

Teaching English Language Through Short Story

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Abstract

Literature has a number of interesting genres. The short story is one of them. We know that language items including grammatical items must not be taught to students out of context. They should be taught to them effectively only when they are presented in context. A short story is very rich in language items. There language items are : Verb Patterns, synonyms, connotative and denotative meanings, the use of Prepositions, articles, type of sentences : Simple, Complex, Compound, Assertive, Interrogative, Imperative, Optative, Exclamatory, different types of phrases and clauses and their function, Negative sentences, voice change, narrative change, phrasal verb, idioms & idiomatic expression, collocation, hyponyms, meronyms, transformations.

Literature plays an important role in teaching four basic language skills like listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and Writing skill. However, when teaching language using literature in the classroom, skills should be taught in an integrated way. The short story is no doubt, a very fascinating and mindboggling genres. We read a short story for pleasure and entertainment and for comprehension. A short story consists of a variety of important components e.g. theme, plot structure, plot, climax, epiphany, humour, irony, figure of speech or tropes, stylistic devices, flashback, point of view, etc. The student must have a good knowledge about those ingredients of a short story.

There is a wide potpourri of activities which students have to master in order to appreciate a short story. They must know the setting and background of a short story. The setting determines the tone of a short story. The tone may be happy, sad or the tone may reflect a blend of joy and sorrow. The setting refers to the time and place of the short story. There is no short story without a conflict. Conflict may be external or internal. External conflict is between man and man, man and nature, whereas internal conflict remains in a character. A character exhibits internal conflict when she or he remains in a dilemma. Character portrayal is an important aspect of a short story. A character can be dynamic or flat. A dynamic character is one who undergoes a change whereas a flat character does not undergo a change.

Imagery is another significant part of a short story. There are various types of images - tactile, gustatory, visual, aural, olfactory, concrete, abstract, natural. These images are of wide significance as through them the message, tone and mood of a short story are conveyed meaningfully. Teaching short story can be done through the integrated approach (integration of reading, speaking, writing) as far as the teaching methodology is concerned. Appropriate and relevant tasks are set to teach the students the ingredients of short story. They are writing the gist of a short story, the traits of characters, prediction, activities, process, question, questions of inference, question of evaluation etc. In this way a short story is taught in classroom and students will acquire a good knowledge of the language.

Key Words: Discourse, Markers, Methodology, Integration, Second Language, Wordformation, Transformation.

Introduction:

The method of teaching language through short story in under graduate classes in our country especially West Bengal is grossly neglected. My writing TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH SHORT STORY is how to promote grammatical and communicative competence of the learners of the English Language through short story. Since the emergence of structural linguistics and learning of language and the study of literature have moved away from each other. It is essential that language should be taught through short story, we need an approach which integrates the two. If an integrated approach to the teaching language and literature is adopted, it will be based on linguistic grounds and educational ones, and the aesthetic point of view. From the view point of the contribution of the development of the learner's linguistic competence, there is hardly any doubt that it obviously can enhance his respective as well as productive knowledge of the language. Literature can help students to be master as well as expert of the vocabulary and grammar of the language as well as the four skills. listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill. When the learners are interested in learning the language, they will be interested in seeing how the whole language system is used in the actual business of communication.

Students learn better when they are engaged with what is happening. Their feelings and attitudes matter both in relation to their encounters with the language itself, and also in terms of the learning experience in general.

Students need constant exposure, to the language otherwise they will not learn how to use it. The input they receive may be in the form of reading or in the way the teacher talks to them. It may sometimes be roughly tuned, or for more form focused sequences finely tuned. Comprehensible input is not enough in itself, unless there is some language study or some opportunity for noticing or consciousness -raising to help students remember specific language. Focus on form - and especially at lower levels, on language forms-is a vital component of successful language learning.

Students need chances to activate their language knowledge through meaning - focused tasks. This activation is achieved when they try to deploy all or any of the language they know either to produce language (spoken or written) or to read or listen for meaning.

Students should be encouraged to think about language as they work with it since, we are sure, this aids retention. Where appropriate, we should encourage students to do some of the work for themselves, discovering how language works rather than being given information about language construction 'on a plate'.

NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING-

According to the practitioner of Neuro Linguistic programming (NLP), we use a number of 'Primary Representational System' to experience the world. These systems are described in the acronym 'VAKOG' which stands for visual (We look and see), Auditory (we hear and listen), Kinaesthetic (we feel externally, internally or through movement) Olfactory (We smell things) and Gustatory (We taste things).

