

Impact of Literature in Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language

S.K.Kannathas

ABSTRACT: English Language proficiency has become a necessary requirement to achieve a better position in the job market. It is almost essential to secure one's bright future in this world. Though proficiency in a language is determined by the mastery about on all the four skills, linguists concerned about speaking skill as oral competence is the prime purpose of learning a language. Speaking skills involve pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and interaction for better communication, and therefore the improvement in speaking skills is very important in facing the challenges in the job market. ESL teachers are often blamed for poor oral competence of the students. Amidst of all the efforts taken by the teachers in developing the oral skills of the learners' the outcome is inadequate. The recent researches show that the learners' involvement and motivation are lacking in ESL classes. In order to suggest a solution to enhance the ESL learners' involvement a research was carried out with the participation of fifty ESL learners' in the GCE O/L Class. Objective of this research is to find out the feasibility of literary texts in enhancing the learners' involvement and motivation in ESL classes. The data were collected by using questionnaire, interview, observation and intervention. The results show that learners' involvement and motivation in an ESL class can be enhanced by using literary texts with real life situations.

Key Words: proficiency, competence, observation, intervention, cognition, communication

Introduction

Language plays a vital role in human society as it is an important human heritage which distinguishes man from other animals. The significance of language in human life is indeed fundamental and central to our social interaction and relationships and to ascertain position in the society. With the use of language man is able to make inventions, communicate ideas and spread them from generation to generation. Each human society has its own cultural experiences and forms of art which are reflected in its communication system. Each system has a unique linguistic inventory and rules that resulted in linguistic diversity. Due to this diversity there are many languages spoken all over the world. Different languages separate human societies and make it difficult to understand each other. Because of this a second language that would unify all the people in this world is therefore necessary, if people must have a common understanding of ideas and have meaningful interactions for a peaceful life.

Status of English

The status of English Language in the present globalization is indispensable. Globalization, it is a way for bringing all the nations into unison and thus establish world peace and harmony. In these noble process seminars, conferences and discussions at International level are compulsory and naturally and inevitably the role of English as common medium to express the views and aspirations of people is felt. Besides on account of promoting trade, technology scientific researches, cultural and social fusions and political links, English is optimistically expected to contribute in a favourable manner to accelerate the process. Most of the programmes performed at internet are in English. Thus English has become a communicative tool to unite all nations together. These circumstances well endorse the prominence of English in the process of Globalization.

Today as a result of globalization, the need for international communication and understanding is increasing as nationals of different countries have to move from one geographical region to another to get their needs fulfilled. In this case, since the British Empire covered many regions from West to East, English has become the lingua Franca for international communication, interaction and relationship. Therefore, English has to be learnt, if we must go along with the world.

Consequently English language is taught at all levels of educational system. In Sri Lanka and India like in some other countries it is introduced to students from pre – schools to tertiary level educational institutions. Language learning involves with learning people and their culture. Learning English Language is therefore impossible without an adequate understanding of its literature.

Role of Literature in Language Teaching

The issue of Literature in Language Teaching is generating a great deal of interest at present, in the changes prescribed in language educational reforms. This also has created a controversial idea on the status of literature study amongst our objectives of Language Teaching and it also plays a problematic role in the new pattern of language teaching which aims primarily to impart practical communicative skills. Nevertheless, there is still a great awareness about what role literature texts perform in imparting language skills for the students who learn English as a second language with their confrontation with Literature.

The decline in the standard of English has been commonly attributed to the teaching methods as used and adopted by language teachers. The main intention in language teaching is not to teach about language, but to develop learners' abilities to make them capable of using the language for a variety of communicative purposes. There is a difference between teaching about the

language and communicating in the language. One great problem is that many teachers believe that teaching about the language in itself will make the learners capable of using the language for communication. In fact, there is often a great ability gap between having information and being able to use it spontaneously for communicative purposes. In order to bridge this gap, there must be an awareness of the social context which can be gained from the world of literature as it is depicted in a language.

Literature and Language are inseparable, as a Language encompasses the diverse features of its Literature and culture. So it is through a Language one can learn people's traditional values and norms which are entwined with proverbs, folk tales and songs of that particular group of people, if a language an empty practice of linguistic skills. Need for linking Literature with Language is emphasized by Michael H - Short and Christopher N. Candlin in their article on Literature and Language Teaching published by Oxford University Press "Literature and Language Teaching should be linked and made mutually reinforcing"(1987). From this, it can be assumed that the non – native students are exposed to the best uses of the English Language through Learning Literature in the target Language.

