Chapter-2
LANGUAGE-LITERATURE CONTROVERSY

English language education was introduced in India with the prime objective of developing a new set of officials or 'Babus' who would be able to carry out the administration of the country as representatives of the British rulers. The British Viceroy of that time, Lord Macaulay felt that there was a need to train such a set of officials who would act as interpreters between the colonial rulers and their subjects. At that time, the British rulers popularly believed that the effective way to ensure a better control over the colonies was to make them accept the British culture and tradition as being superior to their own culture. The colonial rulers hoped that educating the natives in British culture and thinking would make them more submissive to the foreign rule. Though English was introduced with the intention of establishing control over the local population, it later proved to be one of the factors behind the rise of the independence movement. Aparna Basu (1974), tracing the growth and development of education in India, observes that, “The English language, whatever its merit or defects as an educational instrument, was regarded as a common political bond. But for English education, there would have been no political progress in India.” (Basu 1974:77)

2.1 Historical Overview of ELT

English as a language has attained greater importance in the world context. From being a language of the rulers it became an international link language. But things underwent a great change with the introduction of English education in India due to the emergence of an educated and politically active section among the
Indian population. The government of free India felt that the education of English in the country had to be modified to suit the changing world scenario. Over the years, English language has been able to assume greater importance due to its global reach and utility. Today, English is more widespread than ever due to its numerous roles. It was thought that teaching English language would enable the country to progress and emerge as a strong nation among the rest of the countries of the world. With this idea in mind, the government took up the issue of English language teaching and decided to revise the system of English language education in the country.

The introduction of English education in India underwent a major change with the emergence of an educated and politically active section among the Indian population. The emergence of this new group of educated individuals contributed to the spread of science and technology in different parts of the country. The English language was seen as a means of getting employment and ensuring one's better future.

In India, English has been around since the early 1700 AD, when the East India Company started trading and English missionaries first began their efforts. A large number of Christian schools imparting English education were set up by the early 1800s. The process of producing English-knowing bilinguals in India began with the Minute of 1835, which officially endorsed T.B. Macaulay's goal of forming "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (qtd. in Kachru 1983, p. 22). English became the official and academic
language of India by the early twentieth century. The rising of the nationalist movement in the 1920s brought some anti-English sentiment with it—even though the movement itself used English as its medium. English came to be the language of the legal system, higher education, pan-regional administrative network, science and technology, trade and commerce—either because the indigenous languages were not equipped for these roles and English provided with a convenient vocabulary, or because the use of English was considered prestigious and powerful. English gradually became a major tool for acquiring knowledge in sciences and the humanities. In the course of time, English was established firmly as the medium of instruction and administration. The English language became popular, because it opened paths to employment (NEB 1974: 406). English of the subject Indians gradually became a widespread means of communication. It came to represent modernization and development, and, as a link language, it acquired intra-national roles over the years.

However, things changed with the independence of India and the role of English in education and national life came under examination. It appeared that English would not continue to occupy the privileged position it enjoyed under the British. There was a lot of controversy over the status of English. But, over a period of time, it was felt that the use of English should continue. English, therefore, served two main purposes. Firstly, it provided a linguistic tool for the administrative cohesiveness of a multi-lingual country, and, secondly, it served as a language of wider international link communication. (Kachru 1986a: 8). English functioned in the Indian socio-cultural context to perform roles relevant and appropriate to the social,
educational and administrative network of India (Kachru 1986a: 111). English is used in both public and personal domains and its functions "extend far beyond those normally associated with an outside language, including the instrumental, the regulative, the interpersonal and the innovative, self-expressive function" (Kachru 1986a: 37).

The constitution framers thought that linguistic unity was a prerequisite for political and national unity. Thus, Hindi was designated by the constitution as the language of communication between and within the states. It was to replace English within 15 years. The plan was that Hindi would be promoted so that it might express all parts of the "composite culture of India" (Spolsky 1978: 56). However, due to the continuous opposition by many states in the south, this replacement was not politically possible. In 1967, a law was passed which allowed the use of both Hindi and English for all official purposes (Fasold 1984: 24). However, with the changing scenarios in the country and the rest of the world, English continued to be used.

The primary purpose of the introduction of English language in India had been educational. But the new language, bringing with it a world of new ideas and facts became an agent of new political ideas. The situation that emerged after independence was that the focus should be on learning the English language as a means to acquiring knowledge and of carrying out the day-to-day activities. As English grew in popularity it bred elite completely out of touch with its own culture and languages.
Initially, English language teaching was carried out through the mode of language through literature. There was no distinction between English language teaching and literature teaching. However, after independence, the focus of English language teaching changed; it became a means of carrying out everyday functions. It is important to note that in most of the institutions, there was no focus on developing the language of students. Most of the students did not have a prior exposure to English language. The reason behind this was that most of them were educated in the local schools, where the medium of instruction was one of the regional languages.