Most of the people, while using all these systems to experience the world, nevertheless have one 'Preferred Primary System,' . NLP gives teachers the chance to offer students activities which suit their primary preferred system. According to Radislav Millrood, it shows how teachers can operate in the C-Zone - the zone of congruence, where teachers and students interact affectively - rather than in the R-Zone - the Zone of students resistance , where students do not appreciate how the teacher tries to make them behave. NLP petitioners also use techniques such as three position thinking, to get teachers students to see things for other people's points of view so that they can be more effective communicators and interactor.

OBJECTIVE OF TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE:-

The general aims and objectives of teaching English language (at the secondary level/higher secondary level/school level) are as follows.

- 1) To develop the students' intellectual aesthetic and emotional maturity through engagement with, response to, language.
- 2) To increase students personal, social, economical, political, religious, historical and cultural awareness through the study of range of text.
- 3) To increase the students, understanding to how English language functions, especially in its figurative mode through such devices as grammatical items.
- 4) To extend students' knowledge of the major functional grammar such sentences, voice change, narration, simple sentence, complex sentence, compound sentences, Transformation of sentences, Degree etc..
- 5) To develop over all English language competence of students i.e. grammar, vocabulary etc. in English through the study of literature, short story.
- 6) To develop the students' linguistic skills specially reading and writing through English literary pieces. like - short story.

BROAD OBJECTIVE :-

To develop students linguistic sensibility, understand, appreciate and use the proper function of sentences in the specific fields.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE :-

To create awareness about the linguistic competence and their functional way, to enable students to comprehend and interpret the whole linguistic genre; to enable students to make out the meaning of the expressions used in the short story - literature, and to develop students' competence to use the proper function of sentences in the specific field.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE:-

Teaching Language undoubtedly helps in developing cognitive and affective aspects of students and hence, it has been compulsory component of all school curriculum and the language courses at the school, college and university level. Teaching English language with communicative methods and it undertakes the following assumptions and methodological consideration: -

- 1) A literature based (short story) approach to Teaching Language:- Literary texts are seen as a language response which provides stimulating language activities. The advantages of using literary texts for language activities are that they offer a wide range of styles and register; they are open to

multiple interpretations and hence provide excellent opportunities for class room discussion. Students are encouraged to draw on their knowledge of familiar grammatical, lexical or discursive categories to make aesthetic judgment of the text.

Selection and organization of literary materials :-

Linguistic materials are chosen considering three factors :

- a) The materials give exposure to certain stylistic features of language.
- b) The materials illustrate certain linguistic elements viz grammatical, lexical etc.
- c) The materials have considerable linguistic acknowledgement and merit.

2) Language as content :-

This is the most traditional approach frequently used in tertiary education. Language itself is the content of the course, which concentrates on areas such as the history and characteristics of linguistic movements; the social, political, historical and cultural background to a text.

Selection and organization of linguistic materials :-

Materials are selected for their importance as part of a linguistic canon or tradition .

3) Language for personal Enrichment :-

Language is viewed as a major source of personal enjoyment as well as enrichment. Teaching language relates the present to past traditions, conduct, culture, beliefs, values etc. Thereby generating intellectual, aesthetic views.

Selection and organization of linguistic materials :-

Materials are chosen on the basis of whether it is appropriate to students' interests and will stimulate a high level of personal interest. Important materials are often organized thematically and may be placed alongside linguistic materials which deal with similar themes.

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH SHORT STORY, LITERATURE AND GENERATING IDEAS WHILE TEACHING SHORT STORY:

Teaching a short story can be a different task for the teacher particularly because of its length, interwoven plots and subplots, climax, denouement, humour, irony, metaphors, theme, multilayered meaning etc. in contrast to other literary devices. However, a teacher may overcome the aforesaid difficulties through certain pre-reading and while reading strategies which would revive the interest and concentration back to the short story from time to time. The following strategies are specially aimed at generating ideas about different aspects of the short story.

A. Guessing the theme of short story and the students may be asked to guess the function and categories of the sentences, content, etc. This may be used as a pre-reading activity. Different students are expected to come up with various ideas regarding the aforesaid aspects.

B. Pre-Reading incidence as a whole reading activity the students may be asked to stop reading significant junctures of the narrative or episodes and predict the incident or episodes that might

follow. This activity can be most suitable for thriller short story though may be applied to other types as well.

C. **Reading and Evaluating Character development: -**

Having studied one or more characters to a certain extent, the students may be asked to evaluate the disposition of characters and predict their development or transformation if any by the end of the narrative. This can be conducted as a while reading activity.

