

## ENHANCING VOCABULARY AND COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING WITH THE HELP OF NOVELS

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### **Abstract:**

The current study aimed at discovering several ways of improving vocabulary and comprehension with the help of novel reading in English-language learning. In the last five years, considerable emphasis has been placed on improving instruction and educational outcomes for struggling readers. Many reports have synthesized extant research findings in the area of literacy and provided guidelines for researchers with regard to essential elements of effective programs for comprehensive literacy skill development.

**Key words.** Comprehension, Novel, Language, Literature, Idiomatic expressions, Cultural awareness,

### **Introduction.**

For English language learners, building vocabulary and improving comprehension are crucial aspects of language acquisition. While there are various methods to achieve these goals, one effective and enjoyable approach is through reading novels. Engaging with literature not only exposes learners to new words and phrases but also provides context and enhances overall language skills. Reading novels can be a valuable tool for enhancing vocabulary and comprehension for English language learners.

#### **Expanding Vocabulary and Comprehension.**

English language learners are one of the largest groups of students who struggle with literacy in general and vocabulary and comprehension in particular. Often, the language experience and skills of English language learning students are heterogenous. The prior knowledge, home literacy practices, language skill, flexibility of language, and language proficiency of each learner varies considerably and influences learning and instruction. Thus, teachers are faced with the challenging demands of planning instruction geared toward this highly diverse group of language learners. A student's level of vocabulary knowledge has been shown to be an important predictor

of reading ability and reading comprehension for English language learners .Other specific areas of language and literacy competency critical to English language learners' development of language and comprehension skills include but are not limited to,the development of increased flexibility of language use ,learning words in context ,determination of importance and unimportance of text events and details as well as opportunities to respond orally to texts in more skillful ways and encouraging student conversations related to text . These competencies are critical but often neglected in language and literacy instruction for EELs ,as Anderson and Roit contended the development of these competencies will lead not only to increased skill in areas of comprehension but also to more highly developed oral language proficiency.

In addition to ideas above, Reading novels exposes language learners to a wide range of vocabulary, including both common and more advanced words. Unlike textbooks or language exercises, novels offer a more authentic and natural language experience. Through reading, learners encounter words in context, which aids in understanding their meanings and usage. Additionally, novels often introduce learners to idiomatic expressions, colloquial language, and cultural references that are not typically found in textbooks.To make the most of this vocabulary-building opportunity, learners can keep a vocabulary journal while reading. They can jot down new words, their definitions, and example sentences. Regularly reviewing and using these words in their own writing and speaking will help solidify their understanding and usage.

Novels provide learners with an immersive language experience, allowing them to develop their comprehension skills. By reading novels, learners practice understanding the flow of the language, deciphering new words from context, and grasping the overall meaning of the text. As they progress through the story, they become more adapt at predicting outcomes and understanding the author's intentions.

To enhance comprehension, learners can employ various strategies. They can start by choosing novels that match their current language proficiency level, gradually progressing to more challenging texts. It is also helpful to read actively by underlining or highlighting important information, making notes, and summarizing chapters. Engaging in discussions or joining book clubs with fellow learners can further enhance comprehension by exchanging ideas and interpretations.

Teaching Literature: why and what

The use of literature as a technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays. Moreover, in translation courses, many language teachers make their students translate literary texts like drama, poetry and short stories into the mother tongue. Translation gives students the chance to practice the lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic knowledge they have acquired in other courses.

### Building Cultural Awareness

For many language learners, the ideal way to increase their understanding of verbal / nonverbal aspects of communication in the country within which that language is spoken - a visit or an extended stay - is just not probable. For such learners, literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc. facilitate understanding how communication takes place in that country. Though the world of a novel, play, or short story is an imaginary one, it presents a full and colorful setting in which characters from many social / regional backgrounds can be described. A reader can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside (i.e. their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings. This colorful created world can quickly help the foreign learner to feel for the codes and preoccupations that shape a real society through visual literacy of semiotics. Literature is perhaps best regarded as a complement to other materials used to develop the foreign learner's understanding into the country whose language is being learned. Also, literature adds a lot to the cultural grammar of the learners. Novels not only provide language learners with linguistic benefits but also offer insights into different cultures, traditions, and perspectives. By reading novels from diverse authors and settings, learners gain a deeper understanding of the English language and its cultural context. This exposure to different cultures fosters empathy, broadens horizons, and develops intercultural communication skills.

To maximize cultural awareness, learners can choose novels that explore various themes and settings. They can research the background of the author and the cultural context of the story, further enriching their understanding. Engaging in discussions or writing reflections on the cultural aspects of the novels can deepen the learning experience. There are significant reasons why reading novels so important for building cultural awareness:

#### 1 Learning about History

The significant number of books, especially historical fictions can provide insights into the history of different cultures. Reading about past events and how they have shaped a culture's values as well as traditions can help us understand their current beliefs and practices.

2 Exposure to various perspectives: Reading exposes us to different perspectives, voices and experiences. By reading books written by authors from different backgrounds, we gain a better understanding of their cultures and can improve empathy for their experiences. With the help of this exposure stereotypes and biases can be broken down and build competence.

3 Improving Empathy: Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Through reading novels, we can gain a better knowledge of various cultures

and the challenges they face. This understanding can help us develop empathy and compassion for people from different backgrounds.

4 Building communication skills: Reading novels is an effective way of improving communication skills. By learning about different cultures, learners become better communicators with people from various backgrounds. This skill is becoming increasingly important in today's globalized world, where cultural diversity is becoming more prevalent.

5 Appreciating diversity: reading novels enables to appreciate the beauty of cultural diversity. By exploring different cultures and ways of life, students learn how to value differences instead of fearing them. This appreciation can lead to greater social cohesion and understanding.

#### Incorporating Novels into Language Learning

Integrating novels into language learning requires dedication and commitment. Learners should set aside regular time for reading, aiming to read a few pages or chapters each day. It is important to choose novels that align with their interests, as this will enhance motivation and enjoyment.

In addition to reading, learners can also utilize supplementary resources such as online dictionaries audiobooks, or e-books with built-in vocabulary support. These tools can provide instant definitions, translations, and pronunciation assistance, further enhancing the learning experience.

#### Valuable Authentic Material

Novel is authentic material. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real-life contexts (i.e. travel timetables, city plans, forms, pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles) are included within recently developed course materials.

Thus, in a classroom context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life / real life like settings. Literature can act as a beneficial complement to such materials, particularly when the first "survival" level has been passed. In reading literary texts, because students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers, they become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings.

#### Language Enrichment

Literature provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items.

Students become familiar with many features of the written language, reading a substantial and contextualized body of text. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Students also

become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn and begin to make use of some of that potential themselves. Thus, they improve their communicative and cultural competence in the authentic richness, naturalness of the authentic texts.

**Conclusion.**

In conclusion, Literature plays an important role in the English programs of many non-English speaking countries. However, there are some problems encountered by language teachers within the area of teaching English through literature. Reading novels is an effective and enjoyable way for English language learners to enhance vocabulary and comprehension skills. By exposing learners to authentic language, providing context, and fostering cultural awareness, novels offer a holistic language learning experience. So, grab a novel, immerse yourself in the story, and watch your language skills flourish.

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