

## ABSTRACT ON KNOWLEDGE AND LITERATURE

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### **Abstract**

*English Studies may comprise of English Linguistics, English Teaching and English Literature. These three studies are the logical next step of efforts to acquire skills in understanding and using English, particularly for those who aspire to broaden and deepen their knowledge and mastery of English. Learning English language and English literature seems to bring about considerable questions of the benefits and the importance of so doing. Why should students who learn English language require learning English literature at the same time? The ultimate matter remains the same—what is the very core of learning the subject? What are their relationships embrace? What, why, and how are we supposed to know that? Keywords: English language, English literature*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English Studies may comprise of English Linguistics, English Teaching and English Literature. These three studies are the logical next step of efforts to acquire skills in understanding and using English, particularly for those who aspire to broaden and deepen their knowledge and mastery of English. Therefore, an acceptable degree of English mastery is required to study English literature, for example. The higher one's mastery of English the stronger is one's English sense and hence more sensitive is one's knowledge and critical awareness about English literature. More than that, this paper argues that English language and English literature are in fact inseparable with one needing the other. However, the study of English Literature is more than just English. It is about nearly all facets of society lives from which the English literary works spring up. That is, Englishspeaking people of certain country, academic, working, religious, and cultural backgrounds and political leanings and of certain times express various aspects of their lives in written English. The main objectives of studying their literary works are to enrich our knowledge and understanding of the high values of morality and wisdom they contain. However, to know what an English literary work is all about and the messages it wants to convey requires "know-how" that include English skill and strategies. Therefore, this paper argues that the study of English literature can only occur with the presence of the why-what-how balance. The sections to follow explain those arguments. Language contains rules and elements, takes both spoken or written form, reflects the speakers' culture and way of thinking, and it is significantly used to communicate ideas. Literature, in fact, does not have less meaning than language. According to Widdows on, literature has various meanings depending on the context that the speakers refer to. It may mean literary writings such as fictions or literature in term of major of study. Literature referring to literary writing could be defined as "the achievement of aesthetic and moral merit" such as those of canon or the great tradition.

Merriam Webster illustrates literature as "writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest" and Oxford terms literature as "written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit." Literature has the so called a range of characteristics such as excellent, aesthetic, creative, imaginative, expressive, valuable, and universal.

In the digital world glossary, it can be termed that literature is the message, language is the mobile phone. Those two relationships are closely bound and would not be separated in whatsoever ways. The relationship and the closeness makes them mates and this idea underlies the symbiosis of both of them, regardless the facts that there are debates as to how far a learner needs to study both of them.

### **LITERATURE AND THE KNOWLEDGE**

Language and literature are two closely related subjects that need each other. To learn English literature, for example, needs mastering English and to master English needs studying English literature. This is because English language serves as a tool in studying English literature, without which the study is impossible. There is no way to understand an English literary work when little is known about, for instance, how a sentence is constructed and how a sentence can have lexical and connotation meanings. Therefore, a good command of English is a prerequisite for studying English literature. Only with a certain level of English skill it is possible for someone to endeavor the English literature study. Similarly, the mastery of English can be enhanced and perfected by studying English literature. Although the main objectives of reading English literary works are to

enrich one's knowledge and understanding and to empower oneself, no doubt it also improves one's skill in using English. A frequent reading of English novels and short stories, for example, likely develops and strengthens one's language sense as to how the dialogues between characters, the setting description and the psychological mood of the characters are written. Likewise, a constant reading of English history works familiarizes one with how chronologies are composed in English. Another important boost of English skill resulting from intense readings of English literary works is undoubtedly the awareness of close relationship between text and context. That is, certain English texts are used to depict certain contexts. Conversely, certain contexts are described with certain texts not others. Therefore, if one wants to be able to write a good journalistic report, for example, one must frequently read journalistic works.

## THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Why do people need to learn English Literature? People will not study English literature unless it has some benefits. What benefits does English literature give to the reader? Many literary works have high values of morality and wisdom lessons in many different places at different times. Any writings or texts that function to enrich our knowledge and our understanding and empower our selves are essential. There is always a belief that any literary works will certainly give certain meanings to a certain people. People learn particular things from particular sources and thus they have the capacity to give values to any works that are considered precious. Further, the value embedded in a literary work is given by anyone who reads and responds to it based on their own experiences, purposes, and interpretation.

In addition, as far as English literature is concerned, there is language and power issue. Who rules the world seems to be the one with English as their first language. Although nowadays the distinction between English as the first, second or third is hard to tell, the central power still looks the same. This means that English language mastery that may result from studying English literature is a precondition to gain power.

However, we cannot learn the lessons and capture the messages from an English literary works unless we know what it is all about. It is about nearly all facets of society lives from which the English literary works spring up. That is, English-speaking people of certain country, academic, working, religious, and cultural backgrounds and political leanings and at certain times express various aspects of their lives in written English. Literature needs to be analyzed through the interrelationship between text and context in order to establish and synthesize meanings and appreciation to the work.

The knowledge of English Literature may include the English literary tradition, genre, western culture, local context, and analysis of literary texts in detail. Additionally, the attitudes towards English literature should cover the tolerance, respect and understanding on cultural, imaginative and intellectual differences. In addition, literary criticism, as the result of critical thinking and creative interpretation, is among the skills needed in learning English Literature. On the one hand, literary criticism seems to be a 'correction' or 'positive-negative appreciation'. On the other hand, literary criticism is, in fact, a contribution and an enhancement to the world of literature. It shows how a literary work is gaining much deeper and extended meaning in and through other people's viewpoint and reaction and thus leads us to find wisdom in our lives.

In a learning process as well as teaching process, skills, methods and strategies are used as ways to acquire knowledge. Without them, the learning-teaching process will be unorganized and incoherent. In English Literature, for example, the knowledge of genre appears to be significant starting points before analyzing poetry, prose or plays. Before reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, for instance, the knowledge of genre will significantly help the reader in understanding the novel. The reader will be given clues on the expected conflicts that might happen in the story, the complexity of plots and characterization.

The new shift in the language study, from single to multiple viewpoints, has been regarded as the most effective and appropriate method to be implemented. Likewise, the study of literature also offers more freedom of interpretation and appreciation. Learners are not the passive agents anymore; rather they are encouraged to initiate research on literature based on their own interest. Therefore, they are expected to empower themselves with the values they get from literature which are relevant with their lives.

## CONCLUSION

In fact, the presence of the why-what-how balance is required in learning any subject. While the "know-why" aspect gives the ideas of the importance of and background of such a learning, the "know-what" aspect limits the scope of the object of learning. Further, the "know-how" aspect explains the way in which a learning process could be conducted.

There could be at least three reasons that there should be balance between the 'knowwhy', 'know-what' and 'know how'.

Firstly, Learning English Literature is a construct in the whole body of learning. Since it is a construct, it should have a system. The system, in this case, serves as the correlation and interrelationship between each part. Thus, the "know whywhat-how" are elaborated in order to build a scientific reasoning through observation, discussion

and practices. Learners are best given more chances to explore and express their understanding of a literary work through short papers or essays

. Secondly, since the study of English Literature is also meant to develop positive values embedded in a literary work in order to acquire critical thinking, the syllabus should be designed to support learners to discover knowledge. The materials that are going to be discussed should be arranged to suit the goal of study.

Thirdly, methods, strategies and techniques are formulated to suit the content, and material to assist learners in the learning process in order to achieve the goal of studies.

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