Moreover, in most of the educational institutions, the teaching of English was closely linked to the teaching of English literature. In fact, it can be safely said the study of English literature was considered equivalent to the English language teaching. In other words, there were no differences or distinction between teaching British literature and the teaching of English as a language. It was considered that the teaching of literature would ensure that learners acquired adequate language skills. Ramesh Mohan (1968) describes the situation graphically when he states that, "it was presumed that the study of the great works in English literature will automatically and imperceptibly provide for proficiency in the language, and even at the undergraduate level, until three or four decades ago, there were no separate courses in English Language." (1968:366)

Interestingly, the English education was heavily based on classroom-learning and little attention was paid to the practical uses of language. The students were taught to appreciate the beauty of poems from the Romantic period but they were not taught to read
railway timetables and other real and authentic materials. The study of literature within such a framework was believed to have a general humanistic influence upon its readers, but literature was also seen as a document of social, historical, political or theological developments of an age. Language skills in this context would mean the ability to use the language in order to carry out daily activities. It was felt that the teaching of English literature would automatically result in the development of the learner’s English language skills. In fact, a very popular misconception was that education in English literature was the equivalent of developing language skills in English.

Lord Macaulay’s Minutes of 1835 recommended the use of English as the official language of the government, education and development. Macaulay might have thought that the knowledge of English was essential for civilizing Indians; earlier generations might have thought that English was necessary for the shaping of character or the development of aesthetics, but the present generation was convinced that English was needed for mobility and for social and economic advancement. English is the language of opportunities because it takes one outside one’s own community to places (within or outside India) where more opportunities are available for professional and economic growth.

In many ways the changes that took place in India were similar to what has happened in different parts of the world. Thus, the chapter will evaluate ELT practices in different parts of the world. It would be helpful to arrive at the conclusion that in most places literature teaching is carried out without any focus on language skills.
The period around the 1960s witnessed a rise in the number of scientists, engineers, lawyers and other professionals who wanted to make use of English as a means of acquiring knowledge. An overview of the history of ELT reveals the manner in which the differences over the use of literature in the ESL classroom generated controversy. The opposition to the teaching of literature resulted in the formation of an alternative camp. In opposition to the exponents of literature, ELT experts continued to consider literature unfit for achieving the ELT objective. The controversy led to many debates and arguments about the merits of the respective approaches. However, the language-literature controversy also led to new developments like the production of linguistically inclined syllabus which focused on developing the learner’s language skills by exposing him to language in real use rather than in literary use.

With the rise in the demand for ESP from professionals, the demand for ESP materials increased. The professionals who wanted to acquire English language skills to advance their knowledge felt the need to learn language for functional purposes. It was believed that if these learners were given literary texts, it would be difficult for them to acquire language skills or any other linguistic skills. Educationists realized that ELT objectives could not be achieved through literary texts. The choice was between the traditional approach, which unified the teaching of literature and language and the new approach that separated language teaching as an independent discipline.

Let us attempt to analyze the issues connected with the language literature debate by studying the approach initiated and introduced by the British colonial rulers. Lord Macaulay was a central
figure in the language debate as to which language(s) should be used as the medium of education in India. Before independence, English education did not focus on teaching language skills to students. Under the British system of education, the focus was on teaching English literature and not English as a language. The use of English by the colonial rulers led to the decline of the native languages like Urdu and Persian. It was expected that the study of English subject would be divided into two areas; namely English Literature and English Language and the two separate disciplines would be made to work side-by-side but not as a single unit.

Moreover, we need to carefully study the situation prevailing during the pre-independence period in the area of English teaching. The teaching of English language was done only through the study of English literature. Many scholars of that time like Leech (1969: 2) felt that an education in English classics would not only make the student proficient in the use of rhetoric but also improve their language skills. The popular thought led to the teaching of English through literary texts. It was hoped that teaching literary texts would help students attain ELT aims. However, it did not happen as expected because it was found that most students were not able to develop language skills even after years of study.

In support of the advocates of teaching language through language texts, the Education Commission (1968) said that a distinction had to be made between the teaching of English language and literature. With this objective it was decided to make use of literature texts for ELT purpose. The steps taken by the Education Commission lead to the widening of the rift between language and
literature. A shift occurred from a literature paradigm to language paradigm due to the change in the official policy.

Thus, the focus changed from literary composition and critical appreciation to language usage. In other words, it may be said that the period saw a rise in the demand for ESP material due to the changes that were taking place in the country. The split that came in 1960s witnessed numerous developments, some of which will be discussed in this chapter. While both the camps have been raising numerous points to prove their respective arguments, it must be noted that literature continues to be used in the ESL classroom in one form or the other.

Literature teaching is carried out without any focus on language skills. In other words, the students of English studied British literature without having a sound knowledge of the language. As a result, most of the students were found doing poorly in the study of English literature. Due to this, most of the students failed to use English in their day-to-day activities. The chapter intends to look at the factors that initiated the developments in English language teaching. An attempt will also be made to discuss the political and economic changes that were taking place around the world during the 1960s. The changes that took place in India were similar to what was happening in different parts of the world.

