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Teaching of English Language and Literature at Tertiary Level in Indian Universities: An Overview

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The emergence of English as an international Language is regarded as an important event in the history of the world. This language is widely spoken and understood throughout the entire world. The socio-linguistic study of this language suggests that there are many varieties of English language in the different parts of the world e.g., American, British, Canadian, Australian, Indian, New Zealandian, African variety etc. During the colonial period wherever English went it adopted a different kind of variety. Generally, in most of the countries of the world there are two forms of teaching of English i.e., English as a second language or English as a foreign language. When we categorically analyse the distinct features of language, we find that there are native and non- native speakers of a language. The awareness of the nativization of English in so called non- native milieu is one of the significant phenomena of the world. Keeping this fact in view, I have covered some of the aspects that are supportive for the teaching of English Language and literature in the non- native context, particularly, in India where multilingual people live together with unity in diversity.

However, in India English is taught and learned as a second language. After the colonial emancipation the government of free India set up her own way of promoting and enhancing the teaching of language and literature in its universities. According to the constitutional provisions 'education' is the state subject. In this regard some of the states in India have executed their duties properly in managing the teaching of humanities and social sciences. But in other states we need certain kind of modification in teaching and learning process. The second language acquisition in India is suffering from the management crisis. In most of the universities and colleges in India at tertiary level literature of different literary forms (poetry, fiction, drama and non- fiction) is prescribed in their syllabi barring the need of English grammar and its rule for the learners. The purpose of teaching any language in the world is to have at least functional knowledge of the target language. This aspect of language learning is somehow side-lined in the entire higher education system in our country. We presume that the learners are well equipped with grammatical devices of the target language but the truth behind it is something else. Let's discuss it in more detailed form. In many universities there are, usually, seven traditional papers at graduate level. They are being given below-

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| B A part 1 | a) Prose and Fiction
b) Poetry and drama |
| B A part 2 | a) Prose and Fiction
b) Poetry and Drama |
| BA Part 3 | a) Prose and Fiction
b) Poetry and Drama
c) Literary Movements and Practical Criticism |

Here, my observation is that the policy makers don't try to understand the requirements of the students. They ignore this fact that the students are very weak in the communicative skills. The broad perspective of the communicative skill is to hold control over grammar, usage and its various devices which the learners often ignore. But the matter of fact is that it needs for enhancing the communicative skill of the students. So far as the study of only literature is concerned, they are far away from literary devices and the aesthetic sense too. It is because of the fact that they have merely one objective of their study how to pass or qualify the examination and get job. The ready made guides and notes are available in the market. These market notes are their god father. Frankly speaking, the students are literally misguided by the guides and keys. These low-grade keys shut the doors of their mind and imagination. They don't realize the need of the text books. Reading text books is an exhaustive work for them. System too does not seek the alternative for these misguided practices.

In such a situation student never get an opportunity to develop their communicative skills. This tendency of the students and irresponsibility of the governments and policy makers are going to create a vacuum in which our young generation won't be able to stand in the global market. There is a big demand of English language experts in the field of computer and multinational companies. We may reduce the ratio of unemployment by improving the way of teaching and learning of English language and literature.

The main objective of learning a language is how to develop LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and, Writing) skills among the students. But our present system is unable to discharge the desired activities. In this regard, I would like to highlight the fact that the UGC, the apex body in higher education system plays a very important role in India. It has a great responsibility to maintain and enhance the unity and integrity of nation but there are certain lapses in it and this apex body is so far unable to implement the uniformity in syllabi for the universities and colleges. India is urgently in need of uniform syllabus design and its proper implementation. One more fact I would like to bring into notice that in most of the universities and colleges literature of different ages has been prescribed at tertiary level.

To deal with this situation, teachers deliver lectures after lectures but they are not able develop the aesthetic sense among the students. Emphasis is laid only on the critical questions. Students come to the institutions as learners but here they are converted unknowingly into the passive listeners. During the delivery of the lecture there is a pin drop silence in the classroom. After lecture is over the questions and queries are invited by the teacher but amazingly the students neither take it seriously nor participate actively in the discussion conducted by the teacher. With the long teaching experiences and on the basis of it, I can say that students know the answer of the questions and have ideas and thoughts but due the lack of communicative skills they are unable to speak in the classroom situation due to hesitation and lack of confidence. Undoubtedly, somehow, they manage to make out the subject matter of the lecture but are unable to express the same into their own words. It so happens because at junior levels students are not properly trained and taught. Teachers at junior levels, particularly, in government schools are not interested in the classroom teaching except CBSE and ICSE. As a result, students don't have the adequate knowledge of grammar and communicative skills of English language.

