



Interrelation between English language and literature: An overview

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Abstract

The present paper is a moderate attempt to examine the significance of interrelation between English language and Literature. Today mushroom growth of scope in English language is perceptible all over the world. The reason behind this constant expansion of scope of English language is, today, global market that has increased the significance of English language for the effective communication. In other way it can be narrated that, in so many parts of the world, English projects an image in popular imagination which is established through the media (electronic and social), advertising and so on. Its practical necessity is not much realized. This spread is accepted as natural, inevitable, neutral and fruitful. This can be known as 'English triumphalism'. But amidst this we cannot fail to praise the contribution of English literature in myriad ways. Both coexist, so we should realize how literature played and plays the active role in strengthening the position of English language in global society. Where English language is collective art of expression, literature is individual so none is less important. English Literature hoards the native aesthetic sources of speech which is very essential in spreading ardour of dialect. Literature presents the photocopy of contemporary society with all authenticity from the personal lance of poet/writer which can be experienced going through the works. Doing this appropriate words are set on the tongue of readers which can be used in brushing English language. Literature is treasure of situations, events, characters and so on which reveal before us real gestures, feelings and intonation which can be applied in learning English language. This way both can flourish together meeting the challenges of the global market. English 'fosters cultural opportunity and promotes a climate of international intelligibility'. English is widely taught and used around the world; it is a convenient language for communication across national boundaries and in a wide range of professions.

Keywords: triumphalism, imperialism, lingua franca, international intelligibility, 'litterae'

Introduction

As far as relationship between language and literature is concerned it can be illustrated that language is medium and literature is thought. Both coexist but to understand literature readers have to be familiar with pattern of social culture and value. Literature can be manifested in many languages with little change in thought. Despite it in case of unfamiliarity with socio- cultural pattern of country literature can be interpreted differently. That is why translation of any work in different language kills its genuineness. So to understand literature first of all one has to be familiar with original language of that society only then we can understand socio- cultural pattern and enjoy the original fervour of dialect. Prior to go in depth of discussion nature of literature can be illustrated briefly:

To define literature in words frame in clear cut way is really tough but in very simple way it can be illustrated that literature of particular age projects the real picture of society of that time on the wings of imagination. "Literature is the mirror of our lives in which we see the reflections of our lives. Literature, in its most comprehensive meaning, includes all the activities of human soul in general, or within particular sphere, period, country, or a language" (Nabila Tanvir). With imagination and creative writing literature comes in light. Literature is that form of writing which arouses our feelings of

the beautiful by the perfection of form or excellence of ideas or by both. Collins English dictionary defines literature as written materials such as poetry, novels, essays, etc. Especially works of imagination characterized by excellence of style and expression and by themes of general or enduring interest. Esther Lamba has defined literature as a term used to describe written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, literature is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is mostly used for the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction (Esther Lamba, in www.classicallit.about.com). When we try to understand the meaning of literature etymologically, it is derived from the Latin word 'litterae' which means 'letter'. Thus literature is made of letters. Literature provides holistic knowledge of society of the particular time as it brings forth content collected from various sources which are considered authentic and easily wins the belief of people. It is not confined only in written form only but is transferred generation to generation orally too. So literature is of two types:

Written Literature (prose, poetry, drama, novel, non-fiction)

Oral Literature (folk tales, folk songs)

The Term, literature, has been derived from the Latin word, 'litterae' which means 'letter'. So literature means "things made from letters." But it is also not confined to only publish

works. Unpublished work also may be literature which is called oral literature. Like any other branch of studies, literature is also divided into four major classes namely poetry, prose, fiction, and non-fiction. It may also be divided according to historical periods, genres, and political influences. The important historical periods in English literature are the Renaissance period, old English period, Middle English period, Shakespearean and Elizabethan period, 18th century Restoration period, 19th century Victorian period, and the 20th century modern period. There are also many important movements in English literature. Romanticism, Feminism, post-colonialism, post-structuralism, post modernism, psycho-analysis, Marxism etc. are the important movements in English literature.

After having much knowledge about the nature of literature we definitely move to know language. The word, language, has been originally derived from Latin word, 'Lingua' which stands for 'tongue'. Language is related to cognitive faculty which enables us to learn and use systems of complex communication. Language came in existence when two person felt need to talk. Present time people needed a common language to convey their thoughts and ideas to others. So, they corporated a sign language which soon became very common. So it can be said that language is mode of expression with words and sentences including sounds. Each community has developed its language in accordance to its need. With the development of human race, the language also developed and kept on changing. This is the reason there are many languages and impact of dialect can be seen in speaking of denizens. Language is arbitrary. So with passing of time and due to changing civilization it changes. It has its grammar which checks the correctness of language. Besides it language has its phonology which decides its way of articulation. Phonetics decides language tone, pitch, intonation etc. Morphology, word- formation, sentence patterns are involved in language. Application of with gestures and feelings we can learn better from study of literature.