After reviewing the historical background behind the debate, the study will look at the arguments that have been made by the different parties. The study will look at the arguments that support the use of English literature in the ELT classroom. In the next stage,
the study will examine the arguments that are raised in favour of teaching English as a language with a focus on its linguistic utility. By following such an approach, the study is expected to maintain objectivity and look neutrally at both sides of the debate. With strict neutrality the study would be able to understand the respective merits of the two approaches.

2.2 Language- Literature controversy

Literature can be a part of the ESL curriculum due to its ability to motivate students to learn the usages of language in different contexts. It was thought that teaching English literature would not only train the learners in the skillful use of rhetoric but also improve their language skills. Continuing with this tradition, English was taught through literary texts for almost a century and two decades in India with the hope of achieving the ELT objectives. However around 1950s, recalls Imtiaz (2000:34), a divide occurred “resulting in the establishment of two pedagogical disciplines”, literature teaching based on the principles of literary criticism and language teaching supported by linguistic insights. Thus, a heated controversy arose whether the traditional unified approach of teaching English should be followed or literature teaching and language teaching should be taught as two segregated pedagogical disciplines.

Language texts that contain real life materials, like timetables, fail to hold the interest of the learners for long. Though learners of English are initially motivated, in course of time their motivation gets reduced. The reason for the fall in motivation levels of students is their realization that the targeted language skills are beyond their
reach. Suggestions were made that the ESP materials should be developed and used to attain ELT objectives. Scholars like Joanne Collie and Stephan Slater (1987), Susan Bassnett and Peter Grundy (1993), N. Brooks (1960) and Albert. H. Marckwardt (1978) favoured the traditional unified approach of teaching English, while ELT experts like Peter D. Stevens (1978) Keith Morrow (1977), Prof. Blatchford (1974), Chris Kennedy (1980) and Donald M Topping (1968) propagated the idea of using ESP texts for the ELT purpose.

In support of the tendentious preachers who advise the use of only language texts for language teaching purpose, the Education Commission of India (1964-66) stated that "a distinction has to be made between teaching of English as a skill and the teaching of literature" (cited in Sareen 1995:133). The Commission (1964-66) too also recommended the use of language texts for ELT purpose and in doing so it widened the rift between language and literature. A shift from literature paradigm occurred which led to the birth of ESP materials.

The focus shifted from literary composition and critical appreciation in the words of Professor Peter D. Stevens, to (1978:6) "the demand for English for special purposes, that is to say... to meet the needs of scientists, engineers, lawyers and other people with very special though somewhat limited linguistic requirements." Further he maintains that with the changing world scenarios, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of people who want to learn English as a functional language. However, he adds that in contrast to the learners of English a few decades ago who learnt English
language through the study of literary texts, these learners want to be able to use English as a language to carry out day to day activities and not to read English classics. He reiterates his statement by adding that most of the demand for English is of an extremely limited nature for which the study of literature is not appropriate. According to Stevens (1974) (quoted in Imtiaz 2000:45) “The teaching of English was automatically assumed to be part of a general education on the humanities, the arts side, with tacit assumption that the very best students would go forward and study English literature”. Stevens’ s views have found support from Blatchford (1974) and Donald M Topping (1968) who rejected literature in the language classroom on different grounds. Charles Blatchford (1974) opposes the teaching of literature on the grounds that literature teaching takes a lot of time out of the time that is allotted to language teaching in academies. he suggests that in most cases, very little in the curriculum is devoted to the study of languages. He adds that if the students were to take up literature study during the little time the students had for language skills, it would be a waste valuable resources allocated to ELT. According to him “the study of English literature is a luxury that cannot be indulged during the limited amount of time allocated to English.” Linguists like M Topping(1968:95-97) demanded complete removal of literature from the ESL classroom because “ Literature has no legitimate place in a second language program whose purpose is to teach language skills to cross section of students who are for preparing for studies or work in a variety of disciplines”. He adds that reading of literature will have minimal impact on developing skills like speaking, listing or writing. Literary texts gradually came to be considered unfit for achieving the ELT objective with special
reference to those who needed very limited knowledge of English language. To quote Kennedy (1980:119), ESP has tried to suggest ways in which “problems of motivation, materials and methods” can be solved; still ESP has not been able to cope up with the problems that English language teachers have long been facing. Moreover, it has not at all been successful in overcoming all these problems related to ELT objectives completely.

Keith Morrow (1977:58) suggested that ESP materials were authentic in comparison to literary texts, which were used for ELT purposes. He argued that authentic materials should be produced which would be replicas of real life situations, and where the learner could use language for communication purposes. By focusing on real life situations, these materials would be more effective in providing learners with the required language skills.

By over emphasizing the authenticity of ESP materials, people like Morrow question the authenticity of literary texts when used for the ELT purpose. Favouring the ESP texts Morrow (1977:3) says, “An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort. In other words, it is not made up of text produced by an imaginary speaker or written for an imaginary audience and designed to practice specific language points rather than to convey real information.” But authenticity of the former texts becomes doubtful, because they are useful in a very limited sense and their utility becomes redundant after a point of time. On the contrary, literature is timeless; for instance Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Wordsworth etc. are remembered and read with interest till date.
This could be one of the reasons why in India literary texts constantly feature in English course books designed for English Language Teaching purpose.