My study of language and literature compels me to think that there were, are and will be plenty of written literary works, and broadly speaking, literature in any language would have been written. There is no end of writing literary books but so far as the students at tertiary level are concerned, it is the duty of the teachers to develop aesthetic sense in them for the study of literature on the one hand and developing consciousness in grammar and its usage on the other. In many cases, time and again, we as teachers find that students have no clear-cut information regarding the literary devices like figures of speech, versification and so on and so forth. This is the demand of time that we will have to change our traditional concept of the study of literature and language. Unless, we develop the aesthetic qualities in the students, we cannot achieve the desired objective of teaching and learning of language and literature.

To deal with this situation we must include the units of linguistics and grammar in our syllabus so that we could meet out the need of time.

Now the question is how to manage the situation? How to bring the drastic change in the entire system of higher education? The only answer to this question is we will have to change our policy, syllabus and manner of teaching. Policy change is not in our hands. Anyway, both the governments the central and the state should consider the situation and prescribe certain rules for the universities and college. They should develop the infrastructural facilities in the educational institutions. The proper training system for the language teachers should be developed and every year the outcome should be reviewed by an expert committee. As we know there are mainly four types of universities in our country e.g., central, state, deemed, and private. All these institutions should be brought under one umbrella and there should be uniformity in teaching, learning, examination, and evaluation system in all of them.

As I have indicated in the beginning of this paper that in most of the universities and colleges in India, we have traditional syllabus being taught and learnt. The syllabus designers and the policy makers never re-examine and reassess the utility and applicability of the once prescribed syllabus and its implementation. Therefore, these institutions should develop a balanced syllabus when I say balanced it means the language and literature syllabus must consist syntax, literary units (units from Indian English literature, British literature, American literature, African literature etc), literary devices (figures of speech, versification, intonation, stress pattern etc), literary forms (poetry, fiction and non-fictional works) and communicative skills. For the convenience of the policy makers, I have prepared syllabus in English language and literature for the universities in India. There shall be total eight papers at different levels of tertiary education. It means in BA part one and two there will be two papers in each year and in BA part three, there shall be four papers in all. Each paper will be divided into a number of units regarding language, literature and literary terms. The maximum marks for each paper shall be 100 and duration of examination three hours.

The Outline of Syllabus of English Language and Literature at Tertiary level in Indian Universities

BA Part 1

Paper First—Literature and Criticism 1

- Unit 1) Renaissance Literature
- 2) Neo- Classical Literature
- 3) Literary and Social history of Renaissance and the Neo- Classical Age
- 4) Greek and roman Tradition of Criticism
- 5) Neo- Classical Criticism

Second paper- General Introduction to Linguistics and Grammar 1

- Unit 1) Phonetics
- 2) Semantics
- 3) Socio-Linguistics
- 4) Tense and Time
- 5) Phrase
- 6) Sentence
- 7) Use of Modal Verbs

B A Part 2

First Paper - Literature and Criticism 2

- Unit 1) Romantic Literature
- 2) Victorian Literature
- 3) Romantic Criticism
- 4) Victorian Criticism
- 5) Literary and Social History of Romantic and Victorian Age

Second Paper - General Introduction to Linguistics and Grammar- 2

- Unit 1- Phonetic transcription of words
- 2) Phonemic transcription of words
- 3) Accent
- 4) Intonation
- 5) Translation from Hindi/ regional language into English and vice versa.
- 6) Antonyms

- 7) Synonyms
- 8) One word substitution

B A Part 3

First paper- Modern and Contemporary Literature

- Unit 1) Modern English Literature
- 2) Contemporary English Literature
- 3) Literary and Social History of Modern Age

Second Paper- General Introduction to Modern Criticism

- Unit 1) New Criticism
- 2) Marxist Criticism
- 3) Formalism
- 4) Structuralism
- 5) Post Structuralism
- 6) Theory of Deconstruction
- 7) reader Response Theory
- 8) Discourse Analysis

Third paper- Introduction to general Linguistics and Grammar

- Unit 1) Practical implications of Linguistic and syntactical rules into text (at least four exercises in a month)
- 2) Phonetic transcription of the connected speech
- 3) Process of creolization and pidginization
- 4) Discourse analysis of a story
- 5) Letter writing
- 6) Report writing
- 7) Advertisement
- 8) essay writing
- 9) Comprehension
- 10) Transformation of sentences

Forth paper- Dissertation

- Unit 1) Research Methodology
- 2) Functional knowledge of computer
- 3) Preparation of Bibliography
- 4) Publication of one Research paper in UGC approved Journal

To some extent, the above model syllabus for English language and literature will solve our purpose of teaching and learning of English language. The main idea behind the formulation of this model syllabus is to enhance the linguistic and literary efficiency of the learners at the tertiary level in Indian Universities and college. The proper monitoring cell should also be set up for the regular inspection for bringing the desired outcome. In addition to this continuous assessment should also be brought into the centre for the improvement of language skills. In case of the dissatisfactory result the daily class test and unit test in every week should be promoted mandatorily. Apart from these measures examination and evaluation system of our universities need to be changed. Anyway, whatever issues I have mentioned in my paper is not an overall picture of the whole situation, something more is to be done for the better results.

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