

# An Investigation on the Effectiveness of the English Literary Elements in Improving English Language at Undergraduate Level

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Received: April 21, 2020

Accepted: May 26, 2020

Online Published: May 29, 2020

doi: 10.5539/elt.v13n6p127

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n6p127>

## Abstract

The English has become a lingua-franca language, thus to promote the English language's interest in the people with the teachings of English literature is regarded as the competence of the learners in the Target Language(TL). Thus, the study aims to investigate the effectiveness of English literary elements in improving English language at undergraduate level. The qualitative method was preferred for collecting the data in which 15 participants were involved, 5 of them were university lecturers and rest of them were the students of English Department Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sanghar Campus. Semi-structured interviews were conducted from the participants and the data was analyzed by the thematic process. The findings of the research indicated that the English literary elements are helpful in the favor of improving English language. It was also declared that movies and dramas affect the English language more effectively. English literary elements affect the learners' language competence in the different areas as; Listening and speaking. These elements help the learners to learn the language more effectively, and these elements play important role in improving the comprehensions of the learners. The study suggests that there should be integration of movies and dramas in the favor of students as they could get more fluency in English and the study also suggests that the material in the class should be used related to the learning area of the students.

**Keywords:** lingua-franca, improvement in English, literary elements, movies, dramas, speaking

## 1. Introduction

As we know that English has got big fame in the universe, it is being spoken and taught in most of the developed countries. Since the colonial period the status and position of English have varied a lot. Though English is counted as the second language, even it is being given more importance because of its usage in different fields like science, technology etc. Pakistani educational system has more response towards the English, according to the people; it is a vehicle that opens the doors of knowledge in different fields. All the people have been running in the race of learning English, all the people have been searching the ways and shortcuts for learning English. Experts also have been searching in this regard since long, this investigation also sorts out such problems of the people as they could get benefit from it. The study mostly revolves around the effectiveness of English Literary elements in learning English. Different researchers have different perceptions in this regard one of them is Liaw, (2001; cited in Khatib, Hossein and Rahimi 2012:p.32) said that English Literary elements works like a vehicle to teach and learn English language, it a finest areas where great importance and great position is given to a language. In literary works mostly the additional material for practicing grammar and learning vocabulary is provided. If we see in the, the world is going to be smaller and people are experiencing globalization. In a time globalization was only to refer that world's different economies, but now-a-days language and knowledge both are the in globalization too (Dale, 2005). Because of being globalized, especially in language, English now

rapidly being utilized in most of the non-native speaking countries (Mirabela, 2001), and Pakistan is one of them. There is less number of investigations which declares the positive impact of using literature like movie, drama or poems in learning any second language (Stern, 1980; Philips, 2003, Fuentes, 2010; Zyoud, 2012). Davies, 1990; Kim, 1998; Kim, Park & Kim, 2008; Park, 2011 asserted in their articles that there are certain rules to use English movies and dramas in classrooms while learning English language. There are certain investigations which dealt with the effects of dramas and movies for improving the competence of English. After having classes of English drama of 6 hours, we found the overall improvement in English competence, especially in the subcategories of vocabulary and grammar (Park & Won, 2003). It was unbelievable that the short term drama classes got a lot of improvement in general communicative competence of learners. Thus, the study narrows the scope of the study and examines that how much the learners learn and get benefits from the expressions and language which appear in the drama or movie. There is a common mindset that learners naturally learn the language when they are involved in the drama or play because when they participate in any drama they would fully concentrate read and understand the text, remember the dialogues, rehearse it and they will have to perform it. The present study aims to test that assumption. Additionally the project also focuses on the usage and impacts literary elements such as drama, movies, songs, novels etc on their language and expression which they learn from literary elements. This project would be beneficial for the teachers in the favor ELT and also for the students to overcome their difficulties which they face in ELL. The project would add a great contribution in ELT.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the effectiveness of English Literary elements in improving English language at undergraduate level.

### *1.1 Problem Statement*

Many of students have been facing a number of problems while learning English, therefore, the present study is going to be conducted because of giving them the actual way of improving their English by the help of English literary elements at undergraduate level. Most of researchers accept that the dramas and movies (visualization) play a significant role in improving English. Linguistically Fuentes (2010) expressed that there is an acceptable belief that dramas and movies successfully help the learners in getting fluency and getting improving in vocabulary and pronunciation, thus the study assesses to find out such great effects of English Literary elements for improving English language at undergraduate level.

### *1.2 Aim of the Study*

The study aims to know the effectiveness of English Literary elements and their importance in English language learning at undergraduate level.

### *1.3 Objectives*

- To know the most effective literary element that improves the English Language learning at undergraduate level.
- To know the effects of English Literary elements in improving English language learning at undergraduate level.

### *1.4 Research Questions*

- Which literary element is more effective in improving English language at undergraduate level?
- How can English Literary elements improve English language learning at undergraduate level?