An overview of the history of ELT reveals the differences that resulted from the use of literature in the ESL classroom. The language-literature controversy led to new developments like the production of a more linguistically inclined syllabus that focused on language skills. It was believed that if learners were given literary texts, it would be difficult for them to acquire language/linguistic skills. However, it was felt that ELT objectives could not be achieved through literary texts and that the situation was even more serious in the case of professionals who needed English for limited purposes only.

ESP materials faced a number of problems, which may not be the case with literary texts. Authentic ESP materials have a very short life as they are largely based on certain contexts of real life situations. ESP materials may be very effective in the immediate situation, but they lose their relevance in due course of time. When the ESP materials lose their relevance, they lose their effectiveness too. This problem hardly ever arises in the case of literary texts, as literature is not bound by the limits of time. In other words, literature may be said to be timeless as far as its relevance is concerned.

It was also noticed that students who came from a non-literary background found the literary texts to be difficult as well as uninteresting and dull. It was feared that pro-literature approach would make the learners develop a negative attitude to the subject.
Moreover, it was found that materials, which had been specially developed for language teaching purposes had numerous advantages. ESP materials like airline timetable, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles, pamphlets, cartoons, and forms are undistorted and give the learners an opportunity to use language in real life situations. Besides, it is to be noted that these materials can easily be used in the classroom very effectively.

John Munro (1983), González, Ann. (1985) and Prodomou, Luke. (1985) came with the notion that the teaching of literature in the language classroom has its advantages because it provided the learners with an ideal model of language. It also gave the learners a chance to experience the language at a more personal level. There have been another suggestions by Coolie and Slater (1987:3) that ESP materials like “timetables, city plans, forms pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles” can be used for the main teaching material in the classroom while literary texts can be used as supplementary materials. But it is important to remember that literature functions as an independent entity due to its ability to show different ways in which language can be used. Contrary to Slater’s idea, Sandra McKay (1986:198) said that literature can function as an independent means of language learning without being made secondary because “literature does have a place in ESL curriculum. For many students, literature can provide a key role to motivating them to read in English. For all students, literature is an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use”

William Moulton (1961:49) prepared a report in which he laid down the basis on which language teaching was to be carried out. He
suggested that the focus should be on teaching the language and not about language. The focus was to be on the way language was used and not on the rules governing it. The suggested approach advocated the use of teaching methods that concentrated on developing the skill of language use among students. Under this method, students were freed from having to study about language.

Literature can be a part of the ESL curriculum due to its ability to motivate students to learn the usages of language in different contexts. Language texts, which contain real situation materials, fail to hold the interest of the learners for long. The reason for the fall in motivation levels of the students is their realization that the targeted language skills are beyond their reach.

Other scholars like Bassnett (1993:9) felt that the primary focus should be on developing writing skills. She felt that writing skills should be given more importance over speaking as writing involved speaking as well. However, one problem with Bassnett’s theory was that even though literary masterpieces offer greater exposure to language usage, they are still unfit for the language classroom. The students who want to acquire language skills in English may not be able to understand complex usages that occur in literary texts. The complexity of the literary text, like that of a poem, may dissuade learners from continuing their learning.

Another area that draws attention during the discussion of the language literature controversy is the issue of cultural context of the literary texts. It has been suggested that the cultural context of the literary texts played an important part in their understanding and
analysis. Arna S. Harris and Allan C. Harris (1967) have also emphasized the significance of the cultural context in the study of literature and have come up with a two-part bibliography of literary texts according to the difficulty levels of the students. They have provided five kinds of information about each work: the chronological period of the work, the geographic area in which the work is set, the type of life that is described, the social stratification, and the major theme or points to be remembered within the work.

Arna S Harris and Allan S Harris (1967:53) say that literary texts can be divided on the basis of their cultural contexts. They divided their selection into the following categories according to the level of the difficulty of the literary text. The difficulty level is based on vocabulary usage and other factors. The divisions consisted of:

a) low intermediate level
b) intermediate level
c) high intermediate level
d) low advanced level
e) advanced level

They also suggest that the teacher may examine the level of students and determine whether the students would be able to comprehend the text in terms of social, political, and economic factors. If proper selection of the materials were made, then it would be possible to make use of literary texts, to provide language skills to intermediate students. Thus, Arna S Harris and Allan C. Harris argued
that the literature should not be removed from the language classroom merely because literary texts of classics would not be understandable to the students. They suggest that exposing the students to selected texts would help the students develop the targeted language skills and comprehension ability.

A better understanding of language literature controversy issue can be reached through the analysis of the discussion initiated by John F. Povey (1967, 1979) at the TESOL convention in 1967. At the meeting Povey said that it was important to clearly define the exact position of literature in the English classroom. He added that literature was the most expressive form of language but it was important to understand the exact nature of the issue. Povey said that the present teaching practices might be suitable for the native learners and easy for them to follow what was taught in the classroom as the learners had sufficient language skills to study literature.

