



Pedagogy for teaching of English literature at graduate and post-graduate levels in higher education

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Abstract

The pedagogy of English literature is the study of how to teach English literature to the students, with sturdy stress on utilizing English literature to improve linguistic and critical thinking skills. It includes thoughtful comprehension of the nature of the English language, grasping the four important skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also involves using numerous teaching approaches such as pattern practice, imitation, and modern resources like multimedia. Moreover, the approach can also include critical etymology (relating to the origin and historical development of words and their meanings), morphology (relating to the form or structure of things), linguistic (language) pedagogy, which connects teaching with democratic values and social justice. The objective of this paper is to understand and explain the methodology of teaching of English literature at UG and PG level in colleges, universities and in institutions of higher education in India.

Objectives: To understand how to use pedagogy for teaching of literature students at UG and PG level, Explain the importance of pedagogy for study of English literature in higher education.

Methodology: Methodology for this paper is descriptive and explanatory. Paper is comprehensively qualitative in nature. Analysis, explanation, description and even comparison are used.

Keywords: Pedagogy, morphology, language, linguistics, methodology, english literature etc

Introduction

According to the statistics, “every year there is an increment of around 40 percent in the people who are coming in the industry to learn English Language” (Edward, 2000) [2]. This suggests importance of language in life and such can be learnt with a good teacher who is updated in knowledge and innovative in pedagogy. “Reports that non-native speakers of English comprise more than two thirds of its potential speakers, so it can be argued that English, in international setting, doesn’t belong to any group of people” (Crystal 1992). This is a world language and we must focus of its learning because it will develop personality and help in communicating which is important at the global, local and national levels.

“A person needs to acquire various tools including morphology, phonology, syntax, semantics and wide-ranging words to successfully use the language” (Lightfoot & David, 2010) [9]. Such skills can be possible while learning language with an expert and no one is more expert than a good teacher.

It is important to learn English language and classroom are best places where language can be learnt. At the present English language has become so important that learning it is essential not only for self but for country as well.

Review of Literature and Discussion

“Method is a systematic, predictable procedure of teaching. According to him, it includes selection and ordering of teaching contexts, a specification of the roles of the teacher as well as of the learners in the classroom encounter, a specification of the types and functions of the teaching materials in a given situation. Also, they agree that in one approach, there may be many methods.”(Ubahakwe 1991)

The above definitions stresses the importance of methods and the role a teacher and students need to play in this context. Operative pedagogy for BA and MA students of English literature and Linguistics comprises assimilating philological and literary skills, using various methods like the reflection, demonstration, feedback, view, impression and linguistic approaches. The development of thinking critically through activities like seminars to be developed in students is its primary objective.

“An informed teacher is expected to have knowledge of salient aspects of various approaches and methods of language teaching and adopt and adapt what works in her classroom to create an engaging environment for language learning”(https://egyankosh.ac.in). Teachers can combine learning of English Language with English Literature to build language proficiency and understanding of culture among students of English literature. This can be called assimilative method. Students will be able to learn about their own culture and other cultures. It also develops their linguistic and communicative skills by participating in it.

“Language to be the light of the mind. In today era, the basic knowledge of a single or more language has become crucial. Language has become the major tool of communication between countries, cultural groups, varies companies and organizations, communities and friends. Wittgenstein says “The limit of my language is the limit of my world” (Mill John Stuart).

This approach puts emphasis on language learning. In this method grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure are also stressed. It is helpful in developing communication skills and understanding of the text in different ways. It encourages pupils to find connection of the text in their own lives. This helps in integrating oneself to literature and

learning becomes motivated and easy. It is called a method of personal response.

“A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates” (Bloch B. 1942). Students are given opportunities to examine literary features of the text. They search for literary devices such as imagery, symbolism, structure, and tone. By doing so they learn to appreciate a work of art and find deep meaning. This can also help them to look for themes, ideas, concepts, etc. in a literary text. They develop critical and analytical powers in them with such type of reading. Such an approach is called stylistic approach.

“Literature is a powerful medium in the hands of creative writers to modulate and modify or change the societal framework. It cannot be created in a vacuum, and has invariably the basis of socio-cultural, political conditions. It might be seen as an individual’s perspective on the social, historical, political, economic and cultural patterns of the times”(<https://www.wbnsou.ac.in>).

It helps people to find the ways of life in it. Literature is society written on the pages. A good teacher helps pupils understand life through literature. It will help to live in a society, follow what needs to be done and remain an integral part of society, family, government etc. After reading a work of art students delve deep and try to find moral and philosophical dimensions of such a work they have just read. It not only develops moral powers but also enhances philosophical outlook in students. Furthermore, it can help students to deal with practical life situation in a calm and composed manner and get success. This method is either moral or philosophical approach. It is the most important for practical life at the present.

There are various issues that teachers of English Literature at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels face. Let’s discuss in detail.

