

# **Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature:**

## **Inquiry into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Degree of Masters of Arts in English Language Teaching  
(MA in ELT)**

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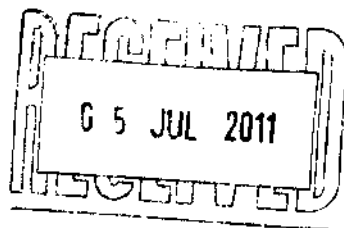


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## DECLARATION

I hereby declared that this thesis is based on my original work expect for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare~~d~~ that it has not been formerly or concomitantly submitted <sup>to</sup> at other institutions.



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Pratap Datta

Date: 5 August 2010



**The Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature:  
An Inquiry into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

*Dedicated to*

**My parents**

**(Mukul Chandra Datta & Gita Rani Datta)**

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## ABSTRACT

At present English is considered as the most dominant language and teaching English is being given the supreme priority in every discipline all over the globe. To cope with this global trend, most of the private universities in Bangladesh offer English Foundation Course (EFC) to the students of different disciplines with a view to enhancing their communicative skills in English language. However, the syllabus of EFC varies in different universities. Most of the universities follow a grammatical syllabus where literature components are avoided considering them useless in language teaching and learning. On the other hand, in some of these universities, literature is used in the classes of EFC. The reason behind integrating literature components in the classes is that literature can make a language class interactive and an interactive class can obviously improve communicative competence. Many researchers have already explored “how” literature should be used in teaching English language. However, no attempt has yet been taken to establish the efficacy of the teaching English language by using literature components. So, I have decided to conduct a descriptive research to establish the effectiveness of teaching English through literature by describing the existing phenomena of the teaching of English in EFC.



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION



This is the introductory chapter of the thesis. After the general introduction of this research, it deals with the research topic, hypothesis of the research, problem statement and objectives of the research. The remainder of this chapter deals with the research question, significance and delimitations of the research.

### 1.1 Introduction

English has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine, and computers; in research, books, periodicals, and software; in transnational business, trade, shipping, and aviation; in diplomacy and international organizations; in mass media entertainment, news agencies, and journalism; in youth culture and sport; in education systems, as the most widely learnt foreign language.

(Phillipson, 1996: 6)

The above quotation confirms that at present English is given the supreme status as a foreign language in every sector all over the globe. To cope with this global condition, most of the private universities in Bangladesh offer English Foundation Course (EFC) to the undergraduate students of different disciplines. However, this research has been conducted by investigating into the classes of EFC at different private universities in Dhaka and out side the city as well as by distributing questionnaires to the teachers who take classes of the course and taking their interviews with a view to establishing the effectiveness of teaching language through literature as a teaching technique.

## **1.2 Research Topic**

Teaching language through literature is now a very common approach in teaching EFL or ESL all over the world. Moreover, Padmini claims that “literature is definitely a useful medium for language teaching” (2009: 42). But after the application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in Bangladesh, literature is being neglected in teaching English language in the secondary and higher secondary levels. However, some private universities in Bangladesh offer English Foundation Course where literary texts are used as authentic materials along with others to make the learning more effective and enjoyable though it is still out of focus. So, I have decided to bring it to the focus and chosen **“The Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level”** as my research topic.

## **1.3 Hypothesis of the Research**

The present research has given emphasis ~~on~~<sup>to</sup> the significance of teaching language through literature as an effective teaching technique. This research was conducted on the basis of the primary assumption that teaching language through literature makes language acquisition more effective and enjoyable. As we know, literature components “focus on genuinely interesting and motivating topics to explore in the classroom” (Duff & Maley, 1990:6). Literature takes into account the functions of language in different realistic situations outside the classrooms. The inclusion of literature components such as novels, short stories, poetry or play can help the learners to become familiar with multifarious use of the language. Moreover, literary

texts motivate and inspire the learners to learn more and keep his or her interest intact.

This research is an attempt to highlight the benefits of using literary texts along with

other materials in the classes of English Foundation Course with a view to making our

teachers as well as students realize the effectiveness of teaching language through

literature.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

English Foundation Course<sup>is</sup> offered at different private universities in Bangladesh

aims to improve the English proficiency of the students. However, at the preliminary

stage, literature was excluded from EFC considering it useless for language

acquisition. The following quotation reflects a valid scenario of EFC of that stage:

For the English foundation courses, universities follow different curricula, text books and teaching methods, but what is common in all these courses is the special emphasis given on correcting grammar, spoken English, and presentation skills. These skills are considered to be useful for further studies and in the job market. There is hardly any literature component in the foundation course curriculum apart from occasional use of short stories and small articles. The anti-literature case is usually based on the hypothesis that literature is of no use in language learning.

(Karim & Zaman, 2006)

But the scenario is changing day by day. Now literature is being used to teach English

language to the students of EFC in some of the private universities of our country.

However, most of the universities still avoid literature which “is very motivating”

(Lazar, 1993: 14). So it is now crucial to establish the effectiveness of teaching

language through literature to motivate the teachers as well as the students to use

literature in the language classes.

## **1.5 Objectives of the Research**

The review of the existing works on teaching language through literature has revealed that literature can be used most effectively with language learners from intermediate level and upwards (Lazar, 1993: xiii; Collie & Slater, 1987: 5). However, most of the studies have looked into the beneficial effects of using literature in teaching English to EFL or ESL learners. Many studies have also called for more empirical research to explore how literature can be used in teaching English. In particular, Paran (2006: 9) asserted that more “descriptive research” is needed to explore the appropriate approaches for using literature in language classes.

Some studies have highlighted ‘why’ and ‘how’ literature should be used to teach English to the Bangladeshi learners. Those studies might be very helpful for the teachers to use literature in their language classes. Nevertheless, no attempt has yet been taken to examine the effectiveness of teaching English language through literature to the students of English Foundation Course (EFC) offered at different private universities in Bangladesh. Considering the existing scenario, this research aims to investigate into the classes of EFC for presenting a documentation to establish the effectiveness of teaching English language through literature to the students of tertiary level in Bangladesh. In this respect, the objective of the present study is to “uncover the interaction of significant factors and characteristics of the phenomenon” (Merriam, 1998: 29).



## **1.6 Research Questions**

The main purpose of this research is to establish the effectiveness of teaching English language through literature in the tertiary level in Bangladesh. To fulfill the purpose the following question is addressed as the research question of this study:

Is the teaching of English language through literature effective in tertiary level in Bangladesh?

In order to reach the answer of the research question, I conducted a descriptive research which shares characteristics with both qualitative and quantitative research in its methodology.

## **1.7 Significance of the Research**

This research, firstly, would work as a resource for the English language teachers to get first hand information on how other teachers are applying literature in their English language classes. In this way it would make available a ground for the teachers to compare their teaching methods with others. This study would also provide a scope for the English language teachers to improve their teaching styles by adopting the approaches highlighted here. Besides, the study would help the English language teachers to get an idea about the general interest, opinion and motivation of the students regarding literature as well as its application in the English language classes.

Apart from the teachers, the study would help the students to know what literature is and how literature can help them to improve their knowledge of English. In our

country, most of the students who learn English language avoid literature. They think that literature has no use in language learning. Thus they fail to get the taste of literature and to learn English language with pleasure. This study would provide the students with an overview of the advantages of using literary texts as authentic material for learning English language. In this way, it would change their mind and motivate them to use literary texts along with other materials. And this motivation would make their English language learning easier with a lot of entertainments.

