



Investigating the Role of Teaching Literature in Developing Secondary School Students' Speaking Skills

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Abstract:

This study aims at showing the importance of teaching literature in developing secondary school students speaking skills in Khartoum. The data were collected from a random sample of teachers of English Language working in both public and private schools in Khartoum. A questionnaire was given to 30 teachers of English at secondary schools in order to collect the data. Descriptive analytical method was conducted so as to analyze the data. The analysis of the questionnaire has shown the following result; Literature plays essential roles in developing speaking skills among student at secondary school as well as universities, the researcher recommends that English language syllabus should based on literature.

Keywords: Literature, Speaking Skills, Communicative approach.

المستخلص:

أجريت هذه الدراسة بغرض الكشف عن دور " تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي في تنمية مهارة التخاطب لدى طلاب المدارس الثانوية بولاية الخرطوم كما قدمت أهمية تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي في المرحلة الثانوية كواحدة من أهم الوسائل التي تؤدي إلى تحسين مهارة التخاطب ومناقشة الأسباب التي أدت إلى تدني مستوى التخاطب . بالإضافة الي توضيح أهمية التخاطب عن طريق الأدب الإنجليزي كما تحتوي الدراسة على تعريف الأدب والاستراتيجيات وطرق التواصل عبر تدريس مهارة التخاطب عن طريق الأدب .
اتخذت الباحثة منهجاً اعتمد على الاستبانة كأداة للبحث اختيرت عينة من مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية بمختلف مدارس ولاية الخرطوم. اعتمدت الدراسة على تحليل المعلومات ومناقشتها عن طريق الإحصاء التحليلي وبعد الدراسة والتحليل خرجت الدراسة بالتأكيد على أهمية الأدب الإنجليزي ودورها الحيوي في تحسين مهارة التخاطب وضرورة إعادة الأدب الإنجليزي في منهج اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية .والتوصيات التي خرجت بها الباحثة هي أهمية تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي الذي يساهم في تنمية مهارة التخاطب والبحث عن العلاقة بين تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي وتدريب اللغة من أجل تنمية مهارة التخاطب .

Introduction

Languages in general are spoken rather than written so practicing the language in its four skills is useful and helpful when we come to speak . The purpose of introducing literature in the academic syllabus mainly in secondary schools. These skills can also be developed by speaking about what they read . The students can make use of learning a foreign language by speaking the language written in that literature. No doubt the absence of literature in

secondary school for a long time is one of the reasons of declining of speaking skill .

Most teachers also neglect the discussion in the syllabus . these question help the student to improve speaking skill . More over speaking skill has a very small part in the syllabus so teacher concentrate on other skill rather than speaking skill and they do not give enough time to the student to speak . Besides student fear to speak so it is the role of teacher to encourage them to talk .



Literature also gives enjoyment of speaking the language if we are able to retell what we read. It's very important in building the skills which are developed through studying literature. There is a great relationship between language and literature, language is defined as the system of human expressions by means of word in speech or reading, and the word literature means any work which is of artistic value.

3.Aims of the study

1\This study aims at showing the importance of teaching literature in developing secondary school students speaking skill.

2\Explaining the methods of teaching literature in developing secondary school students speaking skill.

4. Significance of the study

This study shed light in the role of teaching literature in developing teaching literature that contributes to the significant role play of language learning to students. It helps students to gain some interesting clues to help modify ideas and techniques for teaching literature in language learning. The aim behind this study to promote speaking skill for Secondary School student as well as universities. This study may encourage teachers to use literature in language learning process.

5.Statement of the problem

Throughout observation most of the students have problems in speaking skills which is considered as the most important skill in the language. This study focuses on the problems of secondary students in speaking skills, most students usually fail to express themselves in correct and accurate language, this is due to the absence of speaking skill in the classrooms.

6.Questions of the study

1) Does literature enhance the speaking skill for secondary school students?

2) To what extent will teaching literature expand students knowledge needed for speaking the language?

7. Hypotheses of the study

1) Teaching literature enhances speaking skill for secondary school students

2) Teaching literature enriches the student's vocabulary, pronunciation and communication.

8.Methodology of the study:

A quantitative research will be conducted according to the descriptive analytical method. The researcher used a questionnaire as a tool for collecting data. The sample was the teachers of English Language in Khartoum, Sudan.