Challenges Faced by Students

“In rural area English language is difficult to learn because of firstly their mother tongue is not English. Lack of prior knowledge to teachers and they are untrained faculty irrelevant text books/ syllabus Outdated Teaching Methods Most of the students study English from the examination point of view, so they are not able to produce even a single sentence without grammatical error. Furthermore sufficient practice is not given to students to learn a language.” (Mathad Shaila M. 289)

Scholars frequently come from various linguistic milieus, and they face problems in their communicative English skills (listening, speaking reading, and writing. And teachers cannot maintain individual attention in a class of 20-40 students. Students from rural and far-flung areas don’t have most needed prior knowledge of the subject which further intensifies the problems of learning languages and literature. Several students prepare English solely for examination point of view, aiming only to pass the course rather than developing a deep appreciation for the subject. The supremacy of digital and social media content has also led to attention problems, which makes it difficult to motivate and make interest of the students possible teaching and learning.

“Language acquisition is a typical human trait as non-humans cannot communicate using language” (Kosslyn, Stephen, Osherson and Daniel, 1995) ^[7] Students who are not familiar with English culture find it difficult to get engaged in classroom teaching. They feel themselves in an alien environment for some time. Because of their mother tongue is not the same and characteristics of literature also differ which creates problem in understating and identifying with the subject. A widespread subject matter in some instructive systems is the dependent on memorization of notes, which hinders the growth of critical and logical thinking skills necessary for literary analysis at all levels.

Challenges That are Faced by Teachers

Many teachers of English literature lack specific training. They are far away from effective, innovative methodologies which are very much required for teaching literature. There are almost no opportunities for ongoing professional development. Programmes of workshops, seminars, hands on and training programmes are not held in far off areas which are also some noteworthy problems.

Overloaded classrooms and a heavy workload make it challenging for teachers. Teachers cannot provide individual feedback and manage the class effectively. This is especially where we have oversize enrollment and less teacher ratio.

Institutional and External Challenges

The existing syllabus in some universities may be theory-based and not updated to meet the contemporary, career-oriented requirements of students. The exam system often focuses on testing memory rather than practical language or critical thinking skills. There is lack of analytical and critical testing.

Many educational institutions, especially in rural areas and also in big cities, lack basic services such as language laboratories and trained instructors, well-equipped libraries and their smooth functioning, and modern teaching materials (computers, projectors), forcing teachers to rely on traditional chalk-and-board methods.

“Mother tongue influence is one of the current problems in foreign language teaching” (Brown 1994). The strong influence of students' native languages often leads to teachers to translate texts in mother tongue, which can hinder the development of English proficiency and the nuanced understanding of literary works. This is the biggest problem.

How to Solve Problems for Learners

“Unless the program reflects students real levels of proficiency it risks producing “a mismatch between the text selected and students language ability” which would inevitably have a negative effect on the course implementation” (Krishnasamy 139). Students naturally face problems with regard to proficiency in English, cultural unfamiliarity with texts books, lack of interest, and difficulty with critical analysis.

To enhance Language Proficiency we must integrate explicit language instruction (grammar, vocabulary) within the literature curriculum, especially at the UG level. Students must be made familiar with writing tasks which are analytical and brisk to engage them. It will help in building vocabulary and strengthening language proficiency. Provide academic English support for students as they enter higher education.

Select various and applicable texts, including contemporary and world literature that connect to students' personal experiences and current social issues it will help in motivating and engaging students in classrooms and outside. "The teacher should introduce pronunciation of words in English in their day-to-day interaction" (Gazzalie & Jahane, 2019) [4]. Show film adaptations of texts via media. Audio recordings can help in pronunciation, and virtual field trips to bring texts to life and cater to different learning styles. These can help both students and teachers. Systematize the syllabus as it should revolve around issues which are current (e.g., identity, justice, freedom of thought and expression, good citizenship) to draw connections across different works.

"The English communication is an advanced skillfulness that can be achieved through relentless drill and constant exposure to English language speaking people. The resources available for English language should be identified and encouraging atmosphere should be provided for practicing and learning the English language" (Davis Daniel and Judie Arulappan 59). Give emphasis to close reading techniques and the analysis of literary devices, it will help in analyzing stories by using mind rather than memory. Employ seminars and structured group discussions to encourage students to voice opinions and support them with textual evidence. It will develop proficiency in language and help students to learn how to express their views freely and voice in favour of justice. Introduce various literary critical theories (structuralism, post-structuralism, formalism, feminism, post-colonialism, etc.) to provide frameworks for analysis and prevent biased readings. It will help in becoming reasonable citizens.

Difficulties For Teachers

Teachers often struggle with large class sizes, time constraints, and lack of training in modern pedagogy, rigid curricula, and insufficient resources. There should be strategies that help to overcome these problems which should be cooperated by both government (institutions) and public. Shift from teacher-led lectures to a more learner-centered is the need of the present day teaching and learning. Activity-based approach involving collaborative learning and project-based assignments should be stressed. Let students think and work but be vigilant always what students are doing. Utilize a mix of teaching methods (e.g., grammar-translation, communicative language teaching, oral approaches) depending on the context and student needs. It will be helpful always.

"Teachers who receive multilingual education training report increased capability and confidence in supporting diverse learners. Studies show that in-service training specifically helps teachers build resources and strategies that directly improve the attainment of students without the language of instruction" (<https://www.linkedin.com/>). Provide regular training to teachers so that teaching can be effective, especially in integrating technology and new pedagogical approaches in classrooms. Encourage peer collaboration and mentorship among faculty members to share knowledge and expertise. Make sure sufficient resources and facilities are available. There should be well-equipped libraries and appropriate classroom sizes in every structure.

Teachers should design curriculum to ensure alignment with student needs and the integration of both language and

literature skills. Implement diverse evaluation methods (e.g., portfolios, creative projects, oral presentations, discussions, peer reviews, mock parliaments) to provide a comprehensive evaluation of student progress beyond traditional exams. Provide specific, meaningful, and timely feedback on student work to foster a growth mindset.

Strategies for Classroom Teaching and Learning in UG and PG Classes

"The teacher can develop a variety of techniques to facilitate the teaching and learning of literature. His techniques would be determined by a number of factors *viz*: the age of the learners, the environment where the teaching/learning takes place, the text to be read, availability of material resources and of course the time available to the class" (Ikonne Ugochi Happiness 77). A good teacher always gives students opportunities to participate in teaching and learning process. Students are helped to ask questions and rather than just accepting predictable responses. It helps in two way communication which is important for engagement. Teacher must guide students, providing answers, remaining very kind and accessible to his/her students.

Teaching is a dynamic process. Teacher has to be much updated and must employ a combination of approaches in a classroom. A teacher can use lecture method, group discussions, online discussions, and presentations for just a short period of time on an issue to cater to different learning styles.

Teacher can break down complex literary texts and projects into practicable steps to help students as they can progress their skills. Such a strategy is called Scaffold instruction method. This helps students to learn easily and in a comfortable manner. "Using simplified tasks according to the language level of the test takers and scaffolding the input in a test situation, is considered an appropriate strategy and, hence, totally justified as a mechanism for authentic/performance assessment" (Lewkowicz 2000) [8].

Teacher can help students to prove their analytical, critical and writing skills. Teacher allows students to see how to approach complex literary tasks. This will help students in analysis, description and explanation of different ideas in a literary text. This strategy is called Model skills tactic.

"A range of formats are used in order to assess the performance of students allowing them to demonstrate that they are able to construct meaning and use language skills appropriately" (Stiggins 1987). Literature is an area where students get an ample opportunity to know themselves. By reading about different characters students learn varied characteristics. It helps in collecting features from different cultures which can help in sustaining oneself in multicultural settings. Teacher can help students to reproduce ideas from the texts on their own understanding. It will develop writing skill, understanding, critical and analytical ability in them. Acting a play can help students to realize the character and understand the theme as well. "Plays are meant primarily to be acted but because of the emphases placed in the theoretical answers in literature examinations, the teachers have resorted to the approach of reading drama texts and de-emphasize the practical performance" (Ikonne Ugochi Happiness 76).

"Utilizing digital media as a pedagogical tool for English instruction presents a multitude of benefits in the contemporary landscape influenced by technology. It facilitates involvement and interactivity in the educational

experience” (Raju B Meshak, U Raju 1). Teacher can help students to use digital and multimedia, online resources, and social networking sites to make learning more dynamic and relevant. It helps students to access different sources but a teacher must be very meticulous for separating material and using what is required and it is a big challenge here.

Assessment and Planning for Teaching of English Literature at UG and PG Level

“A part of the social processes that mediate the development of intellectual abilities, construction of knowledge, and formation of students’ identities” (Shepard, 2000). Teacher can use diverse valuation tools and techniques to evaluate students’ learning and provide them with clear feedback. It will be helpful in correction. Not only the aspect of language, but thinking, grammar, sentence structure etc. will also come under scanner. This process will gear up the progress of students. Teacher can give feedback by setting some multiple choice questions which will help in judging how students think and what can be the next step of the teacher.

An effective teacher is always prepared. Teacher must plan his lessons in advance. These plans must align with the objectives of the lesson. Student’s needs of syllabus must be primary but linguistic skills must also be considered.

Result and Findings

A teacher needs to be updated in skill of use of pedagogy in the class.

Regular assessment is very crucial to evaluate the progress of students.

English literature is a way to learn about life such as morals, messages, future planning for life and much more.

Besides learning about the different characters and developing life one can learn required skills to master language as well.

Conclusion

The pedagogy for Study of English literature highlights moving beyond a mere summary. Teacher must focus on fostering different life skills in students. Pupils must get opportunities to learn analytical skill, thinking critical and learn soft skills. They gain awareness of different cultures, and thus acquire personal growth. Effective methods used help scholars manufacture information, develop analytical skills, and make real life connections with what they read. Pedagogy should be updated on regular basis.

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