In addition, this research would be beneficial for the syllabus designers and the commercially material writers of the English language courses. The syllabus designers are to incorporate with three perspectives: “what linguist elements should be taught?”, “what does the learner want to do with the language?” and “what activities will stimulate or promote language acquisition?” (Nunan, 1988: 26). This study would provide the syllabus designers with the information about these three perspectives instantly. On the other hand, this research would work as source of information for the commercially material writers to know the real needs of the students as well as teachers.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the Research**

The present research was conducted to the classes of English Foundation Course offered at some private universities in Dhaka and outside the city. And for the shortage of time, only 20 teachers who teach English language to the students of

English Foundation Course at different private universities are interviewed to get necessary information from them for this research.

So there might have some limitations in this research. However, all necessary initiatives have been taken to make the research authentic and indisputable. So, other researchers might get much benefit from this research. They use this thesis as a first hand material for to conduct further research in this area.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW



This chapter attempts to review the existing works which are relevant to the research topic mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis. This literature review would illustrate a general introduction on teaching language through literature, definition of literature, relations between language and literature, some related issues of teaching language and using literature in teaching language in detail. It will also focus on history of English language teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh and status of English in Bangladesh.

#### 2.1 Introduction

Language is a social phenomenon. It offers the peculiar quality to human being as a member of a particular society or a country. There is an inseparable relationship among wo/man, language and literature in a society. As language belongs to wo/man, where this is no wo/man, there is no language. And without language, literature is impossible. Without lives no society can be formed. This relationship is aptly described in the following excerpt:

... [human] life provides the base, then language evolves and using the language literary works are created. To create a literary work, the writer should have a command over the language and have an eagle eye on the day-to-day events in life. This actually makes the use of literature more relevant to learn a language ...

(Sakthivel, 2010: 227)

Every language is unique and has been molded in a special way to serve the needs of the community that speaks it. Besides, according to Putnam (1992: 385), "Languages

and meanings are cultural realities". Thus the culture of a community gets expression through its language. On the other hand, literature carries with it the cultural heritage of the community over a period of time. Hence, it is necessary to be familiar with literature of the community whose language is to be learnt. Learning of English language, therefore, requires an adequate knowledge of English culture. And it is only possible by getting familiar with English literature.

## 2.2 What Is Literature?

Literature is a "vague term" (Cuddon, 1999: 472) which denotes any type of literary work in black and white. The term is pregnant with the qualitative connotation that makes the work superior to other ordinary written works (ibid.). Russian formalists coined the word "literariness" to refer to the quality that distinguishes a literary work as different from other kinds of writings (Chakrabarti, 2006: 133). According to William J. Long:

Literature is the expression of life in words of truth and beauty; it is the written record of man's spirit, of his thoughts, emotions, aspirations; it is the history, and the only history, of the human soul.

(Long, 1997: 8)

Literature makes bridge between the progeny and the predecessor, but unlike history, it reveals the audacity, deliberation, passion and ambition of the ancestor. And to do so, literature uses language but "in peculiar way" (Eagleton, 2008: 2) to make a "creative relationship" (Collie & Slater, 1987:6) with the reader. Moreover, literature is "quintessential language content" (Holten, 1997) which "actually shapes meaning" (Kramsch, 1993). So, Carter and McRac (1996: xxiii) is right when they say that literature is much more than its language.

### **2.3 Relationship between Language and Literature**

The relationship between language and literature is strengthened by the indisputable fact that both are naturally inseparable. Literature is dependent upon language just as the latter cannot survive without the former. Language of a community expresses its peculiarity reflected in its customs, culture, beliefs, traditions norms and expectations. On the other hand, all these are usually expressed in literature of the community. So, it can be said that language and literature are the two sides of a coin. According to Lado (1964: 239), language is both a component of a culture and a central network through which other components of the culture are expressed. The language of a community, therefore, is the medium through which cultural heritage of the community is expressed in their literature. Thus learning of a language involves the study of literature and vice versa.

### **2.4 Distinctiveness of Literary Language**

Literary language is not a language variety rather “a particular organization of language” (Eagleton, 2008: 2). It is one of the forms of language that most deliberately plays upon affect as a stimulus to communication (Shanahan, 1997). However, literary language is not always that of daily communication but it is special — sometimes heightened, sometimes elaborate, sometimes marvelously simple in its way (Collie & Slater, 1987: 5). Furthermore, literary language is an intensified form of ordinary language which is systematically deviated from our everyday speech. It reveals a higher incidence of certain kinds of linguistic features which are tightly patterned in the text (Lazar, 1993: 7). However, literary language is relative and not totally separate form other forms of language (*ibid.*).

## **2.5 Using Literature in Teaching Language**

According to Langer (1997:607) literature can open “horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore”. Collie and Slater (1987) also focus on the positive contributions of a literature as it exposes the learner to different registers, types of language use. Besides, suitably selected literary pieces provide the students a true means of communication that ensures effective situation for language learning. Some related issues of using literature in language teaching are discussed here in the light of existing works in this area.

### **2.5.1 For What**

The four basic skills of language, namely, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, can be taught through a literary text (Padmini, 2009: 42). Besides, literature can be used to teach all language skills and sub-skills as it is “authentic material” (Collie & Slater, 1987: 4). If the materials are selected properly from literary texts, they will motivate the learners to learn all language skills and sub-skills with a lot of entertainments. Povey also believes, “literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage and complex and exact syntax” (1972: 187).

However, literature, first of all, promotes overall increase in reading proficiency. It can provide the language learners with effective and experiential factors which motivate them to read (McKay, 1982). The contents of literary texts are also more emotive and imaginative which spontaneously entices the learners to be involved in reading the texts. Apart from reading, literature can be “a powerful and motivating

source for writing” (Rana, 2009: 77) too. So, literature components can be used to teach writing as well. In this case, techniques like paraphrase, summary, and adaptation can be followed. According to Haemer (1998) and Ur (1991), these techniques are very beneficial writing exercises.

The teaching of speaking and listening can be also made interesting with an equally meaningful role of literature (Rana, 2009: 77). Literary texts can provide a lot of interesting topics for spoken and listening practice. In this regard, a literary text can be read out in full or in parts by the teacher or the students, or an audio version of the text can be played. Thus, when used orally, literature can develop students’ listening ability (Moody, 1971:7). Besides, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, group discussion can be used in this concern. Furthermore, McKay points out that “literature offers an excellent context for developing global listening skills” (2001).

Besides, literature provides the students with abundant examples of the subtle and complex uses of grammar and vocabulary of English (Padmini, 2009: 41). When the learners read the literary texts all the grammar constructions used in the text are internalized and assimilated unconsciously. It will also help students in improving their pronunciation. On the other hand, as literary texts are much richer in terms of style of writing, scope of vocabulary, and array of grammatical points, it is highly probable that upon using them EFL learners may encounter, linguistically speaking, more difficult structures and learn many more vocabulary items in terms of denotative as well as connotative meanings, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, slang, and colloquialism.



## 2.5.2 Why

Collie and Slater (1987) uphold literature as authentic material that deals with ever-present human concerns, and allows students to enter and inhabit the landscape of a text that touches emotions and invites personal involvement. Besides, the advantages of using literature components for language activates are that they offer a wide range of styles and registers (Duff & Maley, 1990: 6). They also mention that literature components are open to multiple interpretations and hence provide excellent opportunities for classroom discussion (*ibid.*). Besides according to Vandrick, literature motivates students “to explore their feelings through experiencing those of others” (1997:7). It offers numerous authentic materials pregnant with some fundamental human issues (Collie & Slater, 19987: 3).