The questionnaire distributed to thirty teachers of English Language, whom were chosen randomly, from different schools. The sample were from both governmental and private schools.

9. Delimitations of the study :

This study will be concerned with secondary school English Language Teachers in Khartoum locality, 2020. It investigated the role of teaching literature in developing secondary school students speaking skills.

10.Review of Relevant Literature:

1.Definitions of literature

A group of teachers from all over the world were each asked to write down a definition of literature. "literature is a kind of feelings and thoughts in black and white". "Literature is a world of fantasy, horror and feelings. Literature means to meet a lot of people, to know others' different points of view, ideas, thoughts, minds, to know our selves better".

"Literature is the mirror of life, our lives and all the subjects matter or element of literature, also we can get the touch of our lives through literature. Also it may be considered as "a subject that provides the students with real experiences interactions with the society where the language is spoken". (Lazer. G 2001 - P. 11-14).

2. Language and Literature

Ball (1977:77) argues that "awareness of language variety can be an important prerequisite for responding sensitively to literary language use". Literature work cannot be done without language or at least some language items. Also language itself cannot be used regularly and completely without some literary work. *Language is used by almost everybody in all sorts of communication is everyday situation. The result of this situation is that we can never separate literature entirely from concepts, because we normally use language, the same language that occurs, translates and analyses. Literature and language are closely related and this is a fact. Literature is constituted by language and it represents one of the most recurred uses of language.*

(C.J Burmfit and B.A. Carter 1986. P. 137-159).

3. Communicative approach:

The communicative approach has a linguistic background and like other approaches it has methodological basis (Brumfit , 1983 : 90) states two assumptions that underlie it " the first assumption is that we are concerned in the classroom with language use , not language knowledge." " The second is the view that we can learn

language most effectively by using it in realistic situations ".

Emphasizing the use of the new language , (juric , 1989 : 48) points out that " there are two main characters of communicative teaching .

1- The students and the teacher use only L2 to communicative with one another .

2- The teachers uses a lot of communicative activities .

In fact communicative language teaching emphasizes the active use of the new language .William Collins (1987:26) asserts that:

" Communicative approach means study the ability to communicate, or give information by using the language to other living things using signals such as speech".

4. What is a communicative activity?

According to Mathews, Alan (1986:210) "A communicative activity is an activity which fills a communication gap".

Through the transfer of information gap or the exchange of opinions aimed to resolve an opinion gap i.e. comparison between marriage in Sudan and Britain there are some differences. In Britain the bride pays for the marriage expenses while in Sudan the Groom pays the dowry. There are many activities of teaching speaking skills.

5. Role play:

Role play is the way of bringing situations from real life into the classroom. When we use role play we ask students to be different persons. It is also an aspect of simulation. A whole situation is simulated in the classroom and the participants adapt roles which belong to it.



Role playing (i.e. dramatization) helps to bring the language to life and to give the learners some experiences of its use as a means of communication. This depends on the teacher's preparation and on how well the teacher knows the kind of learner. What stories do they read and which ones do they like .

The teacher chooses the material to explain some grammatical items when dealing with different areas in a literature book - so the students will understand the parts of the story.

6.The role of vocabulary

The real criterion of the learning process is the ability to use the newly taught vocabulary and structures in communication , the ultimate goal of language teaching / learning . Using the new forms in different situations for variety of topics will these forms in their minds and will pave the way for them to be part of the learners ' schemata which in turn the learners use successfully to interpret any new material .

7.Simulation

While role – play is a guided classroom activity in which learners play a role of another characters , in simulation they represent themselves . They discuss opinions and analyze data . They speak about their own experience in life rather pretending characters .

In simulation learners can depend on the text but try to go beyond it and provide their own additional point . This technique is suitable for advance learners who ought to have a good stock of vocabulary and background knowledge of various topics .

8.Dialogues

Dialogues , the simplest reading forms , are talking texts . They give the

learners , especially the younger ones , the feeling that dialogues are written to be read aloud and acted . Even if they read them silently , they read them as if they are addressing or listening to someone else .

This characteristic is a great chance to use the dialogue to improve speaking skill by teaching pronunciation problems in stress and intonation . Dialogue represent natural interaction among people in their communication for real social life . While role play is a guided activity , a dialogue is a controlled oral work and the recorded dialogue depends on everyday situations , grammatical points , vocabulary and some expressions that can be used in language classroom . A recorded dialogue is to improve speaking fluency and communication ability when learners recite it orally from memory .