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### *2.1 Literature*

Literature is defined in various definitions, sometimes we get know that literature is called the reflection of society and it is a mirror that shows us the sides of society either positive or negative. It is also defined as that a type of written work, especially consists of superior and everlasting artistic merit. Literature is also called a written or oral work's body that consist imaginative ideas and deals with reader's life's unique vision. It is formed in a universal form and creative form thoughts and ideas which speak the effecting, rational, logical or spiritual connection of humankind. It may be clandestinely skilled and it is mostly thoughts of like a written shape of thoughts, but there are different tough verbal customs/traditions in both indigenous and current world/ society (Rabi'ahYunus2004).Literature is an umbrella term that covers that many literary works in it, like Drama, movies, poetry etc.

Herron and Seay (1991) investigated an investigation about the usage of videos and dramas for improving

listening skills for EFL learners. He involved the students of intermediate level and divided them into two different groups, controlled and experimental group. Controlled group was asked to follow the usual class activities without and disclosure to radios tapes while the experimental group was replaced by listening classes to the reliable radio tapes. The investigation declared that experimental group had great performance than controlled group in the final tests of listening skills in both factors audio as well as video.

Herron, et al. (1995) study concluded that...

“Videos are mentioned for language contextualizing (e.g., to have a link of language form to the meaning) and portraying the foreign culture efficiently than the other objects. Videos classes allow students to listen the native-speakers who interact in their daily life routine’s conversation circumstances and allow them to do practice such significant linguistic arrangements. Dissimilarly, videos’ visual aspects and audio cassettes are taken as to decrease the vagueness which are found in any language’s native speaker’s voice and to also inspire learners who really want to get the education of foreign language” (Herron, et al., 1995, p. 775).

Additionally, literary elements especially movies and dramas grant attractive and inspiring indications to escort written and audio input, thus it supports construction and comprehension of FL (Foreign language) result as well as input (Wen, 1989; Herron, et al., 1995; Hanley, et al, 1995; Weyers, 1999).

In addition, these elements also offer language to the students with the chances to see the communal factors for communicating as a native speaker intermingle in bona fide situation and setting (Wellman, Keniston & Westby, 1978; Kerridge, 1982; Lonergan, 1992; Herron, et al., 1995; Swaffar & Vlatten, 1997; Singer & Singer, 1998; Coniam, 2001).

Other intellectuals have also expressed that the splinters of movies and dramas help the learners to enhance their remembrance and to recover the informative things while listening and reading (Pezdeck, Lehrer & Simon, 1984). By utilizing the similar sample, movie/film can be helpful for developing the writing comprehension by offering them attractive and inspiring indications to escort written and audio input; in this regard it supports intellectual capacity and construction in foreign language’s result (Hanley, et al., 1995).

According to Hanley and Herron (1992) involving dramas and movies in English as first Language (EFL) proffers the locale set information which stimulates previous knowledge, which is crucial to stimulate the four comprehensions activity in classroom.

Joesph R. Wayers (1999) had an investigation on a dependable installment to gauge whether it may enhance learners listening ability and increase their verbal production. For his investigation, he focused a controlled grouping and investigational group. He had an experiment in two second semester Spanish classes for 8 weeks at the New Mexico University. All the learners were involved into two tests pre and post. The curriculum second semester was followed by the both groups. Though, investigational group had a task to watch two episodes of soap per week that belongs to Spanish literature. All the learners were given a precise summary of the *telenovela* in English, before watching the every episode. Finally the study declared that *telenovelas* are the great source for developing and improving learners’ listening comprehension in English language.

Luo, J.J had an investigation in 2004, in which he investigated the impacts of DVD movies on learners’ listening skill in English language. Throughout the year of entire school nine movies were interfered into the class’ curriculum. And the DVDs were kept as the main material of the curriculum and there were also other particular additional activities. Instructional activities embraced picture description, storytelling and open ended questions for discussing and topics were captured from the movies. The researcher integrated caption on and caption off actions for practicing learners’ listening comprehension. The study resulted that DVD movies improve the learners’ listening skills in a particular language and the usage of movies decreases the level anxiety in speaking after an entire year (Luo, 2004).

Draper, (2012) intellectuals have declared that visualization as the capability of building images and pictures while using language either in spoken or reading. It is a proof that we visualize when we talk or when we read or write, it greatly depends upon our previous knowledge and our rendezvous in the area of topic (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). It is big support to the Teachers of English language to be motivated, to utilize and to support the usage of movies in English language classes.

Although, there is a huge literature found about using the movie and drama in TEFL class, a few of them are carried out on the topic usage of movies and dramas in enhancing the improvement in English language; without an exceptional study (Weyer, 1999).