Furthermore, Collie and Slater (1987) and Lazar (1993) point out some issues which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. Firstly, literature is “authentic” and “motivating” material for teaching language. Secondly, literature can offer the students access to the cultural background of the people whose language they are learning. Thirdly, literature can encourage students to learn the language. Fourthly, literature can expand language awareness of the students. Fifthly, literature can develop the interpretative power of the students. And sixthly, literature can teach the whole person by engaging the individual fully into the texts.

Besides, according to Hişmanoğlu (2005, 55), literature adds a lot to the cultural grammar of the learners. Culturally, literature provides the exposure to the culture of its speakers. Lado (1964) also stresses that successful language teaching entails that learners understand the cultural content of the target language, especially if the

language is taught for its educational values as in the ESL or EFL situation. Lawal (1992) has similarly argued that communicative competence must be viewed as subsuming a functional measure of cultural competence. This seems to suggest strongly in favor of including literature that contains some amount of the cultural aspects of English in the ESL curriculum.

Apart from the above mentioned reasons for using literature in the foreign language class, one of the main functions of literature is its sociolinguistic richness. According to McKay (2001), “the greatest benefit of using literature in the language classroom lies in its potential for developing students’ sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence”. The use of language changes from one social group to another. Likewise, it changes from one geographical location to another. A person speaks differently in different social contexts.

On the other hand, literature can provide students with a wide range of language varieties like sociolects, regional dialects, jargon, idiolects which can develop their sociolinguistic competence in the target language. However, according to Ainy (2010: 107), the foremost reason for using literature in the language classes is to encourage and expand students’ creativity and the faculty of imagination. W.R. Lee in his editorial in the journal entitled *English Language Teaching* expresses the effectiveness and necessity of literature in language teaching in the following words:

... Literature is rooted, so far as the foreign-language learner is concerned, in the oral basis of language learning; rooted in lively and meaningful oral drills, in spoken and acted dialogues, in simple dramatization of stories; indeed in those very procedures which make for successful and interested learning of the language.

(Lee, 1970: 4)

Above all, research conducted by Sidhu (2003) noted that students' perception of literature lessons were mixed while the students' perception on the literature in language classrooms appeared to be bifurcated.

### 2.5.3 How

Any standard activity that is used with non-literary texts can be used with the literary texts. Literature can be used to teach language by means of interesting activities such as brainstorming, role playing, vocabulary testing, grammar exercise and so on. In this case, teachers should be able to reshuffle the text according to the language level, need and interest of their students. Based on the historical development of the approaches recognized to teach literature, it can be said that the approaches have evolved from a central focus on literature as a subject matter to making literature as a resource for other subject matter like the teaching of the English language. However (Lazar, 1993) points out some commonly used methods and approaches. These are language-base approach, literature as content, literature for personal enrichment and stylistic analysis.

According to Lazar (*ibid.*), language-based approach to using literature includes techniques and procedures, which are concerned mainly with the study of the literary text itself. Thus, students are equipped with the tools they need to interpret a text and to be able to make competent critical judgments of it. The advantages of using literary text for language activities are that they offer a wide range of styles and registers, they are open to multiple interpretations and hence provide excellent opportunities for classroom discussion and they focus on genuinely interesting and motivating topics to explore in the classroom (Duff and Maley, 1990).

In case of literature as content, Lazar (*ibid.*) states that literature itself is the content of the course. It pays attention to areas such as the history and characteristics of literary movements, the social, political and historical background of a text, the literary genres and rhetorical devices and so on. He added that the amount of background information about a text given depend on different factors, such as the time available, to what extent the text refer to specific historical events or characters and the interest of the students in literary characteristics of a text. The text is seen as a product, a sacrosanct from and about which students accumulate descriptions of critical schools and literary movement, biographical facts about authors and various synopses (McKay, 1982).

Literature for personal enrichment stresses the need of the students' personal engagement with the reading of literary text. It aims to develop language competence and literary competence of the students and is better expressed in terms of the pleasure and personal fulfillment which come out of the reading of literature and the making of a literary text to one's own (McKay, 1982). Lazar (1993) also views literature as beneficial for encouraging students to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings and opinions. Students will become active participants, both intellectually and emotionally in learning the language, hence speeds up the language acquisition.

Literature can also be used in language classes by following the stylistic analysis which "can guide students towards a more sensitive understanding and appreciation of literary texts itself" (Lazar, 1993: 31). It is an approach to the analysis of literary texts

by using linguistic description (Short, 1996: 1). According to Simpson (1997: 5), Stylistics which offers an invaluable testing ground for theories and constructs in linguistics, also has specifically linguistic function. Besides, stylistics spans the borders of the two subjects, literature and linguistics (Short, 1996: 1). According to Lazar (1993: 31) stylistics not only helps students to read and study literature more competently, it also provides them with excellent language practice. So, by following the approach teachers can make their students enable to make meaningful interpretation of the text as well as to expand students' knowledge and awareness of the language in general.

## **2.6 Benefits of Using Literature in Language Teaching**

Using literature in the language classes can offer some extra benefits as literature can encourage inferring meanings by interacting with the texts. Brown (1994) states that learning any foreign language is a complex task which creates human anxiety associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration and apprehension. On the other hand, one of the chief attractions of literature is that it delights. Students keenly feel this effect when the teachers enjoy the texts they are teaching. The latter's enthusiasm enables them to share readily with the former the joy they have derived from the literary works. Thus literature can make language learning easy with lots of entertainments.

Besides, according to Hymes (1971), learners should have knowledge about the culturally acceptable ways of interacting with others in different social contexts along with the linguistic knowledge to communicate effectively through any medium of

language. However, literature can offer them to get familiar with the cultural background of the language community whose language they are intending to learn. Literature can also enhance the students' language competence by means of its capacity for providing pleasure and enjoyment. McKay argues that literature can increase the students' "motivation to interact with a text and thus, ultimately increase their reading proficiency" (1982:531). In reading a literary text, one is often encouraged to recreate its meaning or the reality the writer attempts to represent through actively seeking evidence from the text and his own knowledge of the world. In this way, literature can act as a considerable aid to language learning to deepen the learners' sensitivity to language through heightening their critical ability and creative power. In fact, literature can offer the students sufficient opportunities to develop their interpretative power which is an important asset in language learning.

## **2.7 Section of Texts**

Literary texts to be used in language selected according to the needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students. Conversely, selecting texts relevant to the real-life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner is of great importance. Language difficulty has to be considered as well. If the language of the literary texts is quite straightforward and simple this may be helpful (Collie & Slater, 1987: 6). However, a key criterion for selecting texts is the choice of texts that lead the students to discuss their personal experience (Brumfit & Carter, 1986:32). Besides, McKay (1982:532) states that to encourage group discussion and individual response, texts with themes that students can identify should be chosen.

Different themes will, of course, have different degrees of popularity at different levels.

Stylistically intricate texts may not be entirely suitable for students at every level. But this does not mean that they should altogether be avoided. In fact, texts with a moderate degree of stylistic difficulty may well suit our purpose of developing the language learning capacity. Povey notes that wrestling with somewhat complicated texts necessitates the language learners to “read with careful comprehension and attention to detail” (1979:165). However, teachers need to make sure that the texts they wish to read with their students generally appeal to them, taking into account their age, level, and general interest (Yorke, 1980:314).

