

## The analysis of English literary works

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### Abstract

Studying English language and literature seems to raise many concerns regarding the value and advantages of doing so. Why is it necessary for students studying English literature to also be studying English language? What is the fundamental component of understanding the topic still stays the same? What do these partnerships entail? How, why, and what are we meant to know about that?

**Keywords: literature and language in English**

### INTRODUCTION

As is known, 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, English-speaking 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 AND LITERATURE: UNSEPARATED MATES

There are many definitions of language comprehensive, deep, or simple ones. According to Chomsky, language is "a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements" (1957, p. 13). In Merriam Webster dictionary, language is defined as system of conventional spoken or written symbols used by people in a shared culture to communicate with each other. A language both reflects and affects a culture's way of thinking....

In comparison, Oxford dictionary defines language as “the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way.” From that of Chomsky to the more recent definition of language, the essence remains the same. 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 Widows, 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. Or else, it is understood as the “creative and imaginative” writing (1999, p. 4-5). 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.

Therefore, in delivering its characteristics and entity, a tool—language—is unavoidably necessary. It becomes the only choice and its ultimate means. Now that definitions of both language and literature have been set, their relations are consequently visible. 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 proximity 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.

### **KNOW “WHY-WHAT-HOW” IN THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**

The study of English literature can only occur with the presence of the why-what-how balance. *Why* do people need to learn English Literature? People will not study English literature unless it entails 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 of certain times express various aspects of their lives in written English. Brumfit (2001) argues “a successful reading of a work of literature is an

act of interpretation, in a context where taste and style is often highly valued and where inexperienced learners face an enormous temptation to rely on secondary understanding..." (p. 94). 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 inherent relationships between the text and context, consequently, provide more values to the work. Furthermore, extensive ways to interpret a literary work have resulted in a rich critical analysis combining interdisciplinary knowledge such as sociology, psychology and history. Indeed, it is enrichment beyond literature as a text.

Further, the study of English Literature takes literature as its object of study. Brumfit (2001) affirms that literature itself contains many aspects that are supposed to be learnt, such as knowledge, attitudes, skills and responses. 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. To understand all these requires "*know-how*" or methods. According to Richards and Rogers (2001) methods include approach, design and procedure. Although Richards and Rogers' theory concerns with language teaching, it also seems to apply in learning English Literature. In approach, for example, a theory of the nature of literature and the nature of literature learning, without which it may be impossible to get the ideas of literature learning, should be well discerned. The nature of literature, particularly, lays in the literary work's embedded values (Brumfit, 2001). Whether or not a literary can be used in a wider perspective and thus it is worthy, determines its category. Methods, strategies and techniques used in the study of English literature need to adjust to individual purposes of studies. A close reading of a literary work through language analysis might be a good start. Yet, in order to know how to relate and investigate a literary work, learners need to understand the background of the writer, the society in which the work is made, and the author's personal experience with the work. They also need what kinds of approaches that need to be applied to analyze a literary work.

## CONCLUSION

The ability to balance the why, what, and how is really necessary for studying any topic. The "know-what" component restricts the scope of the learning object, while the "know-why" component provides context and concepts about the significance of the learning. Additionally, the "know-how" component describes how a learning process could be carried out. There might be three main reasons why the knowledge of "know-why," "know-what," and "know how" should be balanced. First of all, studying English literature is a component of learning as a whole. It needs a system since it's a construct. In this instance, the system functions as the interaction and correlation between every component. The "know why-what-how" is therefore

expanded upon in order to develop a scientific reasoning via practice, debate, and observation. It is important to provide students additional opportunities to analyze and discuss a literary work via essays or short pieces.

Second, the curriculum should be created to encourage students to uncover information, since studying English literature also aims to cultivate the good qualities found in literary works in order to foster critical thinking. The items that will be addressed should be organized to best serve the purpose of the research. Thirdly, in order to help students reach their academic objectives, strategies, tactics, and procedures are developed to fit the subject matter and aid in the learning process.

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