If Language is taught devoiding literature, the Learners will be board losing their interest in learning as it is full of drilling on linguistic skills. Students need a variety of experience in learning, especially Language learning. This variety of learning becomes possible when interesting literary pieces are linked in language teaching. Language based study skills can be promoted by integrating literary texts. In this view, some of the language activities like summarizing, debating and guided writing will certainly be an aid to promote language competence of non – native learners. This is supported by Ronald Carter (1985. 11) in Literature and language teaching published by Oxford University Press. "More opportunities should be sought for an extensive integrated study of language and literature in teaching of a foreign language. The use of literature as a technique for teaching the four skills of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and language areas (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) are very popular within the field of learning and teaching a second language or a foreign language. It is commonly accepted that literature is necessary for learning English as a second language very effectively. W.R Lee in his editorial in the journal English Language Teaching says (1970) "..... Literature is rooted, so far as the foreign – language learner is concerned in the oral basis of language learning rooted in lively and meaningful oral drills, in spoken and acted dialogues, in simple dramatization of stories, indeed in those very procedures which make for successful and interested learning of the language" .

In this view, it is interesting to note how children listen to the nursery rhymes and enrich their vocabulary through oral drills without the help of a dictionary. When children in their primary classes of learning English in a classroom listen to a nursery rhyme presented with appropriate pictures meaning of the words become clear when they conjure up the image of vocabulary stays in their experience of the target language and helps them learn faster. Frequent contact with words reinforces this desire for inferring meaning from the contexts in which they appear. Literary texts provide us with a lot of opportunity to learn effectively to use words in different contexts. It is important that literature plays a vital role in developing language learning abilities by training learners to infer meaning through different clues and contexts. A study conducted in Sri Lanka claims that language proficiency of the students improves when using literary texts in the classrooms (Hettiarachchi.2015). Using literary texts in ESL classes stimulates and enforces enjoyable linguistic communication. Literary texts offer perspective which motivates learners to think and use language in an effective way.

Language used in literature is very emotive and powerful. So literary texts offer a wide range of language structures that can enhance our understanding of different usages of language. This has a direct impact on learning to respond and use language creatively and expressively. Lazar, (1993.15) supports this by claiming that literature educates the whole persons. Literature helps learners to develop their emotional awareness. Using literature could also be considered as means of internalizing specific grammatical constructions and sentence structures. A research done in Colombo, Sri Lanka concludes that literature can be used as a powerful tool to develop the language skills of the students (Sulochana Neranjani.2011).

Learner centered motivation is very important in teaching a second language. Motivation can be created by using variety of literary texts which contain short stories, dramas and autobiographies. These varieties will certainly help the learners to hold the grip in learning the target language. William T. Little wood in his *Literature and Language Teaching*, (1991.178) says "There are four perspectives on literary texts which will help in language teaching". According to him the first perspective is, reading literary texts accompanied by a varying amount of grammatical analysis explanation, exercises and drills may be devised in order to transfer linguistic structures to activate language learning. Secondly, literature has become a vehicle for the learning of differences between language varieties. So a language learner can learn for dialogue, an informative style for narration and a poetic style for heightened effects. Thirdly, it creates an authentic situation for language learning, finally, literature materials help non – native students to stretch and expand their competence in the target language. A study conducted in Jaffna, Sri Lanka claims that literary texts used in teaching English language help to develop students' overall language skills (Kannathas.2002).

According to Collie and Slater in their *Literature in the Language classroom* (1990.3) there are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. They are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real life contexts are included within recently developed course materials. Thus in a class room context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life settings. Literature can act as a beneficial complement to such materials which will make the learners to become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings.

Literature is a source for cultural enrichment for real language learning. Visiting or staying in that particular community within which that language is spoken for verbal or non verbal communication. But this is not possible for most of the language learners. For such learners, literary works, such as novels, dramas, short stories, etc. facilitate understanding how communication takes place in that language community. Through novels, dramas and short stories are imaginary works, they present a full colourful setting in which characters from many social / regional background can be described. A reader can see the way how the characters in such literary works think, feel, speak, behave and about their traditions, customs, festivals and possession. This colorfully created world can quickly help the foreign learner to understand how communication takes place in that language community. Literature adds a lot to develop and understand communication in a language community through the cultural grammar of it. Learning language is not only acquiring grammar but also acquiring information about lifestyles of people. It provides a way of enabling learners to make sense of their everyday life and forge links between home and school.