However, the same method might not be effective for the foreign students as they clearly lacked sufficient training in language skills that would enable them to carry out literary studies in English. Povey also studied the work done by Prof. Donald Bowen in India and found that in most of the countries where English was taught as a second language, most of students were unable to develop adequate language skills. Povey (1967) said that the poor language skills of the learners could be related to the teaching of English classics without any focus on the language skills required. He suggested the following use of literature in the context of the language:
1. Literature will extend the language skills of the learners by introducing them to vocabulary and syntax usage.

2. Literature would enable the non-native learner to get acquainted with the culture associated with English as a language. This would make it possible for the students to become familiar with the cultural input that goes into the creation of literary texts.

3. Literature would give one insight into human life and helps one know more about oneself.

4. Literature may be beneficial to some of the exceptional students who may want to pursue their own literary pursuits.

Ultimately, the complexity of the literary text must be cited as a reason for not taking literary texts for language teaching. Literary texts are a good source of classroom activities as they function as a source of motivation for the learners by appealing to their emotions. Literary texts enable the learners to get personally involved in the learning process. He says that an important point is that a study of the literary texts gives an insight into the culture in which the text was created. By becoming familiar with the culture the students would begin to get insights into making meaning of literary texts by studying the language closely.

However, one important factor to be remembered is that most of the students under discussion so far are those who focus on getting a degree in English. As previously discussed, increasingly there are other learners who desire to acquire language skills in order to carry out day-to-day activities. These learners who wish to learn language for functional purposes include professionals like lawyers, engineers,
scientists, and business managers. It can be said that there are many who wish to get language skills to further their own knowledge of specialized areas of knowledge. In such a situation the question that needs to be analyzed is whether or not literary texts would be effective in imparting language skills to them.

While the needs of learners who wish to learn English language for specific functions creates problem in ELT context, it might seem that removal of literary texts from the curriculum might be the answer to the problem. But this feeling has led to more problems.

New problems have arisen in many parts of the world where students are trying to get a degree in English. The problem is that while most of these students lack language skills they are required to study considerable literary texts as a part of the curriculum. Since the students are found lacking language skills, there has been an increase in the introduction of ESP material as a replacement for literary texts. There are many problems associated with such a change in the curriculum because ESP material is not a substitute for literary texts.

The reason behind the introduction of ESP material was related to the belief that literature dealt with general or universal subjects. It was also believed that this tendency of literature leads to ineffectiveness in teaching language skills in the English language classroom. Many ELT experts felt that literature dealt with universal themes like war, hatred, destruction, passion, and creation, which made it inefficient in practical usefulness. The lack of focus made literary texts meaningless for those who wanted to acquire language skills for occupational or functional purposes. With the advancement
of technical education, English was largely seen as a means to
develop one's knowledge and as a tool for communication.

Many ELT experts believed that the language that was used in
literature was one that did not always conformed to the general
standards of usage. It was for this reason considered to be
unacceptable for pedagogic purposes in the ESL classrooms. Some
ELT experts believed that a 'purpose-specific language' must be used
in the ESL classroom for those learners who come from different
disciplines like science, medicine, engineering, and commerce. The
logic behind this argument was that these learners acquired language
skills more effectively from linguistic and purpose-specific input
given in the ESL classroom. On the other hand if the students were to
teach literary texts with the view to developing their language skills
the entire pedagogy would be a failure.

By focusing on the specific language needs of a particular set of
learners it would be possible to develop a particular teaching
curriculum that would take care of the specific language needs of the
learners. The adoption of this pedagogy would make the entire
teaching experience effective and efficient. By making the pedagogy
purpose-specific, the learners who have little or no exposure to
literature would not be baffled by the intricacies of a language that
they are struggling to learn.

However, it should also be noted that while using a purpose-
specific approach, certain problems crops up. For example, it may be
argued that the use of literary texts may be beneficial to the students
in the long run but the fact that literary texts contain complex
language usage may help the students to understand the subtle nuances of language better. Besides, it may also be said that the use of literary texts would serve as a refreshing break for the learners who were regularly exposed to the materials that were specific to their areas of study. By being different from the other mandatory and more important subjects, language classes that used literary texts could become a source of inspiration for the learners. Literary texts in the language classroom could get the students to be more involved in the learning process and thus ensure that language skills were learnt effectively and efficiently.

2.3 Literature Texts in the Language Classroom

While analyzing the issues that emerged on studying the language-literature controversy, one issue that came up was the problems faced by the teachers of English. The problem that arose before the ESP teachers in the ESL classroom was with regard to their area of specialization and general expertise. Teachers, especially those teaching ESP, faced problems when they came face-to-face with problems beyond their area of expertise in the ESL classroom. For instance, an engineer is generally expected to have expertise in one’s own specialized area of knowledge. Similarly, a doctor must have specialized knowledge of the human body. Based on the same reasoning, since ESP is an extension or specialization of literature itself, it may be logical to expect the ESP teacher to be an expert in English literature also. As long as the subject of study remained within the realm of English language, things were under control but problems occurred when ESP teachers were expected to teach science to students. The ESP teachers might be experts in the
English language but the same cannot be said about their expertise in the science subject. It may be suggested that ESP teachers should initiate some learning in science or commerce as the ESP materials were based on topics connected with those subjects the learners were mainly focusing on. There were problems with such a suggestion as ESP teachers were not in any way trained to teach other subjects. They were not experts in subjects other than English.

