced. Regarding the benefits of literature Awasthi, et al. argue that literature does not only expose students with innovative literary and linguistic style and techniques that can be sample for students to practice creative writing but also makes them speculative and creative helping to cultivate their writing skills (2011). Of course, literature

exposes many innovative creations and writings that inspire readers to write something what they have experienced in their life introducing an innovative style.

Literature, developing four language skills, goes further and ameliorates other many skills too. Reading literature improves and enhances vocabulary knowledge make understand its sounds and improves linguistic and communicative power supports students to translate literary texts (Awasthi. et al., 2011). Literature, ameliorating language learners' language skills, attunes them with figure of speech with exposure of artistic language. Regarding the wide range of linguistic exposure of linguistic items in language class, Adhiikari argues that exposition of literary texts to second language learners familiarizes them with figure of speech, sayings and proverbs (2019). Furthermore, of course, it exposes the language varieties as literature never confine within the boundary of so-called standard language. Regarding this issue, Duff argues that in language class, literary genres expose wide range of artistic language and registers providing space for numerous interactions and ample circumstances for interaction appealing and entertaining instigating on content (1988) Of course, literature expands language learners' wide range of linguistic knowledge as well as cultural knowledge ameliorating many linguistic skills, cultural knowledge as well as philosophical knowledge.

Similarly, regarding the dynamic benefits of English literature in ELT class, Lazar argues covering the issues related to the use of literature in ELT class that literature should be utilized in ELT classroom because it motivates, is the source of authentic materials, has educational value, helps students to understand other cultures, is reliable source for language acquisition, enhances learners' critical abilities, delights student, develops linguistic awareness in learners, and motivates learners to share their opinion and feelings (2009). So, literature has its great value in language teaching and learning class. Students also are attracted towards literature in language class that directly contributes for enhancing their linguistic skills as well as other overall skills and knowledge through it. Listening and reading literature providing ecstasy/ rapture encourage language learners to boost listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills rigorously (Adhikari, 2019). Because of pleasure in reading literary texts, language learners appreciate literature in language classroom that motivates them learn language in a delightful mood.

Literature as an Authentic Content for Language Development

Literature is an authentic material and resource for ELT classes to develop linguistic skills of the language learners because the motto of writing literature is not confined just within teaching language, instead, it is an outcome of artistic creative faculty of human mind that ensures the high exposure of artistic and creative language to language learners. Literature performs both roles as content and course, so students acquire massive knowledge on both language and content through it that also enhances knowledge on literary criticism too (Lazar, 2009). Likewise, English literature is neither only language nor only content rather it is both language and content for ELT class. So, it can be used for two purposes: learning language and gaining knowledge too simultaneously. Regarding authenticity and importance of literature in ELT class Hişmanoğlu takes literature as an authentic source of language for ELT class as it is not composed focusing on teaching language purpose (2005). Further, an authentic language material is exposure of target language to language learners which is normal, real, and natural spoken or written naturally either by native speaker or by competent speaker which never compromises

and offers no discount to foreign language learners, so sometimes it can be complex to understand to language learners, therefore, they need to exercise hard to grasp linguistic competency (Harmer, 2008). Likewise, regarding the effectiveness and authenticity of literature as English language teaching materials, it is reported that indigenous writers' literary writing about their own cultural as well as contextual subject matter in Standard English can be reliable teaching material as it imparts knowledge about their own culture that makes comfort to understand and easy to memorize because of their familiarization, ensures to overcome cultural hegemony of the UK and USA, preserves indigenous culture and knowledge and exposes Standard English language to make them global citizen (Adhikari, 2020).

Literature in the Bachelor Level ELT Courses in Tribhuvan University and Mid-West University

Realizing value of literature as one of the most abundant and reliable source to learn and understand target language as well as culture its presence in contemporary ELT class seems more apparent in universities of Nepal (Adhikari, 2019). In B. Ed. English courses of Tribhuvan University and Mid-West University, literature content seems dominant linguistics. Under Tribhuvan University's four years B. Ed. English program, prescription of literary texts are found dominant; "Reading Writing and Critical Thinking", "Critical Reading in English", "English for Mass Communication", "Literature for language development". However, "General English" is compulsory English for all students of B. Ed. First year that the course is amalgamated of grammar, vocabulary is dominated by literary portion. These all literature based courses are prescribed for the development of language learners' English language exposing them wide range of language and knowledge. Furthermore, the courses assist students to magnify their knowledge about philosophy, culture and creativity. In the contrary, only one linguistics paper is prescribed entitled "Foundation of Language and Linguistics" that reveals the fact that English literature is more important in the ELT class for the amelioration of English language learners English language.

Regarding value and importance of literature in ELT courses, Bista argues that in the Bachelor of Education Sciences (English) curriculum of Midwest University, literary texts and literature courses are prescribed to ameliorate students' English language proficiency. Further, it is found that literature is benefiting to ELT course as both language and content playing double roles to study as content and to develop students' target language with its authentic language exposure (2018). So, under Bachelor of Education Sciences, literature is preferred and prescribed. Those literature based courses for the language development are: "Fiction", "Media English", "Poetry Study", "Using Literature for Language Development", "Interdisciplinary Reading", "Drama Study", "Critical Reading and Writing", and "Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking". These courses directly support to ameliorate ELT learners' English language. So, perceiving the value of literature in language teaching class, these courses are developed under the Bachelor Education Sciences English program. Of course, it is found in ELT arena that nowadays, literature is preferred and prescribed under B. Ed. courses in Nepali universities (Tribhuvan University and Mid-West University) because of their wide range coverage of artistic language, different literary devices, culture, knowledge, philosophy, religion etc.

Conclusion

Debate regarding language should be taught through language or it should be taught through literature is ever going on. Some scholars are focused on arguing that English language should be taught through language not literature because literary language is artistic that is written in deviated form rather than common real. However, some scholars have preferred literature in the language class as it is repository of knowledge ensures the vast range of linguistic exposure and so many. Before Macaulay's "Minutes on Indian Education", ELT was in embryo, so at that time The Bible was utilized to teach English language, culture and Christianity to the indigenous people asking to recite its verse. Notably, Macaulay's "Minutes on Indian Education" opened up the way to teach English literature to teach colonizer's (British) language, culture, and religion to the colonized people. That was the politics of colonizing not only the land of indigenous people but also colonizing language, culture and religion of the colonized people through their education system. After Macaulay's "Minutes on Indian Education", after elapse of a century, in 1921 Newbolt Report suggested to teach canonical English literature to British people after its successful experimentation in colonized countries. So, teaching English literature was grownup in colonized soil and transplanted in colonizer's land (Britain). British colonizer politicized teaching English literature prescribing their canonical texts understanding and claiming that was the best source to teach not only language but also their culture, custom and religion (Christianity). Furthermore, it is found that literature develops listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the learners entertaining, expanding their knowledge and criticality and teaching morality too to them. Likewise, English literature is regarded as an authentic content of the language as it is composed by native speakers and it exposes vast linguistic knowledge, culture, and religion. In Nepali universities, English literature is regarded as the source of authentic language and knowledge of English language, so it is prescribed in English Education programs of Bachelor Level. Furthermore, in some of the literature portion of the courses, it is found that there are contents written by indigenous writer in English as well as their translated versions from Nepali to English too to preserve and impart indigenous culture, custom, religion and knowledge to language learners that reject American as well as European cultural, religious, and philosophical hegemony. However, the portion of literature in the courses is found limited. So, it would be better to increase portion of literature in those courses.

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