Literature will certainly help for language enrichment of the learners. Literary texts provide learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Learners familiarize spoken language through reading substantial and contextualized body of literary texts. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentence, the variety of sentence structures, the different ways of connecting ideas, which will develop and enrich their writing skills. They become more productive when they understand the richness and the diversity of the language they are learning. Thus, they improve their communicative competence in the authenticity and naturalness of the literary texts.

Themes, style of writing, vocabulary used, situation created, events described, language used, emotions evoked and the characters' attitudes in the literary texts attract the learners and make them avid and accomplished readers. They increase their linguistic schemata and content schemata. In this view, it is very

interesting to note the literary texts appeal to the learners' imagination and emotions to motivate their learning. Further, the themes and plots of literary texts provide stimuli for interesting and meaningful debates discussions which develop learners' linguistic and communicative competence. In addition to this, literature develops learner's interpretive and analytical skills of inference which is an application to language related activities. On the whole literary text represent language at their best to be ideal models for language learning and developing overall language awareness and knowledge about Language to the Learners.

Literature and the Teaching of Language Skills

Literature plays an important role in teaching four basic language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, when using literature in the language classroom, skills cannot be taught in isolation but in an integrated way. Literary texts are helpful in a language class room, if they are used to teach basic language skills as an integral part of oral and written language use, as part of the means for creating both reference and interaction meaning not merely as an aspect of the oral and written production of words, phrases and sentences. Povey (1972.18) argues that "Literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge". Literary texts with wide variety of lexical items, possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas will help the learners to develop and enrich language skills for better communication. The responses and the interpretation of the texts will help them to develop integrate language skills such as listening and reading as receptive skills and speaking and writing as productive skills.

Reading Skill

Interesting literary texts and student – centered teaching will pave way for effective comprehension. In reading lesson questions regarding setting, characters and plot can be answered by specific reference to the text. When students achieve a good level in understanding literary texts, they move to the inferential level. Where they make speculations and interpretations concerning the characters, setting theme and the author's point of view after this evaluative level stimulates students to think imaginatively about the work and provokes their problem solving abilities through discussions. Discussion deriving from questions can be the foundation for oral written activities. (Stern 1991.332)

Writing Skill

Writing skill is productive and interactive because when we write we produced language in order to convey our ideas to others and when we write we try to

fulfill a purpose and deliver a message to readers who are usually in our mind. Bjorn and Raisanen (1977. 8) argue that writing is highlighted as important skill because of its immediate practical applications as an isolated skill or ability to a thinking tool which develops language for critical thinking and extension for learning in all disciplines.

Literature functions as powerful and motivation sources for writing in English as a second language, both as a model and as subject matter. When one's writing becomes closely similar to the original work, or clearly imitates its content, theme, organization and style, literature becomes a model. However, when one's writing exhibits original thinking like interpretation or analysis of a text or when it emerges from, or is creatively stimulated by reading a text, literature serves as subject matter. Literature is a rich source of themes to write on in terms of guided, free, controlled and other types of writing. Literature can be a model for three kinds of writing.

Link between Reading and Writing

Reading is the base for writing. Those who read a lot will be better in writing than who do not read. Reading helps the learners to acquire vocabulary, structure, ideas, aesthetic sense and experience for better writing. One's writing reflects his / her experience in reading. Linguistic knowledge gained by reading is applied in writing. Influence of one's writing style on another strongly proves the link between reading and writing.

Literature and Listening

Listening is the primary skill in learning a language. It influences one's speaking. In order to learn a language very effectively learners must develop their listening skill. Distraction hinders the learners' listening ability. In order to overcome this, Learners must be motivated to listen carefully with the help of interesting materials. Literary materials like short stories or plays will be useful to hold the interest of the learners in listening since literary works deal with definitely motivate the learners to listen carefully. This is the prime skill to teach pronunciation for speaking.

Literature and Speaking

The most important productive and interactive skill in language learning is speaking. Oral communication plays a vital role in language learning in the modern world as it is the main yardstick used to measure one's personality. In this mechanical and fast moving world, we need to convey our ideas to others

very clearly and quickly. Oral communications is the best way to make us survive in this rapidly moving and changing world. Speaking demands correct grammar, correct pronunciation, good knowledge of sentence structures and good vocabulary, for a second language learner to meet the above mentioned demands of speaking, listening and reading are very important. When learners listen and read, as mentioned earlier, they must be interested in what they are listening or reading. In this context literary texts will hold their interest to enable them to listen and read carefully. After listening and reading, in production level, they will be tempted to talk or discuss or debate on real life situations which could be provided by literary texts. In this view, plays a vital role to promote learners desire to develop their speaking ability.