There is also the question of the use of modern or pre-modern texts. Many teachers emphasize that the former are more easily accessible to students in terms of both language and culture (Sowden, 1986 & Sage, 1987), and they therefore should occupy a large portion of our own anthology for students. While this observation is by and large true, one need not confine oneself to rigidly choosing contemporary literary material. Here again, it is useful to quote Povey:

...even here many have discovered that the most unexpected and improbable texts are enthusiastically received because of some fancied association with students' experience. ... There is no reason not to experiment. After all, some societies in which a teacher might be working may be a lot closer to Elizabethan England, nineteenth century America or even Classical Greece than present-day California and New York.

(Povey, 1979: 164)

Doubtlessly many themes can be found in the “older” literary texts, some of which our students could readily identify. Moreover, the language of these texts is not

necessarily more difficult than that of contemporary ones. Thus, if carefully chosen, pre-modern texts can stimulate student response as well as. This leads us to the next major criterion for text selection — that the texts chosen should be “culturally significant” (Adeyanju, 1978; Sage, 1987). It is also important to select texts of an appropriate length. Texts that are too long, as Sage observes, might pose “the question of how to maintain students’ interest” (1987; 87). Of course, a common method of getting around it is the use of extracts. But teachers need to exercise great care before they can effectively use them to generate student response. Ample background information is required in order to put a particular extract in context; otherwise the students will not be able to relate it to the work as a whole, and thus miss its meaning.

## **2.8 Place of Literature in ELT**

According to Widdowson (1984), the teaching of English language by using literature components in a non-native context started at the early years of the nineteenth century, when literary texts were considered as highly valued materials for the language study and an access into literary texts were regarded as the part of language learning. However, Duff and Maley (1991) claims that after a long negligence, an increasing attention has been given to the possibility of using literature in English Language Teaching (ELT) since the middle of the 1980s. Moreover, Sage (1987) states that literature has confirmed its place in ELT by dint of cultural value, linguistic importance and educational value.

## **2.9 English Language Teaching in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is always associated with the mother language movement because the nation was founded on the basis of the language movement (Bhasa Andolon) of 1952



(Power & Shrestha, 2009: 3). Before 1971, English was as the second language in this territory but after the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country the official status of the English language changed to that of a foreign language. According to

Rahaman:

The Bengali Introduction Law, promulgated in 1983 by Bangladesh Government, made it compulsory for employees in government, semi-government and autonomous institutions to use Bengali in interoffice memos, legal documents and correspondences except in case of communication with foreign governments, countries and organisations. As a result of the enforcement of this law, Bengali began to be used in almost all fields of national life. Thus English lost its previous status as a second language and came to be treated as a foreign language.

(Rahman, 1999: 13)

In that monolingual situation people could do almost everything in Bangla. However, English “has come back as an economically valuable language in Bangladesh” (Power & Shrestha, 2009: 3). The present scenario is vividly reflected in the following quotation:

English plays a vital role in Bangladesh at present. Although Bangla has been introduced as the medium of instruction in our universities, teachers and students have to use English textbooks and journals for study and research in nearly all disciplines of knowledge. English is the only means to use internet and e-mail. It is a required subject for all competitive examinations for recruitment in government service and NGOs. It is used extensively in civil and military administration, in courts, in trade and commerce with foreign countries, in banks and tourism. The ability to use English language effectively is regarded as a necessary qualification for our communication with foreigners and foreign countries. Thus both educationally and socially, English has a very important role to play in our country.

(Karim, Begum, Kundu & Misra, 2008: 7)

English is taught as compulsory subject in schools and colleges, and as a foundation course in universities in Bangladesh. And it is taught in the EFL situation. However, according to Phillipson (1992: 24), “Bangladesh would be categorized as an ESL country, but the amount of English that Bangladeshi children are exposed to may be so small that teaching should be organized as for an EFL situation”.

## **2.10 Place of Literature in EFL in Bangladesh**

In Bangladeshi EFL situation, literature is taught as a separate discipline in different public and private universities. Besides, the private universities offer English Foundation Course (EFC) to the students of different disciplines to strengthen the foundation in English language. Karim and Zaman (2006) point out that there is hardly any literature component in the EFC curriculum apart from occasional use of short stories and small articles. They have also mentioned that literature has been greatly discarded from secondary and higher secondary curriculum as it is considered to be a 'luxury' for students of developing countries like us. However, Deeba and Sultana (2008) claim that teaching through literature can be "one of the best methods of teaching" English language in Bangladesh.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY



This chapter addresses the methodological issues pertaining to the present research. After the discussion of the research method used in this study, it deals with the rationale for the research method, research site, participants and research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and observations. The remainder of this chapter deals with the discussion of data collection procedures, the techniques of data analysis, the ethical considerations followed in collecting data and the reliability and validity of the data and the data collection procedure.

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to establish the effectiveness of teaching language through literature in the context of the English Foundation Course (EFC) offered at different private universities in Dhaka and outside the city. The current chapter deals with the technical sides of the research. And the results found by following the methods discussed here have been documented in the next chapter.

#### **3.2 Research Method**

The method used in this study is the descriptive research method that absorbs a set of techniques “to establish the existence of phenomena by explicitly describing them” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 125). Descriptive research method is of two types: case study and group study. However, this research is a descriptive group study. It shares

characteristics with both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Besides, this research was approached from a synthetic perspective which emphasized the interdependence of the related issues of using literature components in language classes. And the aim of the research was heuristic as it was motivated by specific hypothesis. Moreover, the data were collected through non-intrusive and non-manipulative procedures with a view to establishing the phenomenon of the effectiveness of teaching of English language through literature and then those data were written up descriptively.

### **3.3 Rationale for the Research Method**

The purpose of this research was to examine the effectiveness of teaching of English language by using literature components to the students of the tertiary level specifically the undergraduate students of private universities in Bangladesh. And the aim of this research was to answer the research question discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis. That is to say, the research was conducted to establish the hypothesis of the effectiveness of teaching language through literature in the context of the EFC offered at different private universities in Bangladesh. As the EFC was an existing phenomenon and the purpose of the study was to establish the effectiveness of teaching of English language through literature by describing the phenomenon, the descriptive research method was considered the appropriate method for the research. Besides, Merriam (1998) states that a descriptive research can be effective for investigation into a phenomenon of education where little research has been done. In this sense, a descriptive group study was considered as a pertinent research method for the present research.

### **3.4 Research Site**

The research was conducted in different private universities in Dhaka and outside the city. The universities were East West University, The People's University of Bangladesh, ASA University Bangladesh, Prime University, Queens University, Uttara University, Atish Dipankar University of Science and Technology, Gono Bishwabidyalay, Stamford University, The University of Asia Pacific. These universities offer English Foundation Course (EFC) to the undergraduate students of different disciplines. Generally, EFC is offered in the first or in the second semester of the program. The duration of EFC varies according to the span of the semester. In some universities, the duration is four months and six months in others. The main purpose of EFC is to improve the language proficiency of the students.

### **3.5 Participants**

The participants of this research were altogether 20 teachers who taught English language to the students of English Foundation Course at above mentioned different private universities. The teachers were categorized into two groups according to their postgraduate degrees. The teachers who completed post graduation in English literature were classified as teachers from literature background. On the other hand, those teachers who had an MA in ELT were categorized as teachers from ELT background. However, the teachers from both backgrounds were equally selected. There were also equal numbers of male and female teachers in each group.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

This research adopted quantitative as well as qualitative approaches to collect the primary data. So, different types of research instruments were used in this research for collecting data. The research instruments used in this research are discussed in detail in below.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was designed to collect primary data from the teachers who participated in this research (See Appendix A). The questionnaire was a mixture of factual, structured and open-ended questions. The factual questions were “used for ‘moderator’ variables to tap divisions” (McDonough & McDonough, 1997: 174) of the participants. Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 173) advocate that structured questions are considered to be more efficient than open-ended questions. So, the structured questions were given priority in the questionnaire. On the other hand, Nunan (1992: 143) claims that researchers often obtain more useful information from open-ended questions as they offer an opportunity to the participants to express what s/he wants to say. Therefore, open-ended questions were also used in the questionnaire “to explore the informant’s own perceptions, beliefs or opinions” (Burns, 1999: 131) regarding the research topic.

#### **3.6.2 Interview**

The interview as a research instrument allows the researcher to “enter into the other person’s perspective” (Patton as cited in Merriam, 1998: 71). So, a total of twelve interviews were conducted with the teachers from both literature and ELT background

to grasp an in-depth understanding of the participants' views on using literature components in the English language classes. The interviews were structured, semi-structured and unstructured in format. Burns (1999: 119) asserts that structured interviews ensure greater consistency and reliability than other types of interviews. Therefore, structured interviews were conducted on the basis of "a list of preplanned questions in a fixed order" (*ibid.*) to get the consistent and reliable information regarding the effectiveness of the teaching of English language through literature (See Appendix B).

However, in structured interviews, there is a little scope to look deeply into interviewees' perceptions and belief concerning the issue (*ibid.*). In this regard, Dowsett (1986: 53) affirms that the semi-structured interview is quite extraordinary as the interactions in this type of interview are incredibly rich and the data can be collected through this type of interview more flexibly than the structured interview. So, semi-structured interviews were also conducted "with a list of predetermined questions" (Nunan, 1992: 149) to get "more personalized responses" (McDonough & McDonough, 1997: 184) from the interviewees (See Appendix C).

Furthermore, according to Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 167), the unstructured interviews are mostly used in descriptive research. They also mention that unstructured interviews provide the interviewee with extensive autonomy of expression and elaboration and often resemble informal discussions (*ibid.*). In addition, unstructured interviews offer a scope for the interviewer and the interviewee to engage themselves in an open conversation based on the topic and related issues of the research (Burns, 1999: 120). And the purpose of the unstructured interviews "is

not to get simple yes and no answers but descriptions of an episode, a linkage, an explanation” (Stake, 1995: 65). of the topics or issues. Therefore, unstructured interviews were also conducted on the centering “a rough checklist built around issues formulated in outline only” (McDonough & McDonough, 1997: 184) to get more information which probably could not be obtained in structured or semi-structured interviews (See Appendix D).

Another format of interview used in this research is group interview. Hopkins (1993) claims recognizes that group interview is the most productive among different types of interviews as the individual interviewee can ‘spark’ into the perspective lines of discussion. However, notes were taken instantly after each interview. And the interviews were transliterated without delaying much to maintain “immediate familiarity with data” (Merriam, 1998: 87).

### **3.6.3 Observation**

Observation was also used as one of the research instruments of this research to get a “first-hand account of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam, 1998: 94) of the students and to complement the other account of the phenomenon attain by using other research instruments as interview and questionnaire. The observations were undertaken in the classes of English Foundation Course (EFC) at some of the previously mentioned universities in Dhaka and out side the city. The classes were basically observed for three reasons: (i) to get an overview of the context, (ii) to “substantiate the findings” (Merriam, 1998: 95) and (iii) to “provide specific instances and behaviours that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews” (*ibid.*).



However, an observation checklist (See Appendix E) was designed to undertake the observations. The observation checklist was designed to get general idea of the overall class motivation by following Nunan (1989: 110). The purpose of the observation checklist was to point out the student's motivation level generated by the teaching materials adopted from literary texts. There were 10 issues for pointing out the motivation level of the students. And there were 5 marks to point out the level. 3 was the average mark for any one item of the issues. There was an instruction for the observer to circle the appropriate mark from 1 to 5 to indicate the motivation level of the students. And the observer was also requested to write the final comments at the bottom of the sheet.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

Bryman (2004) and Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) suggest that the use of multiple techniques for data collection offer a comprehensive perspective and holistic insights into the research. So, both the observational techniques and the non-observational techniques were used in collecting the data intended to be used in addressing the research question discussed the introductory chapter of this thesis. Among the observational techniques of data collection discussed by Burns (1999: 78-116), only the class observation technique was chosen for this research. All observations were undertaken by the researcher and another observer selected by the researcher. In total 10 classes were observed. And each class was observed twice.

Furthermore, among the non-observational techniques of data collection discussed by Burns (1999: 117-151), the questionnaire distribution and the interviewing techniques were chosen for this research. The questionnaires were distributed among the teachers

who were selected as the participants of the research. The teachers were given much time to think about the questions of the questionnaire so that their answers would be authentic. On the other hand, all the participants were interviewed either individually or in group according to their schedule. However, at the time of interview, the interviewees were given total preference for knowing their personal belief regarding the research topic. Before taking the interviews all interviewees were informed about the topic and also given much time to think about. All the interviews were taken on the basis of the previously designed checklists.

### **3.8 Ethical Concern in Collecting Data**

Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 196) point out some ethical considerations for the researcher who carries out research with human participants. They suggest that researchers must pay attention to the ethical considerations for the confidentiality of the participants. Keeping the suggestions of Seliger and Shohamy in mind, therefore, much attention was given to the following ethical considerations at the time of collecting data and documentation.

- The dignity and privacy of the participants were protected.
- The individual's freedom to decline participation was respected.
- Confidentiality of research data was maintained.
- The individual was given consent before taking his/her interview (See Appendix F).
- Classes were observed by taking permission from the authorities.

Furthermore, all information and data collected for this research were documented in terms of group statistics to preserve the privacy of the participants.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The data collected through the questionnaires, interviews and class observations for this research were quantified and analyzed to get the necessary information to address the objectives discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis. The quantification was done using the Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel programs in order to organize and keep a record of all the data gathered. The data were then presented in the form of frequency tabulation and were specifically arranged in Chapter Four of this thesis according to the objective discussed in the first chapter. The data presented in the graphs and tables were also discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

Interview records and questionnaires were analyzed for the participants' perspectives. On the other hand, the data collected from class observations were examined to seek a first hand account of the nature of the classroom culture. Those data provided a richer description of the teaching practices in the classes. And they also served to clarify and verify some of the participants' perspectives. However, the entire course of the data analysis focused on coding any recurrent themes related to the teachers' responses and the students' motivations regarding teaching language through literature.

Following Leed's suggestion (cited in Merriam, 1998), all data were managed in three phases: (i) "data preparation" (i.e. entering data to prepare a data base), (ii) "data identification" (i.e. placing data into analytically meaningful and easily locatable segments) and (iii) "data manipulation" (i.e. searching for, categorizing, retrieving, and reorganizing the data). Besides, numerous visits to the database of the research, such as questionnaires, interview records and observation checklists, were made with

a view to exploring the persistent themes pertaining to the nature of teaching language through literature. Some quantitative findings of the research collected through the questionnaires were also searched and analyzed. These quantitative findings were particularly related to the teachers' responses and perceptions regarding using literary texts in the classes of English Foundation Course.

### **3.10 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are the two most important criteria for assuring the quality of the data collection procedures (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 184). To increase the authenticity and reliability of the findings, therefore, a description of how data were gathered was given in sufficient detail. Moreover, to ensure validity and reliability, the entire process of this research was reviewed and verified ethically prior to data collection, and complied with ethical concerns throughout the research. In addition, following the suggestions of Merriam (1998), the internal validity, reliability, and external validity were enhanced through the following strategies.

#### **3.10.1 Internal Validity**

Various types of strategies were followed in the entire process of the research to ensure the authenticity of the findings. Firstly, multiple data collection instruments, such as questionnaires, interviews and observations, were attempted for conducting the research successfully. Secondly, an attempt was made to clarify the researcher's biasness on the topic by explaining the hypothesis of the researcher in the introductory chapter of the thesis.

### **3.10.2 Reliability**

As the criteria of reliability of provides information on whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 185), throughout the entire process of the research all attempt were taken to follow three strategies to enhance reliability suggested by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007). The strategies were: (i) explaining the theoretical background along with the researcher's position (ii) triangulating data collection procedures and (iii) describing in detail the data collection procedures and analysis and how conclusions were drawn. Moreover, except the researcher, another observer was selected for "independently observing the ... classroom" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 186) to make the observations more reliable.

### **3.10.3 External Validity**

External validity confirms the "reader/user generalizability" (Wilson, cited in Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007) or "user generalization" (Merriam, 1998) of the findings. And user generalization is important for every research. Therefore, it is essential to present a rich substantial description of the research site as well as the procedures of data collection and analysis so that readers or users of research can determine whether the findings are relevant and applicable to their situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this reason, every initiative was taken to increase the user generalizability of the findings of this research by providing an extensive description, so that the results of this research in relation to teaching language through literature could be valid and useful for other researchers and practitioners.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION



This chapter presents the findings and the discussion on those findings of the present research. It deals with general introduction of the chapter, background of the teachers who participated in this research, teachers' views on literature and some related issues, such as what literature is, methods and approaches along with activities followed by the teachers to use literature components in language classes. And the chapter ends with the discussion of benefits, problems and suggestions regarding teaching language through literature.

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Apart from the presentation of the findings of this research, this chapter also includes the discussion on the findings. The findings are presented here in some figures and tables to make the discussion more effective. By observing the figures and tables one can easily get an overview of the findings of this research.

#### **4.2 Background of the Teachers**

The participants of this study were 20 teachers who took classes of English Foundation Course at previously mentioned different private universities in Dhaka and outside the city. The teachers were from both literature and ELT background. According to the background of the teachers, the findings were categorized into two groups named (i) Literature Background and (ii) ELT Background. This distinction was done to recognize any possible patterns that may emerge from the different groups of participants.

### 4.3 Teachers' Views on Using Literature

Teachers' views on applicability of literature, literary texts type along with methods and approaches used by the teachers to used components in the language classes are discussed below.

The following figure demonstrates the general findings regarding teachers' views on applicability of literature in teaching language.

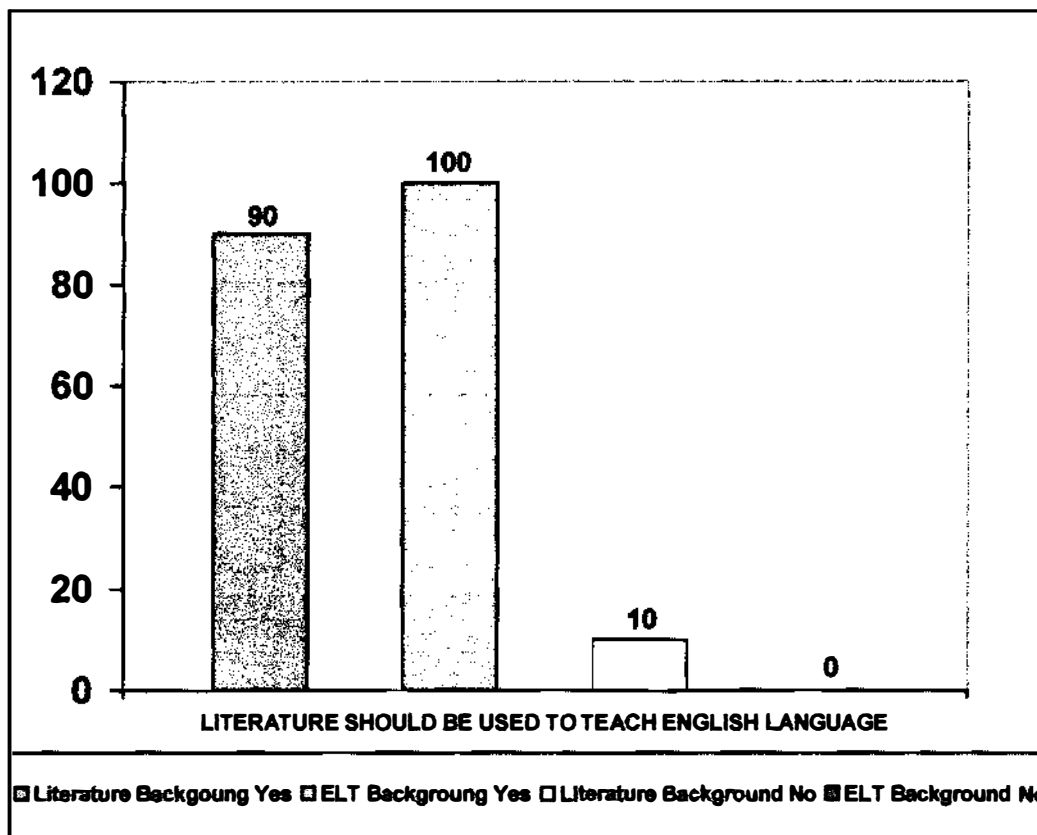


Figure-1: Teachers' views on applicability of literature in teaching language

Figure-1 shows that teachers from both backgrounds had some similar views on applicability of literature in language teaching. Figure-1 shows that 90% teachers from literature background group were in favor of using literature to teach English language. On the other hand, 100% teachers from ELT background thought that literature should be used in the language classes.

### 4.3.1 With Whom

The teachers from both groups had also some similarities and dissimilarities regarding the students with whom literature should be used to teach English language. The following figure contains the general findings regarding teachers' views on the students with whom literature should be used.

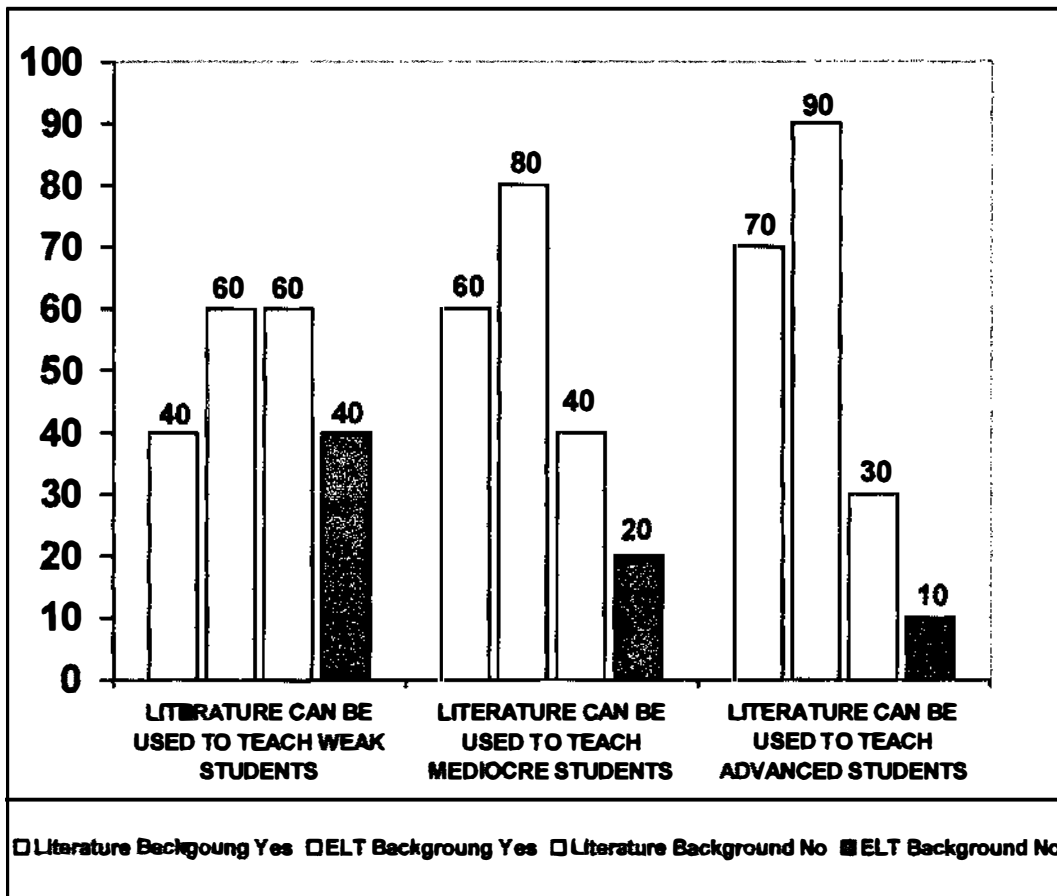


Figure-2: Teachers' views on students with whom literature should be used

Figure-2 shows that the teachers from both literature and ELT background differed in their views on applicability of literature to the weak, mediocre and advanced students. More specifically, on an average more than 50% of the total number of the teachers thought that literature should be used to teach English language to the weak students. On the other hand, on an average 70% of the teachers were in favor of using literature



to teach English language to the mediocre students. However, on an average 80% of the teachers thought that literature should be used with the advanced students. These variations might be on the basis of the language level of the students. As the language level of the weak students was comparatively low, the teachers might have thought that they would not be much capable to tackle the advanced language of the literary texts. On the other hand, as the advanced students had a good command on English language, most of the teachers from both backgrounds were in favor of using literature with the advanced students to make their learning more effective and enjoyable.

#### 4.3.2 What

The following figure shows the general findings regarding teachers' views on literary texts written in different varieties of English language.

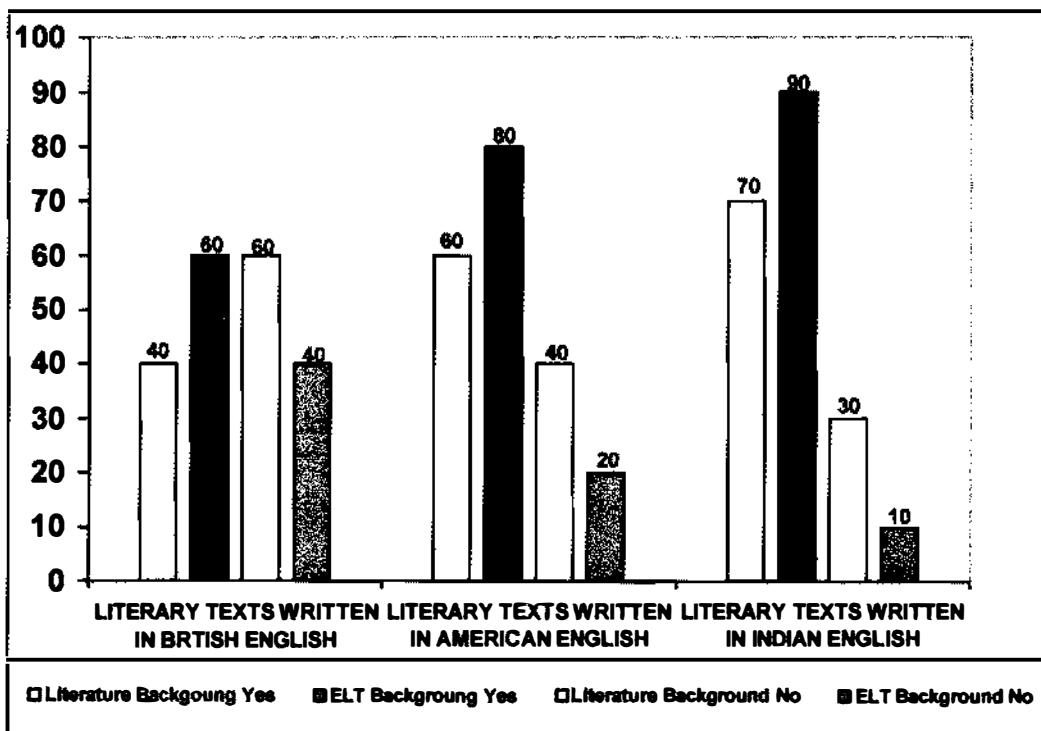


Figure-3: Teachers' views on texts written in different varieties of English

Figure-3 shows that on an average more than 50% of the teachers thought that literary texts written in British English should be used to teach English language to the students of EFC. In the contrary, literary texts written in American English were suggested by in average 70% of the teachers. Nonetheless, in average more than 80% of the teachers were in favor of literary texts written in Indian English. These variations might have been occurred because of the lucidity and accessibility of these different varieties of English language. As literary texts written in Indian English were comparatively lucid and accessible for our students, most of the teachers from both backgrounds might have suggested for those texts.

However, teachers from both literature and ELT backgrounds, agreed that theme of the literary texts would be the main considering issue. They mentioned that many themes might be found in the older literary texts, some of which our students could readily identify. Moreover, the language of those texts might not be necessarily more difficult than those of contemporary ones. In fact, most of the teachers from both backgrounds mentioned that a good deal of modern writers such as T. S. Eliot, Faulkner, Joyce and a few others —would appear to many of our students to be stylistically obscure. Thus, if carefully chosen, pre-modern texts might stimulate students' response better than their modern counterparts. However, the teachers were mostly in favor of the Indian writers, such as R. K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and a few others. They also mentioned that any types of literary texts such as novels, short stories, poems or plays, all of them might be used in the language classes if those were written in lucid English and pregnant with the themes according to our culture and students' interests.

### 4.3.3 How

The teachers from both literature and ELT background had some similarities and dissimilarities in case of methods and approaches they followed in their classes to teach English language through literature. Figure-4 presents the information about the methods and approaches followed by the teachers to use literature components in their English language classes. It shows that teachers from both groups more or less followed language-based approach, literature as content, stylistic analysis, literature for personal enrichment, grammar translation method and communicative approach for using literature in their English language classes. It also demonstrates that the teachers from literature background followed literature as content, stylistic analysis and grammar translation method most. In the contrary, language based approach, literature for personal enrichment and communicative approach were followed by the teachers from ELT background.

However, to show the findings presented in Figure-4 more distinctively, another two figures — Figure-5 and Figure-6 are also incorporated in the following pages. Figure-5 specifically represents the findings attained from the teachers who had an MA in English (literature) and were categorized as the teachers from literature background. On the other hand, Figure-6 particularly shows the results collected from the teachers who had an MA in ELT and were categorized as the teachers from ELT background. These figures were incorporated of other researchers and the readers of this research so that they can easily get the specific information about methods and approaches used by the teachers from both literature as well as ELT background.