On the other hand, we can found a lot of literature regarding using the movies and dramas in the improving particular language skills, especially listening skills, (Chung, 1994; Wetzel, Radtke & Stern, 1994; Ginther, 2002;

Gruba, 2006; Ockey, 2007; Opat, 2008; Suvorov, 2008). Though, we have a good number of studies related to the topic but those are separate from each other that causes research gap but the present study is going to will be dealing by covering all the above discussed studies because the present study does not rely on any single literary element as dramas, movies or poetry etc but this covers all the literary elements like movies, prose, novel, drama, poetry and so on. Neither, the present study discusses only any specific skills/comprehensions; it discusses all the comprehensions throughout its process.

### 3. Methodology

The present study is followed by the qualitative method on the account of the questions of the research and objectives of the research and also because the qualitative method helps us to understand the things deeply and critically. According to Arora and Stoner (2009), it is method that allows a researcher to collect richer data and to get more cleared and detailed picture of any problem. It is a method in which answers of the questions are sought and evidence's collection is involved. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews to obtain the ideas, thoughts and the responses from the teachers as well as from the students regarding the effectiveness of English literary elements like drama, movie, prose, novel, poetry in improving the proficiency of English language.

#### 3.1 Instrument

Semi-structure interviews were conducted from the participants. Questions were asked on the basis of the research questions, in interview participants were asked different questions regarding the study and were given freewill to share their perceptions. The whole data was collected according to the need of the study.

#### 3.2 Research Design and Sampling

Sampling was designed randomly. The number of participants which were involved in the study was 15, in which 10 were the university students while the remaining 5, were the lecturers of English Department at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Sanghar Campus. 10 participants were final year students of BS-English department from Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sanghar Campus.

#### 3.3 Data Analysis

The data was collected on the basis of research questions and the data was analyzed by thematic process for getting the main and purposeful data for the study and findings. The thematic process is preferred when the data is collected in codes, and after it needs purification in simple language. Thematic analysis is an inductive, flexible process and it is a deliberate decision to wait until all data is collected to allow for 'structures of signification' (Geertz. 1973:9).

### 4. Findings

In the Results section, summarize the collected data and the analysis performed on those data relevant to the discourse that is to follow. Report the data in sufficient detail to justify your conclusions. Mention all relevant results, including those that run counter to expectation; be sure to include small effect sizes (or statistically nonsignificant findings) when theory predicts large (or statistically significant) ones. Do not hide uncomfortable results by omission. Do not include individual scores or raw data with the exception, for example, of single-case designs or illustrative examples. In the spirit of data sharing (encouraged by APA and other professional associations and sometimes required by funding agencies), raw data, including study characteristics and individual effect sizes used in a meta-analysis, can be made available on supplemental online archives.

### 5. Discussion

Joseph R. Wayers (1999) conducted a study in this regard, he tried to measure that does the integration of literary elements enhances the abilities of students? Do these increase the verbal production of the students? And the study of Joseph R. Wayers revealed that *telenovelas* (is a topic of serial soap) are the great source for the students to develop and improve their competencies in language and listening ability in linguistics.

Luo, J.J had an investigation in 2004, in which he investigated the impacts of DVD movies on learners' listening skill in English language. He integrated 9 movies with other additional activities in the classes for whole year. Activities were taking from movies as: picture description, storytelling and open ended questions for discussion. The study's findings revealed that DVD movies revealed help the learners in improving their listening skills in a specific language. And it was also indicated that the integration of movies decreases the anxiety of students in class performance.

By embracing the findings of the both researchers, this study also concluded that the utilization of movies and dramas in the class improves the different abilities of the learners; one of them is the listening comprehension.

The findings of the study also matched with Luo, J.J's (2004) findings that the integration of movies and dramas decreases the anxiety of the learners in class performances and reduces the tensions in language learning.

## 6. Suggestions

The study suggests that there should be integration of movies and dramas in the favor of students as they could get more fluency in English and the study also suggests that the material in the class should be used related to the learning area of the students. The study present study suggests that the integration of movies and dramas is in the favor of students; these elements should be frequently used in the class curriculum as the students could feel more comfortable and easy while learning the English language because these elements also decrease the anxiety of students in class performance and the tensions in language learning. The study also suggests that the material for using in the class should be related to the area of the students' learning as; if the students are from literature field then the material also should be relevant to their field. In this way they would take interest in learning and that will positively affect their English competence.

## 7. Conclusion

As we know that English has got big fame in the universe, it is being spoken and taught in most of the developed countries. The study mostly revolves around the effectiveness of English Literary elements in learning English. The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of English literary elements in improving English language at undergraduate level. The qualitative method was preferred for collecting the data in which 15 participants were involved, 5 of them were university lecturers and rest of them were the students of English Department Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sanghar Campus. Semi-structured interviews were conducted from the participants and the data was analyzed by the thematic process. The findings of the research indicated that the English literary elements are helpful in the favor of improving English language. It was also declared that movies and dramas affect the English language more effectively. English literary elements affect the learners' language competence in the different areas as; Listening and speaking. These elements help the learners to learn the language more effectively, and these elements play important role in improving the comprehensions of the learners.

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