Dialogue is one of the important techniques in teaching literature to developing speaking skill . It can be a good means for young learners who should know from the beginning that language is study to be used .

Through short dialogues teachers can instruct and practice useful structures , phrases and vocabulary . (Rivers , 1981 : 201)

9. Questions and answers:

They are based on information gap. Many communicative activities are described to be done by student's working in pairs. To create a need to communicate, the two students in each pair are given different information. The activity can work in various ways.

a) One student has some information, and the other has to find it but by asking questions.



b) One student has some information and tells it to the other students.

c) Both students have different information, and they tell each other.

The topic (a) is suitable to use in a literature classroom .

10. Games:

Simply , it is not more than an activity with a score. To play a game is to enjoy competing in groups. Also games develop the pronunciation and structures of words and sentences. i.e. words games.

The activities are often carried out by small groups. The small numbers increases the opportunity for each student to negotiate meaning.

Also students will be engaged in many activities, such as reading various literary pieces, interpreting them, taking part in discussion and giving presentations.

Teachers in communicative classes will find themselves talking less and listening more than becoming active facilitator of their students learning. The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as monitor.

A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however, the students do most of the speaking and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students learning their seats to complete to ask, because of the increased responsibility to participate. Students may find that they gain confidence in using the language in general. Students are more responsible managers of their own learning.

The communicative approach is used when the teacher teach any literary

work, to discuss it with students to make interaction with them.

(David Betteridge and Michael Backby 1534 - P. 169-180).

11. Teaching spoken communicative skills:

Wessels (1998:9) points out that, "The role of drama is to get our students to speak". Drama varies the methods of teaching speaking in a communicative manner. The method focuses the attention of the learners on the creation of drama, dialogue, role play or solving a problem.

Teachers should emphasize the production rather than the reception of the language. And for these activities to be fruitful and beneficial learners have to be active participants using their imaginations and interaction with each other and by so doing. they almost unconsciously acquire communicative skills in the foreign language.

12. Exploiting literature to develop students' speaking skills:

Literature shows that interactive approach such as learning games is one of the interesting techniques to improve students English Speaking skills.

Also communication skills include many things using the teachers (who can speak good English and communicate well). That they can teach communication skills through literature. Literature can be seen as the bridge between the student and culture of the people whose language they are studying. Speaking is one of the most important skills to be developed and enhanced as means of effective communication. The main reason of poor speaking skills of secondary school student in their unwillingness to communicate due to the absence of literature.



So literature help them to communicate with each other through group discussion and express their opinions.

The problem of teaching English to students, especially literature and the problem of oral communication has not yet been solved and one can find much to explore in this field, because of the significant role speaking.

(M.C Closkey Mary 1998 - P.14-17.)

Many researchers have proposed methods to enhance speaking by means of syllabus design, teaching principles, types of task and material, and speaking assessment.

13.Using literature in language classroom:

Literature represents language or people, culture and traditions, but literature in more important than just a historical or cultural artificial. Also literature should be used with students because it is assumed to be very motivating since it introduce learners to a wide area of knowledge.

Also literature helps student to understand another culture and encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings. Literature exposes students to complex themes and fresh, unexpected uses of language. The use of literary text is often a particularly successful way of promoting activities where students need to share their feelings and opinions through discussions and group work. The teacher can teach grammar from the texts and literature can assist. The teacher explain some grammatical items when dealing with difficult areas in literature book, so the students will understand the part of the study. Literature involves different skills when the students read, then do the activities, in saying the answers. Sometimes the

teacher may ask students to read short stories in the classroom then the teacher ask them to discuss or give them opportunities to retell the part of the literature book in their own words. The aim of using literature in classroom argues that literature will improve all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and suitable vocabulary usage.(Collie J. and S. Slater 1981, P. 97-155).

14. Communicative speaking activities:

There are many activities of teaching speaking.

Problem solving: Material needed is a number of full-face portraits and some pictures showing problem situations.

The class is divided into groups of six. Each group is given a portrait, which it discusses in detail to extract the maximum of information.