The general conception was that English language and literature were considered to be one and the same. However, this was not the case. In the light of the aforementioned developments in the field of ELT it would be better if ESP teachers were not expected to have an expertise in literature. However, it would also be beneficial to have suitable components drawn from literary texts so as to help the ESP teachers achieve their ELT objectives by enabling the teachers to have access to resources that literary texts have to offer.

On the other hand, if the ESP teachers chose not to use literary texts in the language classroom, then they might face a different problem as far as the question of language resources was concerned. By doing away with literature in the ESP curriculum, the ESP/EAP teachers may be forced to approach other subject experts for help, as they have no prior training in the subjects like science, engineering, or robotics. The other subject experts helping the ESP teachers may find the entire exercise to be time-consuming and futile, especially in the academic year when time is limited. Another advantage of using literary texts is that these texts can be easily handled by the ESP teachers themselves without any assistance.
Speaking about time, many ESP teachers find that managing time is a serious problem while dealing with the ESL classroom. In many of the academic institutions, English language classrooms are given the least priority in comparison to the more important subjects like computers or biology. This leads to a situation where the language classes are scheduled for the afternoon sessions after busy and tiring forenoons. In such a scenario, it has been found that by the time the English language began, the students had been completely exhausted and lost interest in taking up language learning. As a result their motivational and interest levels became very low. This finally led to the students' inability to acquire language skills, which otherwise would have been beneficial in their pursuit of knowledge. A suggestion may then be made to change the timing of the language classes to a more suitable part of the day. But the problem with the suggestion is that it is too much to expect that a change in the timetable would make ESP materials interesting and effective.

Talking about time brings up another point that needs to be discussed before going any further in the analysis of the language-literture controversy. One of the points raised by Prof. Blatchford (1974) against the use of literary texts in the ESL classroom is that the study of literature is a "luxury" that cannot be indulged in a situation when the time allotted for English language education is limited. He expressed his view that the study of literature for "sheer pleasure" was not useful as it failed to help the learners to get language skills. The problem that has been identified by Prof. Blatchford may be solved through a judicious selection of appropriate material that would help in teaching language skills. Selecting and choosing the right materials from different literary
texts will allow the learners to acquire language skills while make the teaching process easier for the ESP teachers also.

Another demerit of using literary text in the language classroom is that literature is too de-contextualized to be used in the ELT classroom. However, there are certain problems with the argument as it can be said that a literary text is created in a specific context and its meaning can be fixed on the basis of the context in which it is read. For example, *Robinson Crusoe* can be read as an adventure story or economic treatise on the basis of the context in which the reading is done. The text can be contextualized according to the needs of the readers. While some readers may read the novel for the sake of the story, others, for instance commerce students, may be using the same for understanding the nuances behind the functioning of an economic system. For the same reason as cited above, experts like Brumfit and Carter (1986) feel that a literary text is an authentic piece in which “real” language is used and is capable of supporting a discussion and exploration of language.

An appropriate selection of the literary text would be an ideal source of inspiration for students as it can make it possible for the students to carry out an analysis of language composition in a specific context. This would make the student more confident of being able to use language in various contexts and give them adequate exposure to the different ways in which language can be used in a manner appropriate to the contexts. By giving them real examples of language use in different contexts the students would be to understand the different ways in which the language can be used. Moreover, by understanding the different contexts and situations the student will
learn to make meaning out of a study of the language used in literary texts.

While there is no denying the fact that literary texts are useful in the ESL classroom, problems arise when claims are made about the supremacy of the literary texts over ESP materials. It has been repeatedly pointed out that literary texts are superior to ESP materials as they are able to provide "cultural" values which ESP materials are unable to. This particular claim has to be analyzed in the light of the present scenario as well as from a historical perspective. When Macaulay (1835) introduced English education in India, it was pointed out that, English education would give the native population education in western culture. But in the present scenario the focus has shifted from imparting cultural education to language skills. In other words, it can be said that the emphasis today is on the functional aspect of language and not on the aesthetic aspect of English language. While saying so, this study does not in any way try to suggest that the aesthetic aspect of literature is not important. The focus is more on the utilitarian aspect of English language and what it can provide its learners rather than on the enjoyment it can give its readers. In most cases, where English language education is carried out, the emphasis is on language skills except in the universities that provide advanced courses in English literature. Thus, it may be said that these days the focus is more on acquiring language skills than on literary appreciation.

An important factor that comes up during the analysis of the literature-language debate is the issue of translations of English literary works with regard to the ESL and EFL programme. It is to be
noted that at this point of the study it would be imperative to look at the issue of translations due to their crucial role in potential language teaching.