Thus where literature is thought, language is mode of revealing thoughts. In absence of mode thoughts cannot be revealed. To understand literature, we should be familiar with language concerned. Only then we can feel the originality of thoughts. In learning language, we can learn only formal language, cannot feel the warmth of particular language. This way literature and language coexist. Through literature we are confronted with both formal and informal language and get chance to cultivate habit of communicating in natural way. We derive pleasure in studying literature when we are acquainted with the language concerned. In failing we cannot recognize author's sense, feeling, tone and intention. Study of literature in particular language confirms status of language either language is dead or live. We can trace the change between earlier and current language. Any literature can be declared to be rich or poor depending upon the correctness of the language in which it is created. Interpretation of thought totally depends on knowledge of language as authors' thoughts are sometimes distorted in hands of readers and it kills authors' thoughts. As it is only author who can understand the depth of their thoughts issued from his/ her imagination and creativity.

If we see the Indian Playwrights, novelists and poets we

receive the Indian fragrance in their language. Indian can enjoy and understand better than non- native readers. Authors' thoughts are embellished with pattern of social value and convention and if readers are not of Indian taste, their enjoy are interrupted. Hence if we are familiar with Indian social and cultural patterns we can understand Chettan Bhagat, Girish Karnad, Amitav Ghosh, VS Naipual, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Nayantara Sehgal, Manju Kapur, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni etc. Studying these we can differentiate their English and native English writers. The very fact is, study of literature increases our efficiency and builds our confidence. As literature can be helpful in conferring many opportunities to learners of learning language in so many ways. We can have role play, citation of poetry, comprehensive study of passages/ stanzas analyse the literary works from study of literature. So it can be stated that literature and language have unbreakable bond. As for as English learning is concerned, help from literature is beyond description. Without study of English literature, we can learn English language but cannot have sound and prosperous English language. That is why elite class of English literature considers English language of general communication sketching and broken English. As genuine fragrance of English language does not come out of general English. But in the global world many new trends immerged to flourish English language. Consequently, millions new words came in existence and words embedded in literature are obsolete but our modern literature is showing this change too. So literature's language is being updated in accordance to occurring changes in language.

Relation between language and literature can be traceable in the language of literature. Literature of particular age reveals the language in trend in that time. Generally, language which we have seen in literature has been ornamental language which is called literary language but in the modern age focus on language is shifted from literary to common. Today it is considered that a successful writer projects the burning issues in the language of ordinary people. So that majority can read and give their opinion. This will happen when language of literature will match too. Since the literature is the expression of human thoughts, its content is limitless because the thoughts and desire of human beings to communicate with one another is limitless. The subject matter of literature is as wide as human experience itself. So the themes of literature have at once an infinite variety and an abiding constancy. They can be derived from myth, history, contemporary events or they can be a pure invention of the writer. In weaving this texture of literature vital role is of language. Selection of correct level of popular language secures the success of literary work. How language changes with the situation and condition students can learn by study of literature. In nutshell it can be described that literature has two aspects—the first is enjoyment and appreciation and the second is the analysis and exact description which is great source of learning. "In the broadest sense, perhaps, literature means simply the written records of the race, including all its history and sciences, as well as its poems and novels; in the narrow sense literature is the artistic record of life, and most of our writing is excluded from it...." (William J. Long, English literature). If we examine Indian

writing in English, we encounter the substantial pictorial description of the pattern of Indian culture. It reveals the reality in the language spoken by general people in India. Here it will not be irrelevant to quote the lines of Half Girlfriend by Chetan Bhagat as he is so popular among his readers for his selection of them and language. Husband of Riya, female leading character, makes her realize that she cannot live her life and pursue her dream on her terms. We talk about gender equality but we do not follow in the practice. Even today men think that women have no right to ask any question. Riya has noted his behaviour down in her journals,

He came home drunk. He tried to hit me.
'Why didn't you take my call?' he yelled.
She further adds, 'It's midnight, Rohan. What kind of business meetings happen so late?'
'Shut the fuck up, bitch. What do you know about work?'
When she tries to make him realize about the reason of her being there.
'For your information. I'm twenty. I was studying in College. I left to marry you'.
You left it to live like a queen'. (200)

His reply depicts the inartificial way of reacting with wife in India. How an able and talented girl can bear such hard flow of anyone. Husband and wife are for each other and they are equal. The novelist has dexterously expounded thousands of Indian Riya. One can examine how section of words go with situation.

Literature is expression of thoughts which has universal appeal as it covers all beyond the shackles of boundary of nation. It deals with human emotion- love, hate, fear, belief, joy and sorrow. It can be explored in many languages crossing boundary and race. Under cultural studies provokes us to understand culture and value of various places in various language and it should definitely be disseminated. In doing so language plays vital role. Thoughts can be revealed in many ways of expression. So to practice particular language literature concerned must be helpful to great extent. Literature is very near to our real life so it shows reality with beauty. Here it will be pertinent to quote the lines of William J. Long to understand literature:

Literature is the expression of life in words of truth and beauty; it is the written record of man's spirit, of his thoughts, emotions, aspirations; it is the history, and the only history, of the human soul. It is characterized by its artistic, its suggestive, its permanent qualities. Its object, aside from the delight it gives, is to know man, that is, the soul of man rather than his actions; and since it preserves to the race the ideals upon which all our civilization is founded, it is one of the most important and delightful subjects that can occupy the human mind.

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