

## THE LANGUAGE- LITERATURE DEBATE: INTERSECTION AND DIVIDE

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### **Abstract:**

Language and literature are inextricably woven with each other and mutually dependant on each other. Though they complement each other, it is essential to learn the intersection and divide between language and literature. Literature is read, understood and created only through the usage of language and language also thrives and develops through literature. It is essential to understand the difference between Language and Literature. In literature, one can say imagination surpasses reality and proportionately found more and in language reality surpasses imagination. Language focuses more on the linguistic features, structure and form. Literature is the sagacity of thoughts and felicity of expression. Language is used for communication, and also used for various other purposes like acquisition of knowledge and for a qualitative existence. But both language and literature are tools of empowerment, because by acquiring English language, there is upward mobility and ample career opportunities and Literature empowers individuals by imparting values and nurturing the thinking skills of learners.

**Keywords:** Intersection, linguistic features, qualitative existence, empowerment, thinking skills

English as a language is intricately and beautifully woven in the lives of the people across the globe. English has a significant role to play in the process of transforming the world into a global village. In addition to being the International link language, English is emerging as a language to nurture the thought process of individuals by offering various literary master pieces of the world. It serves as a medium to expose us to the various philosophies, religions, culture, politics and the life of the people of other countries where English is the native language and vice versa. It is also a language of empowerment today. This language, though a colonial remains in India, is inevitable due to the fact that English is the official language of India and also a link language of all the States. Hence English is always a subject of controversy and a boiling cauldron of politics and contention.

Higher education and career opportunities are easily accessible if English language is acquired and mastered. The world economy is centred on the English language and India with its potential human resources and a fast growing IT sector, depends on English language for its global businesses. Though there has been ideological and political resistance for the English

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language in India, the economy of the nation, the scientific and research output and communication across the globe is dependent on the English language. The Curriculum of the School education and higher education is framed by incorporating the English language. To be competent at the global level, learners are encouraged to be conversant with this global language so that they comprehend, respond and have the ability to produce the English language with proficiency and competence.

Learning English as a Second Language and being fluent and conversant in English is seen as one way of boosting the morale of learners and thereby it is seen as a language that empowers people who aspire to have upward mobility in the caste based Indian Society. Proficiency in English places the marginalized on par with the educated elites in the Indian Society and thereby minimizes the differences between the educated affluent people and the marginalized sections of the society. Therefore in this context, English education has become very important tool of empowerment.

Language and literature are inextricably woven with each other and they are mutually dependant on each other. Literature is read, understood and created only through the usage of language and language also thrives and develops through literature. It is essential to understand the difference between Language and Literature. Literature is defined in Oxford Dictionary as "*pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems (in contrast to technical books and newspapers, magazines, etc.)*" whereas language is defined as "*the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country or area*". The definition of literature emphasis that it is all about creating literary texts which are considered as works of art and the purpose of art is a form of human expression of creative abilities and faculties whereas language is a system, a structured form of communication with its grammar, syntax and punctuation, intonation for speaking and writing. Literature is language in use and also serves as a means of social communication. It is highly complex in its use of figurative language.

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Language of common use is different from the language of literature. Most of the time we do not use literature as a language of communication but we sometimes use some literary expressions to communicate and thereby it adds style to our communication. Literature is a discourse in which the creativity and complexity of language are designed with a wide range of style. In literature, we use figurative language like metaphor, simile, alliteration, assonance,

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refrain, poeticisms and other specific literary forms to create poems, short stories, drama, novel and other genres. There is also a moral and a cognitive value and above all an aesthetic value in the literary works created. It is also a crystallization of life's experiences brought by the author to the reader through a language. Literature is also seen as a process of exploring and discovering language. According to Van (2009), the study of literature is a must as far as it exposes students to meaningful texts in descriptive language and interesting characters. It is indispensable in language learning both for the native and non-native speakers of the language. According to Lazar, literature language "does not stick to the most common usages, but exploits and even distorts the accepted conventions in fresh and unexpected ways (Lazar:1993:115.). In this context it is seen that the real challenge is to integrate literature in the language classroom for the benefit of the students.

Language teaching is predominantly done through literature, which is one of the traditional, time tested practices of language learning and acquisition. Literature can expose the learners to varieties of uses of words as structures for specific purposes and enrich the linguistic experiences of learners. The literary text is discussed with the learners, the literary forms and the figurative language is analysed, the grammatical components are understood and the text also introduces new vocabulary for the learners. Beyond language learning, literature also nourishes the thinking skills of the learners. Learners acquire critical, analytical and creative skills during the language acquisition process through literature. They are exposed to the culture and the society through these texts and through this the value system of an individual is also nurtured.

Language learning requires practice especially with speaking and writing and learners also need autonomy to experiment with the language, evaluate their performance and improve their language skills. Developing the language skills of learners is done in a multiple approach. Development takes place through learning and learning can happen both in a conscious manner and also without the learner being aware of it. Learning of the language happens in a variety of ways and some of the factors which affect language learning are the innate ability of individual learners, aptitude of the learners, the motivation level of individuals, proximity of the learner to English, opportunity to use the target language, learning strategies, learner types and the confidence level of learners.

Innate ability refers to the individual's potentiality to grasp the language quickly and naturally a second language apart from their mother tongue. Aptitude refers to the ability to learn a second language more easily than others and motivation could be both intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Lindsay and Knight (p 7,2006), " Intrinsic motivation refers to the individual learner's wish to learn or enjoyment in learning; extrinsic motivation to a learner's need to learn because of external factors such as employment, social pressure, academic requirements, and so on" individual learners might develop an interest to learn another

language due to a passion for it but some learners have to acquire English as a second language due to its growing importance and its inevitability. Proximity to English refers to individual learners' exposure and the alphabets, sound system written form, script and layout, grammar and socio cultural factors. Literature is created through experiences and evaluated and interpreted with the background of history and society. It is a series of narratives of life, events that impact the writer and his contemporary society. There might be subjectivity in its creation but language is predominantly free from bias as it is built on a structure.

Thus language and literature have their own differences and also their similarities. While literature comes with new, strange and unexpected language use which a learner must be aware of, language on the other hand is an umbrella term which brings all disciplines under its fold. Language is useful in understanding medicine, engineering, law, religion, philosophy and literature and the process of enriching linguistic competence by way of drawing pleasure from literature is an ever fascinating activity. Thus we see that literature is the product of language and so it depends on language. If a language is dead, automatically, its literature is also dead. It has been rightly said that if you want to kill and destroy a community, first kill its language, the community will automatically be killed and vanished. Hence it is necessary that we preserve our native language and also retain English language that opens the doors of the West, exposes us to the global culture, newer technologies, trade and commerce and also empowers us by leveling the differences created by class, caste and race.

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