Initially, it may seem that translations of English literary works have little to do with the proceedings of the ELT classrooms. The issue can be understood better if we were to look at the issue of the selection of the appropriate material that would be of greater interest. At different times, it has been found that most ESP teachers face problems while selecting materials for the ESP classroom.

It has been suggested that an analysis of the English literary texts that are translated into foreign languages gives an indication of the reading interests of the readers in that country. Such information would be of great help in determining what literary texts are to be selected for use in the ESL classroom.

To highlight the importance of the study of translations of English texts, it is important to look at the publishing details of the texts. For example, not all of Ernest Hemingway’s work was taken up for translation. The fact that only those texts are chosen for translation helps in understanding what texts the readers are interested in reading. Thus, it can be inferred that there are certain factors that readers look for in translations of English literary works and that this information can be used to determine which literary texts might be interesting and helpful in the ESL classroom. Marckwardt (1978) dealt with the notion of translated literary texts being more helpful and interesting (1978: 44).
Marckwardt cites a particular case to prove his hypothesis. He tells about how a certain book called *Babbit* by the famous author Sinclair Lewis which was selected for translation while another called *Arrowsmith* was not taken up for translation. However, a drawback of Marckwardt's argument is that it subtly implies that ESP texts fail to provide any suggestions that can help in determining what would be suitable for the ESL classroom.

### 2.4 Restoration of the Controversy

A critical analysis of the arguments of the two sides enables us to look at the views of the two schools of thought together. It can be found that the rigid stands taken by the two camps are not helpful in solving the problems faced by the students in the language classrooms. We need to understand that the main focus of the pedagogy is to provide greater help to students in acquiring language skills, whether it be through the study of literary texts or ESP materials. Both ESP and literature have different unique qualities that make it effective in language education. While literature offers the wealth of language usage, ESP provides an effective language learning pedagogy. A break up between the two sides can only result in the loss of the learners.

An important point to be remembered is that both language and literature are part of the same body which is called discourse. The particular relation between the two branches must be understood by anyone who deals with either of them. By rejecting the other views constantly, both ELT and literature experts fail to find answers to the problems faced by the students in the language
classroom. With this aim in mind it is important to find if it is possible
to have an area of common agreement between the two distinct
camps.

The objective of finding an area of compromise between the
two is not easy in the face of the opposition between the two sides. A
cursory look at the arguments by both sides on a particular argument
will illustrate the point. Both the sides continue to counter the
arguments put forward by the other endlessly.

In the face of stern opposition among the proponents of the
two camps, it is only natural that each side would take a rigid stance
in reaction to the stand taken by the other side. In opposition to the
idea expressed by some supporters of literature, Widdowson (1984)
says that the basis of language learning lies in the meaning-making
process that takes place on the part of the students while they are
engaged in the learning process. He says that the essential process
that takes place during the meaning-making process is a discourse
that enables the students to make sense. This discourse is crucial to
the language learning process as it is the basis on which pedagogy
should be based so as to enable the students to acquire language
skills.

To explain Widdowson’s argument, it would be helpful to look
at what happens in the language classroom with special focus on the
above points raised. The class normally starts with speaking and
eventually proceeds onto reading or writing skills. The process is
similar to what happens in real life situations. A person first listens to
a conversation and then tries to make sense of the utterances before
reasoning and coming up with a suitable response. The same process takes place in the language classroom when students are introduced to a literary text. The learners make efforts to concentrate upon the details that are provided by the text, which results in the learners' trying to make sense of the text. The process of making sense of the details of the text results in the meaning-making process in the learners. The reason behind the effective meaning-making process is that the learners begin to make inferences from the details given in the text. Thus, it can be safely assumed that literary texts have an important relevance in the ESL classroom.

A complete removal of literary texts from the ELT curriculum may result in a serious drawback to achieve ELT objectives. One of the reasons behind the complete rejection of literary texts is that ESP materials alone cannot ensure the correct imparting of language skills. One of the reasons cited for the removal of literary texts is the inability of literary texts to train students with adequate language skills. But it would not be fair to judge the effectiveness of literary texts in the ESL classroom on the basis of the students' inability to master the language skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. There are several factors like faulty system of examinations, lack of teaching aids, incompetent teachers, and various other factors that may be responsible for the failure of the students. Another factor behind the students' failure could be the standards applied in English teaching across the country. The central government accepted that English education should be provided in schools but it has been left to the respective state governments to decide when the education was to be started. As a result there is a
wide discrepancy in the manner in which English is taught in many parts of India.

Language is a communication tool used by an individual to express one's thought to others. In the same way, literature is a means of communication for the writer and the reader. The reader reads the text and begins to get emotionally involved and takes active part in the meaning-making process of the language education. The meaning-making process involves the reception of information, analyzing it, and making suitable response to it. Similarly, when students are introduced to a literary text, they make use of their knowledge of general language (that has been acquired in the classroom) to understand the complex language that has been incorporated in the literary text. Language taught in the classroom essentially consists of the speech that is used in day-to-day life and the language that is used in creating literary texts. Both have differences between them as they are generally used in different contexts, which sometimes may alter the meaning of even the same set of words.

