



## TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH SHORT STORIES

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### Introduction:

Although the use of literature is beneficial for students, some objections may be raised against use in public high schools due to overcrowded classes, overloaded syllabus and limited and stipulated time. The literary works can be included in the syllabus of teaching English when we think of the advantages of using literature in classroom. Taking the above-mentioned problems into consideration, it can be said that the deviated and figurative language of poetry, and the length of novel may create problems in a non-culturally related classroom. Drama can be used in classroom to teach English language skills, but it will be difficult to act out a play in crowded classes within limited course hours. So, among literary forms, short-story seems to be the most suitable and adequate one to use in English classroom to enhance language skills at the primary and secondary level.

The reasons can be found of why short-story is the most suitable and adequate literary form to use in English classes lies in Edgar Allan Poe's definition of short-story. He defines it "as a narrative that can be read at one sitting of from one-half hour to two hours, and that is limited to 'a certain unique or single effect,' to which every detail is subordinate" (Abrams, 1970, p. 158). Since it is short, and aims at giving a 'single effect', there is usually one plot, a few characters; there is no detailed description of setting. So, it is easy for the students to follow the story line of the work.

The aim of using short-story in teaching English is to encourage the students to use what they have previously learnt, and therefore, it is a student-centred teaching. However, the role of the teacher is less and student's participation is given importance. The teacher must choose a suitable text to use in class, and should help her/his students understand the story with various activities. The activities which teacher designs can help the learners to develop their language (LSRW) skills.

### Choosing culturally related short story:

As we mentioned above short stories seems to be the most suitable source to teach language skills. If the culturally familiar short stories used in teaching English can help the learners to understand the text easily and also helps to cope with the text.

The selection of stories plays an important role to make our teaching more useful and worthwhile for the learners. The selection of the story should reach the need and the level of the learners.

When we use short stories in teaching English the vocabulary and sentence structure of the short story should be studied must be suitable to the level of the students. The short stories with archaic, slang, foreign words, and allusions, having sentences imitating the speech of a particular locality or ignorant people or foreigners must be avoided. Similarly, very long sentences are difficult for students to understand. As students will not understand these sentences and words, they will get bored and not read the work. Therefore, before giving the short-story, the teacher should decide the readability of the text. There are graded or simplified stories on the markets. Teacher may think that their sentence structure and vocabulary are suitable to the level of students. Even though the linguistic level of these stories is appropriate, there is controversy concerning the use of graded or simplified materials.

Penny Ur thinks (1996) that "... the use of 'authentic' text with less proficient learners is often frustrating and counterproductive" (p.150); therefore, she recommends the use of simplified text with less proficient readers and learners (1996, p. 150). Jeremy Harmer (2001) suggests simplified books as extensive reading materials, claiming that "Such books succeed because the writers or adaptors work within specific lists of allowed words and grammar. This means that students at the appropriate level can read them with ease and confidence.



At their best such books, despite the limitations on language, can speak to the reader through the creation of atmosphere and/or compelling plot lines” (p. 210).

The culturally related elements should be taken into consideration while choosing the text.

### **Background of the study**

Teaching and learning English has got much importance in the present competitive era. Mastering in English brings many opportunities to get employment. The present study has been designed to enhance language skills of the lambada learners in tribal area by using culturally related short stories. The learners who come from the tribal area are lacking in language skills and failing to communicate in English. If the culturally related texts were used the language skills of the lambada learners can be enhanced.

### **Significance of the study**

Teaching and learning English in tribal and rural areas of Telangana is in a panic situation that the tribal and rural students remain lacking in communicating in English due to their low competence. They are refused to get employment in MNCs due to lack of communication skills. Therefore, it is mandate to know the problem of communicating in English. As we all know language skills (LSRW) play main role in learning a language fluently. The language skills can be incorporated at the primary level if the short stories used to enhance language skills in English. The culturally familiar stories can more impact to learn English language.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to teach language skills (LSRW) of the lambada using culturally related short stories.

- To know learners’ problems in learning English language
- To know how culturally related short stories can help lambada learners to enhance their language skills (LSRW) in English.
- To know lambada learners’ attitude towards English teachers and learning English.
- To know teachers’ attitude towards teaching English and lambada learners.

