

English Language Acquisition through Comparative Literature

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Abstract

Comparative literature facilitates amalgamation of cultures, traditions and nations bringing them all onto one common front. Reader gets an opportunity to compare and contrast these major features realizing cultural and religious sensitivity. When regional literatures are compared with English literature, reader may have a broader scope to learn English language from the context. Through this, reader may gain functional and practical English. Thus, my paper throws light on comparative literature between regional and English literatures with a note of practical and functional English acquisition.

Key Words: Comparative literature, Regional languages, Language acquisition, Functional English and Cultural sensitivity

Comparative literature, as one is aware, draws comparisons and contrasts with many aspects of literature as well as life. Besides, it also facilitates language acquisition. One may wonder how this will be possible. If the comparison is made between regional literature and English literature, reader with that regional language background can find a clue about how such intentions can be expressed in his language and in turn how can they be conveyed in English. In this context, it should be remembered that translated works also serve the stated purpose but in a different way. When a work in regional language is translated into English, it's a linear process and messages are straightly translated into it. If the same work is compared with an English one with more or less similar backdrop, it helps the reader to find subtle differences between the portrayals of the themes. Variety of expression exhibiting cultural modalities, religious sentiments and traditional differences can be observed and learned.

It has long been recognized that the 'comparative literature' has casually been used by Mathew Arnold in 1840s. During this long journey, it has undergone many tussles. At present it is enjoying an exclusive status of eradicating borders between nations. Globalization also contributed a lot for this positive impact.

When it comes to English language, it has almost pervaded the world turning it into a global village. In this globalized and privatized world, one can survive by changing one's self in accordance with the prevailing circumstances. No doubt, person with proficiency in English language can outsmart others in this cut-throat competitive world.

Language doesn't mean phonetics and syntax alone. It has many paralinguistic features like accent, intonation, inflexion etc. All these are so significant in spoken communication but written communication requires intonation. One can understand these features by observing the native speakers

keenly. The other way can be this – comparison between regional and English literatures. It helps the learner improve his/her linguistic competence.

Why literature? Literature always intrigues the reader. It encourages extensive reading by enjoying it throughout. In recent times, there has been much enthusiasm and curiosity over translations too. Interest coupled with pleasurable and focused reading, allows the reader grasp the functional value of English language. He can easily locate functional elements from the context. By learning things from the context, reader is less prone to forget. Thus. It facilitates long-standing memory of the aspects learnt in this process.

Comparative literature between regional and English languages, brings forth subtleties of cultures and traditions, region and religion, and so forth. With the focused aim of acquiring English language, one can find a pleasurable way of acquiring it. Concentration on the subtle elements and identification of variety of expression, takes the reader a long way. This can be taken as a pre-requisite for a reader to get benefitted from.

As it is evident, if the reader immerses in reading such comparative works, he/she should always keep reminding himself/herself that they have to acquire English for their practical purpose. These practical purposes may be business letters, e-mails, reports, legal documents etc. Language learnt from functional point of view allows the reader deal with these practical purposes in a better way. Though these are purely impersonal, yet setting a friendly tone to these pieces of writing establishes good rapport between the initiator and the receiver. This professional writing can be better gained through the stated strategy.

To sum it up, comparative literature between regional literature and English literature helps one acquire functional elements of English. Vocabulary, sentence syntax, paragraph writing, written composition as well as paralinguistic features also can be acquired reasonably well. As it is rightly stated ‘comparative literature unifies entire world.

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