However, Brumfit and Carter (1988:6) feel that all qualities of language can be found in literature without fail and therefore it is not important to exclude literature in the ESL classroom. They even suggested that a usage like oxymoron is a regular feature of a language and not the prerogative of literature. They say that literature is dependent on the extensive resources of language and therefore language components are enough for ESP curriculum. But at the same time, it is helpful to remember that to question the usefulness of one over the other would be to ask questions of a
never-ending nature. In this context it would be easier to remember that both play a mutually interdependent relationship for continuing their existence. Both are essential for one another and in turn complement one another. Thus, it might be said that both language and literary components are complementary and supplement one another.

One point that might be looked at while speaking about meaning making process is to highlight the contexts in which it is done. The meaning making process does not take place in a vacuum but rather it is enabled by the existent context and the linguistic input given previously. A text written by a person using a given set of linguistic rules when read by another person conveys a certain idea, which may or may not be similar to the idea conceived by the writer. It is important to note that until and unless a certain amount of conformity is maintained, it would not be possible to bring about an intersection of common factors. It is clear that in order to be able to convey a piece of information it is important to have a clear point of convergence, called “frames of reference”. Literature can be seen to provide these frames of reference since literary creation cannot take place without a context.

It would be incorrect to say that literature does not get any contributions from language since literature constantly draws upon the linguistic resources for support. Making use of the linguistic resources, literature comes up with innovations, which in turn add to the language resources. It is however true that literature does not always follow the rules of grammar usage. However, when literature is recommended for classroom use, one must see these aberrations in
In the words of Lee, "The substance of the English language, however, has been shaped by literature. It is in literature that the resources of the language are most fully and most skilfully used. It seems to follow that literature should enter into the languages-study of those who are to use the language with the greatest possible skill and effect." (cited in Marckwardt 1978:7)

Widdowson (1984) makes certain clarification and makes a distinction between literature as a subject and literature as a discipline. He also distinguishes 'learning' from 'studying' literature as follows:

By study I mean enquiry without implication of performance, the pursuit of knowledge about something by some kind of rational or intuitive enquiry, something, therefore, which is given separate third person status. By learning I mean getting to know how to do something as an involved first person performer. Study, in this sense, is action which leads to knowledge and extends awareness, whereas learning is knowledge which leads to action and develops proficiency". (Widdowson, 1984: 96)

Widdowson suggests that the task for the classroom teacher is to teach his learners 'learning' of literature, 'how to read and interpret for themselves.'

Further, it may be added that literature helps students to acquire a native-like competence in English, convey their ideas in good English, and learn the features of English, get insights into how
the English linguistic system is in communication. They also learn how idiomatic expressions are used in order to speak in a clear and precise manner. A combination of language and literary components in the curriculum would make the learners more proficient in English, as well as to become creative and critical learners.

Support for the inclusion of literature have also come from other sources like the research of Marwan M Obeidat (1997) who made several studies in this area especially in the Arab countries expressed his ideas on the teaching literature in the ESL classroom and recommended the inclusion of more literary texts in language teaching. He made a study of several Arab universities to examine the problem of whether English literature should continue to be associated with ESL classroom. About his research he says:

"In order to test the conflicting claims regarding the place of literature in the curriculum in the Arab world, I examined the curriculums of English departments that Zhughoul mentioned as well as few other departments at different Arab universities of the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Damascus, Tasreen, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt" (1995: 35)

Obeidat (1997) maintains that the teaching of literature in the ESL classroom plays an important role in making the learning process even though the syllabus of the universities in Arab world had almost completely removed English literature from their curriculum. Obeidat (1997) cites the work done by Mahmud Salih (1986) who also supported the teaching of literature in language
classroom. He quotes from the study that was conducted by him on 118 students.

"The students' survey shows that skills seem to develop through studying literature in English. The positive impact of literature upon language skills is by no means novel, since students exercise or practice all kinds of the skills in literature courses." (ibid) Salih suggests that in contrast to the popular belief that literature content in university syllabus was higher than that of language content, he found the reverse to be true in the universities.

Thus those who argue for the complete elimination of literature from the ESL classroom forget the fact that an effective substitute for literary text is yet to be found by linguists or language experts, for there are few language texts that can fascinate the students as well as literary texts. By focusing solely on the utilitarian function of language, many language experts forget the fact that language might not be used by the students only for the purposes of daily activities but it may also include attempts to understand the human thought process. In light of the differences between the two sides and with no visible resolution, it might be feasible to explore the possibility of having a mutually acceptable agreement between the two sides.

An objective analysis of the issue or controversy will indicate that both the sides are basically targeted towards improving the language skills of the students. Both the approaches have been found to have their respective merits and demerits. In light of the above
discussion, let us look if it is possible to bring about a new approach arising out of the combination of the two distinct approaches.

This proposed step would be able to bring out a more learner-centered teaching technique that would be able to improve the student’s language competence. One of the most significant aspects of the proposed approach would be that it will enable the teacher to combine the rich language resources offered by literature and ensure that the required linguistic components are in place.
REFERENCES:


