
Literature _ Significance in Language Learning

Ahmed Hameed Ubeid

College of Education

The study of Literature

Within the total field of education, the study of literature can make its maximum contribution in the following ways:

1.Skills: We have already touched upon the close relationship between literature and language. Language skills are of four types: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The inclusion of literature in the curriculum helps to train students in the skills of reading and for sure a little in listening as well as speaking and writing.

A student listens to literature read aloud by the teacher (or on records or tapes) and to the discussions that the literature stimulates in the class. He speaks when he acts in plays, when he reads poems and when he takes an active parts in discussions trying to defend his opinion and points of view. Because literature is interesting, he wants to talk about it. It can provide plenty of interesting opportunities for writing too. A learner may oblige himself to recall and use certain patterns or terms according to the subject he is discussing. Thus, exchanging with others he will listen, check and practice new vocabularies and uses.

2. knowledge: Literature does not of course concentrate on a particular area of knowledge, as for example does chemistry or history. Literature we can say for some reasons is concerned with all aspects of man and the universe in their entirety. Certainly every work of literature is about something, often about many things; and the more a person reads, the better-stocked will his mind be with knowledge. Knowledge, of course, is a complex conception; we can analyze it, and the way it is acquired from literature. In a number of ways. There are, for examples, the facts that are actually encountered and explained in the work of literature ;there are also the facts that we are impelled to discover from other sources in order to understand particular situations or problems that occur in literature .Sooner or later ,students

come to realization that separates facts in themselves are less important than the way in which they support and illustrate each other. Most important of all is the realization, which comes to all that the facts worth knowing are only facts about things but also the facts about the life. the facts about life include not only the answers to the questions: who is who? And who did what? But also all the answers to such questions as what are human beings like? what can be expected of them? How do they behave? what is my own aim in life?

While it would be foolish to claim that literature has all the answers to all these questions, it may safely be claimed that it has quite a few. Most important of all, perhaps, it can stimulate its students to ask relevant questions, so that they are more likely to arrive at a true understanding of the problems, whether by the reading of literature or by other methods of investigation.

A special kind of knowledge which every society must foster is that connected with its own culture. The word culture is used lavishly nowadays, with many different meanings and implications. Here we use it to signify what is peculiarly characteristics of a particular community, including its organizations, laws, customs, art, religion and so on its totality. It is important in any system of education to impart to each individual a comprehensive insight in to his own culture, for this gives him pride, self-confidence and a sense of belonging. Some of this knowledge is transmitted in the family, in places of worship and some in various parts of the school curriculum. Literature, however, can often fill in any gap and weld the whole into a meaningful picture.

Nowadays we live more and more in one world, "global village" as it has been called and this remains true regardless of various political divisions. Improved communications are helping us to develop an international culture, and one of the tasks of education is to acquaint us with widest range of human achievements without destroying pride in our indigenous culture. Studies in literature, if wisely undertaken, will bring us into contact with some of the world's great minds and personalities, the great teachers and thinkers of all ages. We could manage to live without knowledge of such things and such people, but having made the acquaintance, we could not wish

to live without them. Without some acquaintance with the total field of human culture, we should often find ourselves baffled by what other people are talking and writing about.

3. Development. We cannot for long think of education only in terms of abstract like skill and knowledge for, as every teacher must be aware, every student is an individual, with his own particular personality ,his own abilities ,his own problems, his own rate of development .It is important therefore to see the whole of education as a process of development in the individual .yet ,while the individual is ,as the word suggests, a complex unity ,it is possible to see in him a number of different faculties. For some of these can at times be underdeveloped or over developed .they all ,however ,must be developed in harmony if he is to realize his fullest potential and make the most useful contribution to the affairs of his generation. The principal faculties to be trained are the sensory ,the intellectual ,the feelings, the social , and some would probably add the religious sense. For each of these literature can provide suitable materials and encouragement. It can be urged too that better than any other subject, literature provides opportunities for the development of all these faculties in relation to each other ,which comes very near to the aim of the fullest education as follows:

a-The senses : The study of literature can be used to extend the range of perceptions of all the classic senses ,of sight ,hearing ,taste, scent, and touch. Many writers have themselves been men of sensitiveness and refinement ,who have sought to convey their understanding to the rest of mankind. Following their insights and interpreting the words they have used ,the student will be led to recognize an ever-extending range of perceptions and distinctions. **b-The intellect :** The training of the intellect is often thought to be the special realm of non literary subjects such as mathematics and science ; this is a view that should be strenuously challenged. While it is true that those subjects demand strictly controlled, the intellectual and logical procedures. There is the very greatest need in the world today in developing societies as much as others for the application of logical and rational methods to vast ranges of non-scientific problems and in those field is the study of literature, if rightly guided ,can

provide an excellent training. The operation of the rational faculties as opposed to such alternatives as guesswork, impulse, habit, custom, can be as well illustrated and practiced in the study of literature as in any other field. The logical process depends on such things as accurate perception ,precise interpretation of language ,the grouping and classification of data, the during of correct induction and deduction ,judgments of various kinds and the formulation of appropriate courses of action. No student on entering a secondary school is expected to confront all these weighty responsibilities. From the very beginning ,however teachers of literature can encourage respects for facts, distinguishing between the evidence for an opinion ,recognizing incorrect methods of argument, and so on.

c-The feeling : "The culture of the feeling" , "The training of the emotion" is more frequently associated with the study of literature and perhaps needs little defense, yet even those who believe in it ,do not always make clear what they mean by it .while there are many phenomena in human life which can best be dealt with rational procedures (shall I go by bus or train? Shall I do this or now or next year ?...etc, there are also those which ,over and above intellectual recognition, demand some kind of emotional response. For example the sight of the sea breaking upon a rocky coast demands our indignation ,whereas the sight demands our awe and admiration ,and we should say that any one who failed to make normal response was less than human.

d-Social awareness: A newly born infant has no conception of the world apart from his needs, and all his activities are directed towards the satisfaction of his personal and selfish requirements. The process of growing up for the human individual is a very long one ,especially when it is connected with the recognition and appreciation of other people and of course this is often quite a painful process, involving conflicts, clashes and friction of many kinds. A successfully educated person is the one who has achieved an attitude of respect towards all other people in the world ,which include at first his family his friends his village his tribe but then beyond that all other tribes nations and races he may encounter in the world. A mature attitude is based on understanding and interest,and express itself in tolerance and friendliness. To be effective ,this understanding must embrace all aspects of the ways of other people

including their language, work, behaviour, customs religion and so on. Literature by all means can support this attitude to get its goal.

e-The religious sense: This may not at first appear to be a topic on which many busy people will wish to spend much time. Others find that they can understand manage their daily life only if their thoughts and actions are based on some underlined system of beliefs. These may be thought of in many different ways, involving religious concepts, or other kinds of philosophical doctrine. It is true enough that whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not all our thoughts and actions are based on some assumptions, and intelligent human beings will wish to base their lives on better rather than on worse foundations. All we need to add is that teachers who see the need for the exploration of fundamental questions will find abundant material in the realms of literature, for most imaginative writers have been extremely interested in such problem. However, students should not assume that every author is in a position of the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Some authors argue passionately for certain beliefs :others are more concerned with attacking and reforming: always there is a need for the critical assessment of what any particular author seems to be advocating . As a result one may come so close to a fact that mastery of any language is something that grows and expands in each individual by recognizable stages. Similarly, works of literature involve many shades of language complexity and sophistication based not only on range of subject-matter ,but on other factors such as the author's own way of grasping the subjects he deals with, the literary conventions prevailing at the time he is writing ,and the kind of reader he assumes himself to be writing for.

To be successful the teacher of language – learning may develop the skill of selecting literature the language of which is in a suitable relation to his students' capacity. The teacher concerned with the wider educational possibilities of literature teaching and learning. Finding out what is easy to be tackled and understood besides what is interesting of literary information and passages or stories , the learner may hit birds with a stone in the process of learning. i.e. what is scientific(language) can be

mixed with that is fictional (literature) to get the purpose of mastering spoken and written language.

Works cited

- Al-Hamash, Khalil and Younis, Hamadi. **Principles and Techniques of Teaching English as a Second Language**. Al-Mosul University ,1985.
- Gurrey, P. **Teaching English as a foreign Language** .London: Lowe and Brydone LTD.,1969.
- Lado, Brobert. **Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach**. USA: Megraw.Hill,Inc.,1964.
- Moody,H .**The Teaching of Literature in Developing Countries**. London: Longman Group LTD.,1971.
- www british council org . jo
- www ielts. org. skills