### **Hypothesis**

- The lambada learners are lacking in communicating in English.
- The language skills of lambada learners can be enhance/developed if the culturally familiar short stories are used in teaching English.
- The learners of the tribal area do not have opportunity to learn English comparing to the urban/metropolitan learners. The lambada learners also can perform well if the facilities are provided like urban learners

### **Research Questions**

1. How short stories can help lambada learners to acquire language skills in English?
2. What are the problems tribal learners face in learning English?
3. What is the teacher’s role in enhancing language skills of the lambada learners?

### **Subjects**

The subjects for the present study are secondary learners from lambada community areas Warangal district of Telangana state.

### **Tools**

- ✓ Translated short stories of banjara culture
- ✓ Informal interaction with learners and teachers
- ✓ Activities for enhancing language skills (LSRW)



### **Research Design**

The current carried out study is an experimental study to enhance language skills of lambada learners by using culturally related short stories. The present study carried out by selecting a school from the remoted tribal area where the learners are from lambada community. The short stories were used to teach language skills(LSRW). There was also informal interaction with the teachers and learners to know more about their teaching learning problems.

The designed exercises were included with the activities to enhance language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

### **Findings and discussion**

The present study was carried out with the intention of enhancing language skills of the lambada learners by using culturally related short stories. There were some findings which help the learners to enhance their language skills in English.

#### **Performing listening skills**

- The learners were very much interested to have stories of their own culture which were already known to them.
- The learners were listening the stories curiously because they want to know more about their culture.
- The stories were interested and motivating the learners to listen.
- The students could respond to the teacher's questions as they comprehend the story easily.

#### **Performing speaking skills**

- The learners were asked to narrate the story in English for which they were able to narrate the story without fear and hesitation.
- The learners were asked to read the story loudly as a chain activity. So, the learners could read story with good pronunciation.
- The learners could also narrate new stories which they heard from their parents and grandparents with a lot of curiosity and interest.
- The learners were comfort with teacher who is from their own community. Because, the teacher explained unknown things in their mother tongue to make them understand easily.

#### **Performing reading skills**

- The learners could read the text easily because all the words which were used in the texts are relating to their culture.
- The learners were motivated to read texts other than their culture too.
- The reading comprehension questions were formulated to check their understanding for which the learners could answer well for all the questions.

#### **Performing writing skills**

- The learners were asked to write a story that they heard from their parents or grandparents all the learners could attempt to write a very short story.
- The learners were able to write their daily activities. In this way the writing skills of the learners can be enhanced by motivating them to write daily activities.
- The writing skills were not much focused to them as they belong to the primary schools. Even though they tried to write few words what they could.

### **Implications of the Findings**

This study helped the researcher to find some ways to enhance language skills by using culturally related short stories. The researcher tries to provide some implications to enhance language skills in tribal schools.



### **Role of Culturally Related Texts**

- ❖ The culturally related texts should be introduced at the primary level of the learners as they come from the marginalized community. The culturally related texts and short stories will help them to develop language skills in English.
- ❖ The multilingual education should be strictly implemented in tribal schools which is intended for the marginalised lingual community learners.
- ❖ Culturally familiarity of the texts motivates learners to learn English language without any barriers.

### **Role of the Teacher**

- ❖ The teachers who teaches in tribal schools should learn the local language of the learners which would help him/her to know more about the learners.
- ❖ The teachers should use culturally related text or authentic materials to enhance learners' language skills in English.

### **Role of the Material Developers**

- ❖ The material developers should consider about the marginalised and backward community learners like lambada, koya and gond.
- ❖ Materials can be prepared keeping in view of tribal learners.
- ❖ Separate materials can be provided to the tribal schools which are related to their cultural familiarity which boosts learners to learn English with involvement. The needed training can be provided to the teachers to deal with the culturally related English texts or short stories.

### **Role of the Education Department**

- ❖ The government should provide culturally related texts or short stories for the lambada learners which would help them to develop their language skills in English.
- ❖ The multilingual education is mainly intended to provide education for the marginalised community learners by using their textbooks. It should be implemented strictly.
- ❖ The same community teachers can be appointed in tribal areas schools so the learners may get interest to learn English.

### **Conclusion**

The present study was mainly carried out with the aim of enhancing language skills (LSRW) using short stories from the learners own culture. This is an experimental study which enabled learners to have good language skills by using short stories. The implications above mentioned can be consider to provide better English education to the tribal learners of Warangal district as they come from the socially and economically marginalised community. This kind of study can be carried out any other parts of the study to enhance language skills in English.

It is believed that the assumptions and hypothesis made by the researchers were met as the results shows that the language skills of the learns can be enhanced by using culturally related short stories and texts.

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