The aforesaid strategies are expected to trigger imaginative faculty of students to a great extent and at the same time enjoy reading the short story.

DESIGNING TASK FOR TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH SHORT STORY.

Designing appropriate and effective tasks and activities forms an integral part of teaching language. The tasks and activities are the tools of achieving the objectives of teaching language and developing literary competence of the students. Hence, the task designer should consider the following while designing tasks for the language class.

- 1) One of the main aims in the class room should be taught the students to read language using the appropriate linguistic strategies. Hence, the tasks should be designed that they involved them not in reading for some practical purpose, for example to obtain information, but rather in analyzing a text in terms of what it might mean symbolically or physically.
- 2) Linguistic texts have a powerful function in raising moral and ethical concerns in the class room. The tasks and activities the teachers devise to exploit these texts should encourage the students to explore these concerns and connect them with the struggle for a better society.
- 3) Language provides wonderful sources materials for eliciting strong emotional response from the students. Hence, the tasks for a language should be devised in a fruitful way. So that they involve the learner as a whole person and provides excellent opportunities for the learners to express their personal opinions, reactions and feelings. These tasks should further generate discussion, controversy and critical thinking in the class room.
- 4) One of the main task in the class room is to pin point how far literary language deviates form ordinary language. The tasks should focus on the specialized use of language or the linguistics features of a literary texts.
- 5) Finally, one prime aim when using literature with the students is to help them unravel the many meaning in a text. Students often need guidance when exploring these multiple levels of meaning a linguistic text the teacher needs to devise materials and tasks which help them to learn the proper language.

The teacher would teach them different kinds of sentences from the perspective of meaning and structure e.g. declarative sentence/Assertive sentence, operative sentence, Imperative sentence, Interrogative sentence, Exclamatory sentence, Affirmative sentence, negative sentence (meaning) and simple sentence, complex sentence, compound sentence, complex compound sentence, multiple sentence etc. The students will learn discourse markers, logical connectors and the correct use of

punctuation marks. They will also know the different grammatical categories e.g. complement subjective & objective, adjunct, disjunct, conjunct etc.

Teaching the English language can be best done through the short story. The different aspects of the language must be taught in context not in isolation. The teacher would adopt the integrated approach (integration of reading, speaking & writing) as far as the teaching methodology is concerned. Appropriate and relevant tasks are set to teach the students the different aspects of language used in the short story. Then tasks include fill in blanks, match the columns, make sentences with words phrases. In this way students will acquire a good knowledge of the language.

SAMPLE TEACHING UNIT-1

The TENSE of a verb refers to the time when the action of the verb is performed.

Tense of a verb can be of three types :

Past, Present and Future.

Each type of tense has four forms :

Simple, continuous, Perfect and Perfect Continuous

1. A tiger was looking for something to eat.
2. The old woman was feeling very ill tempered that night.
3. Bholenath was looking for his donkey in the storm.
4. The drip drip is falling
5. Tiger is thinking for drip drip.

Text Book Class VI, BLOSSOMS, WBBSE, Lesson -1,

IT ALL BEGAN WITH DRIP DRIP - Alkha Shankar and Sharleen Mukundan.

Exercise :-

- a) Rai eats rice for lunch
- b) Rai is eating rice for lunch.
- c) Rai has eaten rice for lunch.
- d) Rai has been eating rice for lunch.

All four sentences show a particular time - the present. The action is a habitual one, or is still in progress, has just been completed or has been going on for a while.

The present tense of the verb refers to a state or an event that happens in the present time.

SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE :

Rai eats rice for lunch.

The verb eats suggests a habitual action - that the subject Rai eats rice regularly.

This sentence is said to be in the simple present tense.

- a) Tapasya ---- (sing) a song everyday.
- b) Moon --- (Teach) in English every day.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS TENSE

Rai is eating rice for lunch.

The verb is eating indicates that the action is in progress at the time of speaking .

The present continuous Tense is used for actions which are talking place at the time of speaking.

The present continuous tense has the form :

Subject + be + verb + ing. + object

- a) Rai (eat) rice for lunch.
- b) Moon (Teach) English every day.

SAMPLE TEACHING UNIT - 2 VOICE CHANGE

Voice is the form of the verb which indicates whether the subject does the work or something has been done to it.

There are two kinds of voice -

- a) Active Voice : When the subject of a sentence is the doer or actor, the verb is in Active Voice. It is so because the subject is active.
- b) When the subject of a sentence is acted upon, the verb is in Passive Voice. It is so because the subject is Passive.

Change of Pronoun :-

Subject - (before the verb) I, We, You, He, She, They,

Object - (After the verb) me, us, you, him, her, them.

Voice Change -

- 1) She was awakened by the little bird calling her at the top of his voice.
- 2) The bird was surprised when she carried him to the cage.
- 3) The bird was quite used to this, so he suspected nothing.

Text Book, Class VIII, BLOSSOMS, WBBSE.

Lesson- 5, PRINCESS SEPTEMBER - W. Somerset Maugham.

Exercise -

- 1) Tapasya does her work everyday.
- 2) She did her work everyday.
- 3) She has written the letter.
- 4) Moon will teach English.

SAMPLE TEACHING UNIT -3 TRANSFORMATION OF SENTENCES

Transformation of sentences refers to the conversion of sentences from one type to another without changing the meaning.

Example :

- 1) Swami knew how strict his father could be.
- 2) Swami hoped that his father would be made to see
- 3) He put it in an enveloped and sealed it.
- 4) Father snatched the letter away and tore it up.

Text Book, Class - X, BLISS, WBBSE, Lesson - 1, FATHER'S HELP - R.K. Narayan.

Exercise :-

- a) She want to learn a new language (Assertive Sentence)
Doesn't she want to learn a new language? (Interrogative Sentence)
- b) Mr. Parekh is a rich businessman (Simple Sentence)
Mr. Parekh is a businessman who is rich.
- c) R.N. Tagore is a great poet. He got Nobel Prize.
- d) David came home. He began to write.

SAMPLE TEACHING UNIT - 4

INTER CHANGING EXCLAMATORY AND ASSERTIVE SENTENCES. :

An exclamatory sentence can be changed to assertive by expressing the feeling as a statement. Words like alas, would that, how and what in the exclamatory sentence are not retained in the assertive sentence.

Example :

- 1) What a poor fruit vendor!
- 2) What impudence!
- 3) What a grimy fruit vendor!

Text Book, Class - IV, BLISS, WBBSE, LESSON - 10, THE PRICE OF BANANAS, Mulk Raj Ananda.

Exercise :

- a) The opening ceremony was spectacular
What a spectacular opening ceremony!
- b) How tall is that man!
That man is very tall.

SAMPLE TEACHING UNIT - 5

NARRATION AND REPORTING :-

1. "He is a very angry man"
2. "Have you no school today?"
3. "Does he always scold the students?"
4. "You are half an hour late".
5. "I have a headache."

Text Book, Class - X, BLISS, WBBSE, Lesson - 1, FATHER'S HELP, R.K. Narayan.

(Narration of Speech)

Two Kind -

- a) Direct Speech (or direct narration)

What a man says is kept as it is within a quotation ("") marks. A sentence containing such a quote is called the DIRECT SPEECH or DIRECT NARRATION.

b) Indirect Speech (or Indirect narration)

Sometimes the exact speech of a speaker is not repeated but reported. Such a speech is called Indirect Speech or Indirect Narration.

We use Direct Speech when we repeat someone's words and Indirect Speech when we use our own words to report what someone says.

Example:-

He said, "I am okay."

Mother said, "Are you ill?"

The teacher says, "Listen to me."

He said, "May you be happy."

Example:-

He said that he was okay.

Mother asked if I was ill.

The teacher says to listen to him.

He wished that I might be happy.

- i) The quote, starts with the capital letter preceded by a comma.
- ii) the indirect speech contains no quote mark, nor any comma.

DIRECT SPEECH (three parts)

The Speaker - He, Mother, The teacher

Reporting Verb - said, said, says,

Reported Speech - "I am OK.", "Are you ill?", "Listen to me."

CHANGE OF NARRATION (Statements (From direct to indirect))

Rules : i) The speaker and the reported verb remain unchanged.

ii) The comma and the quote after the reporting verb are replaced by that

In Conclusion, completing this writing, I would like to point out that to be the most obvious conclusion of the overall discussion, namely the tremendous educational potential of literature for the English Language Teaching through short story in general and the ELT classes in particular in West Bengal.

The teaching of English language can be adopted to the communicative approach through the use of short story. In the EFL classes offers variety of pedagogical activities and expands the communicative scope of foreign language teaching.

The integration of the study of language through literature in the curricular sets a series of question related to its value and implementation. The materials should set up contexts in which learners can express themselves, their own opinion, ideas, and attitudes as well as developing their language skills in class rooms situation that should be suitable and helpful for learners to communicate effectively.

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