The groups then pass on their portraits and discuss the new portrait they receive. The portraits are now collected, and pictures with problem situations distributed to the groups. Each group discusses its picture in order to arrive at a satisfactory interpretation of it. When all the groups are ready, they are asked incorporate the two characters they described earlier into the situation they have just interpreted. The resulting sketch is then acted out for another group, which offers comment and criticism.(Alan Maley and Alan Duff - 1584 - P. 186)

Dialogue:

It is a conversation or short talk between two students or more. The dialogue helps students to develop speaking skill through communicating with each other.



The dialogue between the people of Mbanta and interpreter, the people asked the missioner some questions and he replied.

An old man said he wanted to ask a question:

Which is this god of yours? He asked
Is the goddess of the earth, or the god of the sky or another god?

The interpreter explained this question to the white man.

The white man was saying: all the gods you have named are not gods at all, they're not true gods because they tell you to kill each other. (Chinua Achebe. P. 56)

Simulation :

Jim Hawkins said : " I worked with long John Silver in the galley was the ship's kitchen I helped to cook and carry the food to the crew . After their meals , I cleared away the plates and washed them . At the end of each day I was very tired . I did not sleep in a bed – I slept in a hammock . The hammock hung between two wooden posts . The hammock moved as the ship moved , from side to side , and it was very comfortable " . (Robert Louis – 2005 : p 24)

15.The advantages of teaching literature:

Students are helped to develop a response to literature through examining the linguistic evidence in the text. Also students are provided with analytic tools to reach their own interpretations. They are encouraged to draw on their knowledge of English, so the approach may provide useful exposure to, or revision of grammar and vocabulary in interesting new contexts. Genuine educational

approach is that understanding of texts is enhanced by situating the learner with their literary and historical contexts.

Students are exposed to a wide range of authentic material. Martinez (2002-7) defined authentic would be " material designed for native speakers of English used in the classroom " .

Authentic material in the classroom is discussed with the students benefiting ways to promote different skills and can be used more than ones as well as updated, others it's an opportunity to teach pronunciation and practice speaking skills. (Gillian Lazar 2001-31).

11.Data Analysis and Discussion:

The researcher has collected data by using a questionnaire which consists of ten statements in order to investigate the role of teaching literature in developing secondary school students speaking skill. The questionnaire was given to 30 respondents who represent the teachers' community at Sudanese Secondary Schools.

The following table shows the mean and standard deviation and chi-square values for the following study Hypotheses: The following hypotheses are postulated:

- 1) Teaching literature enhances speaking skill for secondary school students
- 2) Teaching literature enriches the student's vocabulary, pronunciation and communication.

| Num. | Statement | mean | SD | Chi square | p-value |
|------|--|------|-----|------------|---------|
| 1 | Literature contributes to speaking skill development | 2.4 | 1.9 | 12 | 0.00 |
| 2 | The low performance in speaking skill is due to the absence of literature | 2.5 | 2.6 | 17 | 0.00 |
| 3 | Speaking is a useful skill in developing language learning process | 2.4 | 2.4 | 13 | 0.00 |
| 4 | Literature is an important component for enriching the classroom communicative language teaching | 3 | 0.8 | 25 | 0.03 |
| 5 | Literature is encourages student to express their feeling and opinions | 2.9 | 1.6 | 20 | 0.00 |
| 6 | English literature enlightens students about some cultural aspects of English people | 2.4 | 1.9 | 12 | 0.00 |
| 7 | Literature is a good basis for vocabulary expansion | 2.5 | 1.4 | 17 | 0.00 |
| 8 | The choices of literature books in English should depend on the students' environment | 2.7 | 2.6 | 15 | 0.00 |
| 9 | Literature reflects human ideas , beliefs and societies , habits and customs | 2.8 | 0.8 | 20 | 0.001 |
| 10 | Literature expands the awareness of language structure | 2.5 | 0.7 | 21 | 0.008 |

From the above table, it is obvious that the calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in the (10) statements is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents which indicates that the hypotheses of the study are confirmed.

12. Conclusion and Recommendations: The researcher found that:

Literature plays essential roles in developing speaking skills among

student at secondary school as well as universities. Literature contributes to the language learning process. It helps the student to learn language through attracting them to speak English. Literature provides excellent opportunities for the learners to express their personal opinions reactions and feelings. Some activities like language games and role-play are important for students to practice speaking.

According to the research results, the researcher recommended the following:

- c) Teachers should be trained to encourage the students to retell what they have read to improve their speaking skill.



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d) English language syllabus should be based on literature.

e) Literature text or book should be selected according to the student's levels and to student concern.

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