Benefits of Different Genres of Literature to Language Teaching

Benefits of using Poetry

Poetry employs language to evoke special experiences of life and suffices readers with feelings. Poetry based on feeling triggers the emotions of the readers which will induce them for interaction. Since poetry transmits culture very effectively and powerfully, it helps the readers to learn many cultural elements like allusions, vocabulary and idioms.

According to Cubukcu (2001.1), poetry is a rewarding and enjoyable experience with the properties of rhyming and rhyme both of which convey love and appreciation for the sound and power of language. In this view, poetry helps the language learners to be familiar with the suprasegmental features of the target language like stress, pitch, junction and intonation.

Poetry is very rich in language as it is very concise in conveying very strong and emotive ideas. So it will help to develop sensitivity for words and discoveries, that may later grow into a deeper interest and grater analytical ability.

Sarac (2003) lists the Educational Benefits of Using Poetry as follows:

- Provides readers with a different view point towards language use by going beyond the known usage and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary.
- Triggers unmotivated readers owing to being so open to explorations and different interpretations.
- Evokes feeling and thoughts in heart and mind.
- Makes students familiar with figures of speech (i.e. simile, metaphor, irony, personification imagery, etc.) due to their being a part of daily language use. (2003; 17-20).

Benefits of Using Short Stories

Short stories reflect real life situations and the characters act out all the real and symbolic acts people carry out in daily lives. Therefore short fiction is a supreme resource to teach not only language but life itself. Sage (1987:p.43) views short fiction as “The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives”. As short fiction is short, it is a very helpful technique in teaching a second language because it makes the learners’ reading activity easier and involves them in their task with great enthusiasm. Another important feature to be noted regarding short fiction is its universality. This will help the learners to feel variety of experiences which will enrich their vocabulary, sentence structure and diffident styles of language. Moreover, short fiction makes contribution to the cognitive analytical abilities by bringing the whole self to bear on a compressed account of a situation in a single place and moment (Sage 1987.43).

Ariogul (2001) has listed the following as Educational Benefits achieved by including Short Fiction in ESL curriculum:

- Makes the students’ reading task easier due to being simple and short compared with the other literary genres.
- Motivates learners to read due to being an authentic materiel.
- Offers a world of wonders and mysteries.
- Gives Students the change to use their creativity.
- Makes learners feel themselves comfortable and free.
- Helps student coming from various background communicate with each other because of its universal language.
- Helps learners to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings.
- Enlarges the advanced level readers ‘world views about different cultures and different groups of people.
- Facilitates teaching a foreign culture (i.e., serves as a valuable instrument in attaining cultural knowledge of the selected community)
- Promotes critical thinking skills. (2001; 11-18)

Benefits of Using Drama

Drama facilitates and accelerates development of oral skills since it is based on spoken languages in different contexts. The real life situation in drama increases

the involvement of the students to take part in language learning activities. Therefore, it plays a vital role in providing a rich resource for language teaching. Through the use of drama the learners become familiar with grammatical structures in contexts and also about the different uses of language to express, control and inform. The use of drama raises the learners' awareness towards the target language and culture.

Learners should make use of drama to promote their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstance and make sense of their extra linguistic world in deeper way (Saricoban 2004:15). In this view, drama is an invaluable resource in language teaching as it provides more real life situation and experiences to widen their linguistic knowledge. The educational benefits of drama according to Lenore (1993) are as follows:

- Stimulates the imagination and promotes creative thinking
- Develops critical thinking skills
- Promotes language development
- Heightens effective listening skill
- Strengthens comprehension and learning retention by involving the senses as an integral part of the learning process
- Increases empathy and awareness of others
- fosters peer respect and group cooperation
- Reinforces positive self-concept
- Provides teachers with a fresh perspective on teaching.

Mengu (2002) has listed some other Educational Benefits of Using Drama in Language Teaching

- Bringing authenticity into the classroom
- Exposes the learners to the classroom culture as well as the social issues a society may be undergoing
- Increasing creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation, and examination of moral attitudes while developing communicative skills and appreciation of literature.
- Helping learners to improve their level of competence with respect to their receptive and productive skills.

- Provides a solid basis for the learners to bridge the gap between their receptive and productive skills.
- Offers students the space and time to develop new ideas and insights in a range of context.
- Enables student to develop new understanding and forms of knowing, not accessible in other more traditional ways of learning (2002; 1-4)

In today's communication – based and student – centered language teaching, the use of drama is an effective way of achieving the aims and objectives of teaching English as a second language. Drama is an authentic material and it helps to promote learners' comprehension of the verbal / nonverbal aspects of language they are learning. Language teachers can use drama to make their teaching more colourful and interesting.

The subject matter in the materials used for language teaching should be interesting, if not, it will fail to inspire learners. If language teaching materials are framed out of contexts aiming only on sentences without any context, learners are left to use words in limitation. Literature, on the other hand, provides subject matter with motivation to help the learners in exploring the possibilities of usages and meaning that enhances their language competence to a great extent.

Purpose of the Study

In the path of achieving the goal of education students are expected to acquire proficiency in reading, writing and speaking. Since the prime intention of learning a language is communication, they are expected to speak well. This will help them to communicate well at interviews and at their working places (When they are employed). Students in Sri Lankan educational institutions have to be successful in speaking Second language learners have to develop their speaking and writing ability to meet the demands of the higher educational institutions in Sri Lanka.

This research focuses on providing a suitable technique to develop their speaking skill by incorporating literary texts in ESL classes. This will enable them to get involved in learning activities by increasing their motivation.

Most of the research studies conducted at school level and university level have been based on identifying the linguistic problems of learners in reading and writing. No attempt has been made to improve speaking ability of the students. To be successful in teaching English as a second language a teacher should pay attention to the need and attitude of the learners. The learners' need is to speak well and their attitude is the material used for activities need to be understandable and motivate them.

Originally, the aim of this study was to investigate an ESL classroom employing literary texts as the material to teach speaking. The main objectives of the study are

1. To find out whether literary texts improve oral communicative skill of the low proficiency L2 learners in the classrooms.
2. To find out whether using literary texts improve the vocabulary pronunciation, fluency and interaction of the low proficiency learners in speaking English.
3. To propose: Suitability of using literary texts to enhance the speaking skills of low – proficiency level L2 learners.
4. This study aims to provide suggestions for teachers on teaching tools in ESL classes to develop oral communicative skills through mixed method research inquiry.

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of this study is based on feasibility of the literary texts in ESLclasses to stimulate interaction among the learners to develop their oral communication skills.

Limitations of the Study

Among the communicative skills this study focuses only on speaking skill because there is always a high demand and expectation from the society to focus on improving the oral communication of the undergraduates.

The participants from schools (sixty two students) were taken only from the two leading schools in the Jaffna District. The number was limited due to the practical difficulty of bringing them together for the interview and intervention.

Rationale for Using Mixed Method Research Methodology

There are various procedures of collecting data; tests, questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, diaries, journals, etc. The most common way to classify the research is according to the data gathered and analyzed. This study aims to provide a holistic description and explanation of the case in the technical manner. The data display of this study is in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research instruments of this study are observations, interviews, observation, questionnaires and experimental teaching done for a short term. The research questions are based on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Hence, the mixed method research is used in this study as the fundamental purpose of it is generalization and the aim of the study is hypothesis testing.

Research Design

To achieve the aim of this study, four groups were chosen. One group was 25 teachers handling ESL classes in various educational institutions. The other group was school students from two leading schools studying in the secondary classes. These groups were chosen for questionnaire and interview. The last two groups were chosen for experiment; one as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The experimental group was taught speaking through literary texts. The control group was taught the traditional method which focused on drilling.

Participants

The participants for this study were students from the General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level classes and Ordinary Level classes from two schools, and twenty-five teachers teaching English as a second language in the government schools. The group of Advanced Level students composed of 12 students who offered English Literature at G.C.E O/L classes. These students participated in the interview. The experimental group and the control group have 25 members each. They are in GCE O/L classes from the two schools in the Jaffna District. Except the students offered English Literature, all the other students English Language speaking proficiency was almost the same.

All the teachers were degree holders. Questionnaires were distributed to the teachers to collect data from them.

Research Instruments

There are various procedures of data collection. The main instruments used in researches are questionnaires, interviews, experiments and classroom observation. These different ways of gathering information can supplement each other and hence boost the validity and dependability of the data. In this study the quantitative data were obtained through closed – ended questionnaires and experimental teaching. The qualitative data were obtained through interviews and classroom observations. The researcher decided to observe the student's activities during the experimental teaching process. The participants were observed in the classroom activities for the entire research period.

Ethical Consideration

Prior to conducting the research, participants' consent was obtained through consent form. The main objective of the study was explained and they were told that the data and information collected would be used only for research purposes. The participants were assured that their names and any other personal details

would not be under any circumstances. All the participants were volunteers and they were not paid for their participation in this research. The participants' consent was obtained to record their interview.

The Heads of the educational institutions where the teacher participants are attached were also met to get the formal consent. The teachers were explained the main objective of the study and they were assured that their names and any other personal details would not be revealed under any circumstances.

Intervention

The strategy used in the intervention was stimulating motivation through involvement with lots of real life situations. The intervention was designed mainly to promote targeted learners' proficiency level in speaking skills and to pave way for them to understand and interact in English easily. It was a necessary demand to introduce an oral speaking test individually and groups with ways of assessing speaking skills. Weir (1995.7) refers to speaking test as "... a repeatable procedure in which the learner speaks and is assessed on the basis of what he/she says".

The intervention consisted of five main functions listed in the observation card and the six speaking skills to be tested before and after intervention.

Steps in building the Intervention

1. Selection of students
2. Dividing the students into two groups: control group and experimental group.
3. Conducting a pre-test on speaking skills.
4. Teaching literary texts focusing on real life situations for the experimental group and teaching in the traditional way of drilling exercises for the control group.
5. Observing the learners of both groups on the main functions as listed in the observation card.
6. Conducting a post – test on speaking skills.

Observation

The Observation aimed at evaluating the impact of Literary Text Intervention on the students' oral communication skills in English Language. The observation

card was designed to observe the students' activities and reaction in the classroom during the intervention programme. The observation cards were designed for both control and experimental group.

The observation card consists of five major domains: students' motivation, understanding the text / activity, students' involvement, students' practice and students' interaction. These domains are based on the students' response and participation in the classroom activities. The classes were observed once in two weeks on a regular basis over 8 weeks.

The evaluation was done on two aspects. The first aspect was the percentage of students responded or participated in the classroom activities. The second aspect was the manner of response/ participation of the students in the classroom activities.

Interview

The Interview Guide Approach or Semi Structured Interview Method with leading questions to gather data from the participants was used. The school students offered English literature as a subject at general certificate of education ordinary level (GCE O/L) were interviewed. The interview was structured in a way to elicit information regarding their experience in learning English literature and the benefits of it in developing their language skills with special focus on oral communication skill.

Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is administered to twenty five (25) teachers handling ESL classes at the government schools. The selection of such sample was based on the consideration that these teachers will benefit the researcher by providing their valuable opinion and supports the researcher to find out ways to develop the oral communication skill of L2 learners

Description of the Questionnaire

The teachers' Questionnaire consists of 28 questions which are divided into three sections. They are classroom interaction, teaching speaking and using literary texts. The questions are closed questions requiring either 'Yes' or 'No' answers, or to put a tick as the appropriate answer from a number of choices or open questions where teachers are requested to specify their choice.

The first section questions deals with talking time of teachers and the opportunities given to students for interaction.

The second section, questions are focused on the importance of speaking skill, stimulation given to students for speaking, aspects of speaking, mistakes of students in speaking and the ways to motivate the students in the speaking activities.

The final section's questions are based on using literary texts and the effectiveness of them to motivate students for interaction.

Findings

Interviews

The oral communication is hindered by inhibitions like shyness and fear. This could be overcome by motivating learners' interaction through real- life situations in literary texts.

Literary based texts help L2 learners to develop their overall language proficiency. Literary texts based activities help L2 learners to develop speaking skill and their personality

Literary texts in ESL classrooms help L2 learners to overcome fear and shyness which is important to motivate their interaction

Literature learning experience helps L2 learners to develop their creativity in language. Literary texts help to develop L2 learners' oral communication by heightening learners' involvement in language activities

Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers feel the importance of speaking skill and interaction in ESL classrooms and they invite learners to speak and interact in the classrooms.

Teachers are reluctant to expose the type of speaking activities they use in the classrooms..

They feel that cultural identity in ESL materials increases learners' motivation.

They feel that literary texts help to develop oral communication skills of L2 learners but they rarely use the literary texts in classrooms.

They have noticed progress in learners' involvement and improvement when literary texts are used.

They have noticed that learners' interest in learning activities increases when literary texts are used.

Observation

The focus of the study is the development of oral communication skills. Therefore, the classroom activities were based on understanding the texts and practicing the episodes in the texts. The students were given opportunities to understand the texts through pair or group discussions under the guidance of the teacher and opportunities were given to practice the episodes of the texts in pairs or groups. During the discussions, attention was given to sentence structure and vocabulary. The sentence structures were discussed with their context and application in other situations. Attention on vocabulary was given through contextual meaning.

During the intervention programme, the students' motivation for learning, understanding the activity, their involvement in learning their participation in the activities and the interaction were observed.

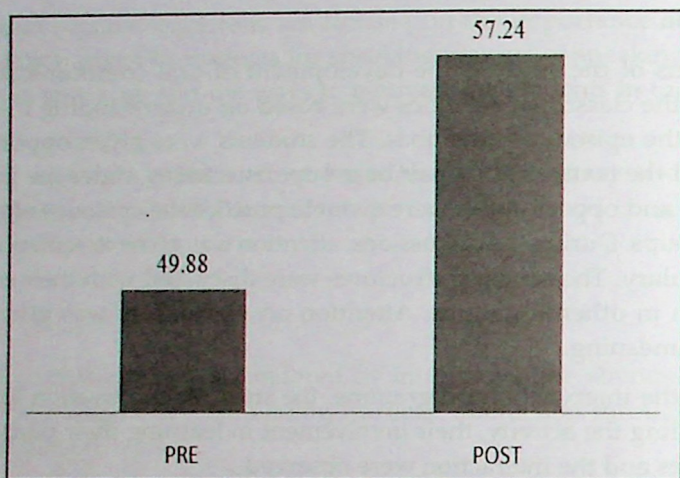
The data from observation demonstrated that literary texts influenced the minds of the students. Based on the analysis of classroom observations there was some qualitative evidence that learners experienced a high level of enjoyment and pleasure which were reflected in their positive response in motivation and involvement.

The data obtained from observation demonstrated that the learners understanding the text was at a high level. This was revealed in the observation and their active participation in practice.

The experimental class in this study demonstrated remarkable increase in the percentage of students interacted in the class and their manner of response in interaction. The activities were based on pair or group work. Therefore the students had a favourable atmosphere for interaction. The dialogical nature of literary texts gave the learners the real environment to interact with true enthusiasm.

Intervention

Prior to the implementation of the intervention, the pre speaking activity was built on real life situations. The 50 students in two groups were given real life situations and they either in pairs or groups were asked to speak on the situations given. Their speaking activity was recorded. This was done as a pre – test to assess their speaking ability and diagnose the difficulties encountered by them. The traditional pen paper exam was not considered by the researcher as the study is focused on developing oral communicative skills. After the intervention period same speaking test was conducted for both control and experimental groups.



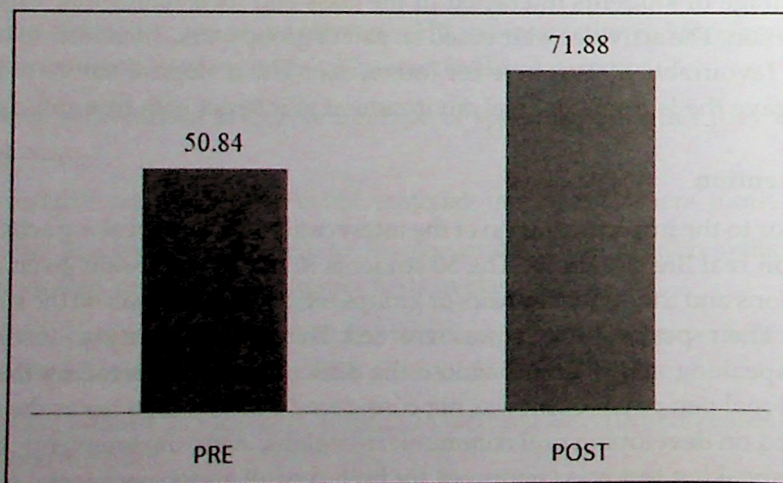
Mean value of pre and post test of Control Group

As seen in the above figure, the mean value of the pre- test of the control group is 49.88 and the mean value of the post-test is 57.24. The mean

gain secured by the control group is 7.36. The tables above show that the participants of the experimental

group have improved in oral communication skills better than the control group.

After the intervention period same speaking test was conducted for both control and experimental groups.



Mean value of pre and post test of Experimental Group

As seen in the above figure the mean value of the pre-test of the experimental group is 50.84 and the mean value of the post-test is 71.88. The mean gain secured by the experimental group is 21.04. The gain secured by the control group is 7.36. But the gain secured by the experimental group is 21.04. This proves that the improvement in oral communication skills of the experimental group is much better than the control group.

Conclusion

Language teaching and learning can be a challenging and interesting practice when teachers make effort to explore a variety of approaches and techniques. Teachers are expected to keep on exploring approaches and techniques to quench the students' thirst on learning languages. Change is incremental in this modernized world. It may gradually take place in all spheres but very certain. Due to this students who are good in adaptation, like to experience the new approaches more than the traditional techniques. Therefore teachers should be ready with novel ideas and approaches to cater the students' desires.

Using literary texts in language teaching is an interesting and effective approach that has been practiced for a long time. It is interesting to note that drama task in the form of role playing has been practiced in ESL classes from 1970s with the introduction of CLT method. Literary texts based activities strengthen the bond between thought and expression in language provides practice for speaking skills and offers a good opportunity for interaction. It facilitates the type of language behavior that should lead to fluency through interaction.

Despite the fact that this study was focused on the cognitive effect of literary texts on the GCE O/L students results on the pre/post oral test and observations showed literary texts had some definite benefits for these students on affective side too. The cognitive domain includes the recall of speaking sub-skills included in the intervention.

Literary texts helped the students to relax, motivated, get involved and become less anxious around each other and began to lower their affective filter enough to learn some vocabulary sentence structures, pronunciation and grammar. All these lead them to gain fluency. They observed saw these effects in the observation in the classes during intervention and the students themselves reported such benefits in the interviews.

The researcher came to the conclusion that literary texts gave learners an opportunity to get involved in learning activities without shyness and fear. The students did not feel uncomfortable as some would in the case of traditional class. For the students with inhibitions like shyness and fear, literary texts made

them to work within their teams and allowed everyone to participate without fear of making mistakes. The literary texts used in the intervention kept the students in a stress-free situation. The more understandable the literary texts are the more motivated students become. The literary texts will provide a venue of opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends pedagogical implication for Students, Teachers and Curriculum designers.

Recommendations for Teachers

It is important to approach speaking skills in the adult classroom with a specific framework in mind. It is a common attribution that choosing the proper strategy and approach is away from the minds of the ESL teachers because of time constraints to finish the syllabus and the effort to be taken in experimenting proper techniques. The literary texts with cultural identity and written in accessible language used in this study can help greatly in changing the classroom dynamics and help them to develop speaking skills in a pleasant atmosphere. Literary texts provide teachers with specific goals and parameters to judge their students' performance. This will help them to see whether the expectations have successfully been met. Teachers might find it useful to identify the ways to motivate students' involvement and active participation with the classroom activities and then research existing strategies to see which framework best suits with the goals.

In implementing a new approach it would be beneficial for teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their class speaking performance. If teachers want to examine and adjust their practice it is definite that literary texts will become more balanced in terms of motivation, participation and involvement. In an ESL class teachers need to explicitly state their goals regarding speaking skills and to assess learners by using oral tests and observation.

Though the study was cognitive in nature it affects the affective side too. The observation in this study revealed that the learners in this intervention were comfortable, motivated, involved and actively participated when they were grouped to interact. There was more cooperation and positive interaction. Learners were truly involved in the activities that allowed them to speak without shyness and fear.

Teachers should think of moving away from their comfort zone of using traditional drilling technique to teach speaking. They have to employ literary texts with cultural identity and in accessible modern English in their speaking classes.

New perception of material preparation conducting and assessing of speaking lessons should be rooted.

It is hoped that this study will guide teacher educators to encourage ESL teachers to incorporate literary texts in their classrooms to teach speaking. Drama, poetry short-story competitions and shows are to be arranged to encourage the students to participate in them.

Recommendations for Curriculum Designers

Curriculum designers are invited to pay attention on developing speaking skills of learners' in ESL classrooms. The present curriculum design concentrates on reading and writing skills of the learners in ESL classes. This will motivate the learners and the teachers to focus only on these two skills. When designing curriculum for speaking more emphasis to be given on authentic materials with real- life situations to increase the learners' involvement in the classrooms activities. The literary texts as materials written in modern accessible English with learners' cultural identity will enhance communicative skills in English giving enough space for practice and performance. This will motivate the learners' involvement in the activities and promote their participation in interaction. More opportunities should be given to the learners for participating in the dram

Recommendations for further studies

It is recommended that long term studies on larger populations of students will strengthen the case for the inclusion of literary texts and to add to the growing body of research on literary texts as an important and effective technique for ESL classes.

Replication of this study with different age groups is recommended to determine whether literary texts intervention is an effective teaching method for a wider range of age groups.

Possibility of extending the literary texts' impact on other language skills, such as writing reading and listening.

Reference

- Ariogul.S. *The Teaching of Reading through Short Stories in Advanced Classes* Ankara: Hacettepe University, 2001.
- Bjork.L&Raisanen.C, *Academic Writing; A University Writing Course,; Student Literature*. 1997.
- Carter.R. *Language through Literature and Literature Through Language*. EF.L Gazette, 1985.