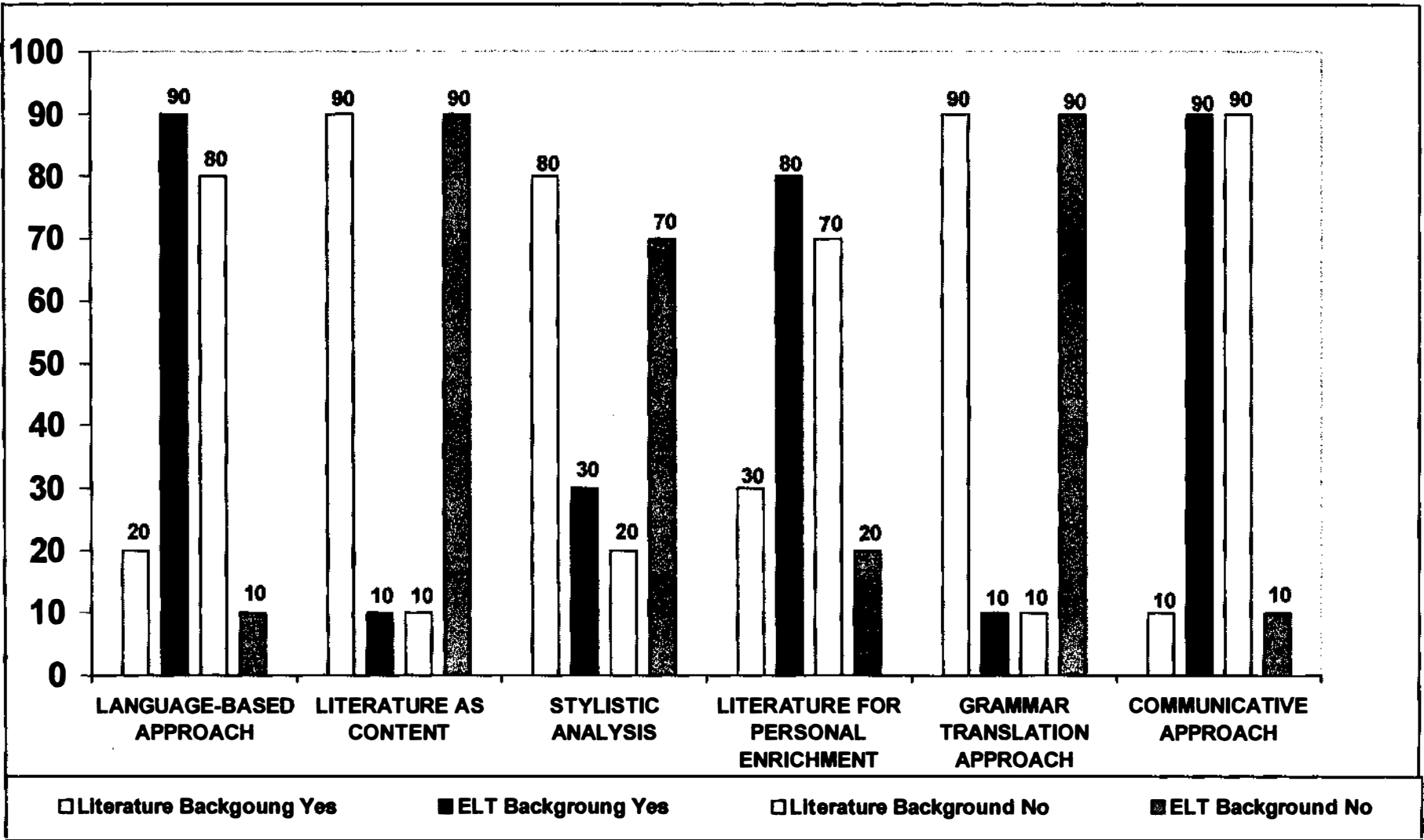


Figure-4: Teacher' view on methods and approaches for using literature in the language teaching

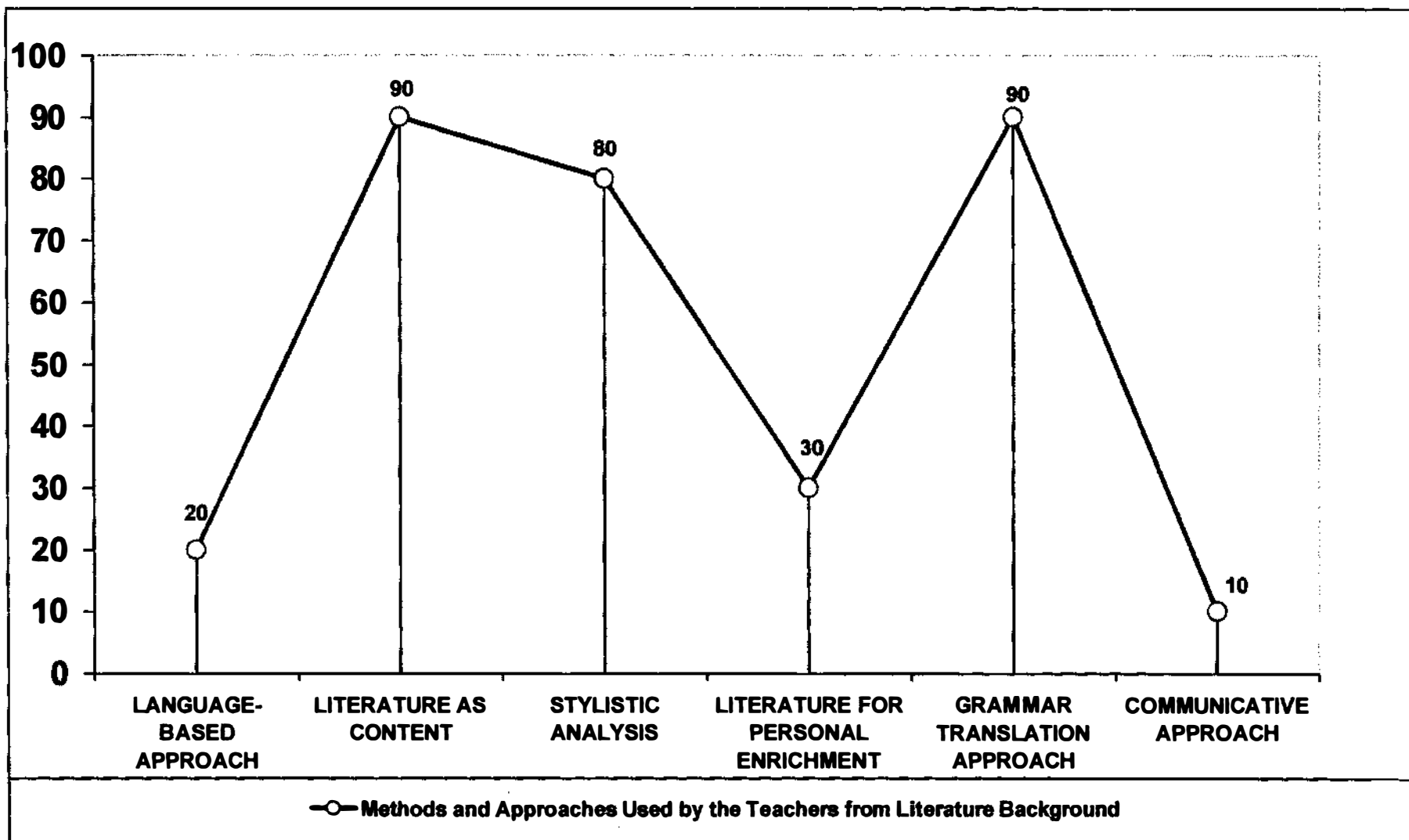


Figure-5: Methods and approaches used by the teachers from literature background

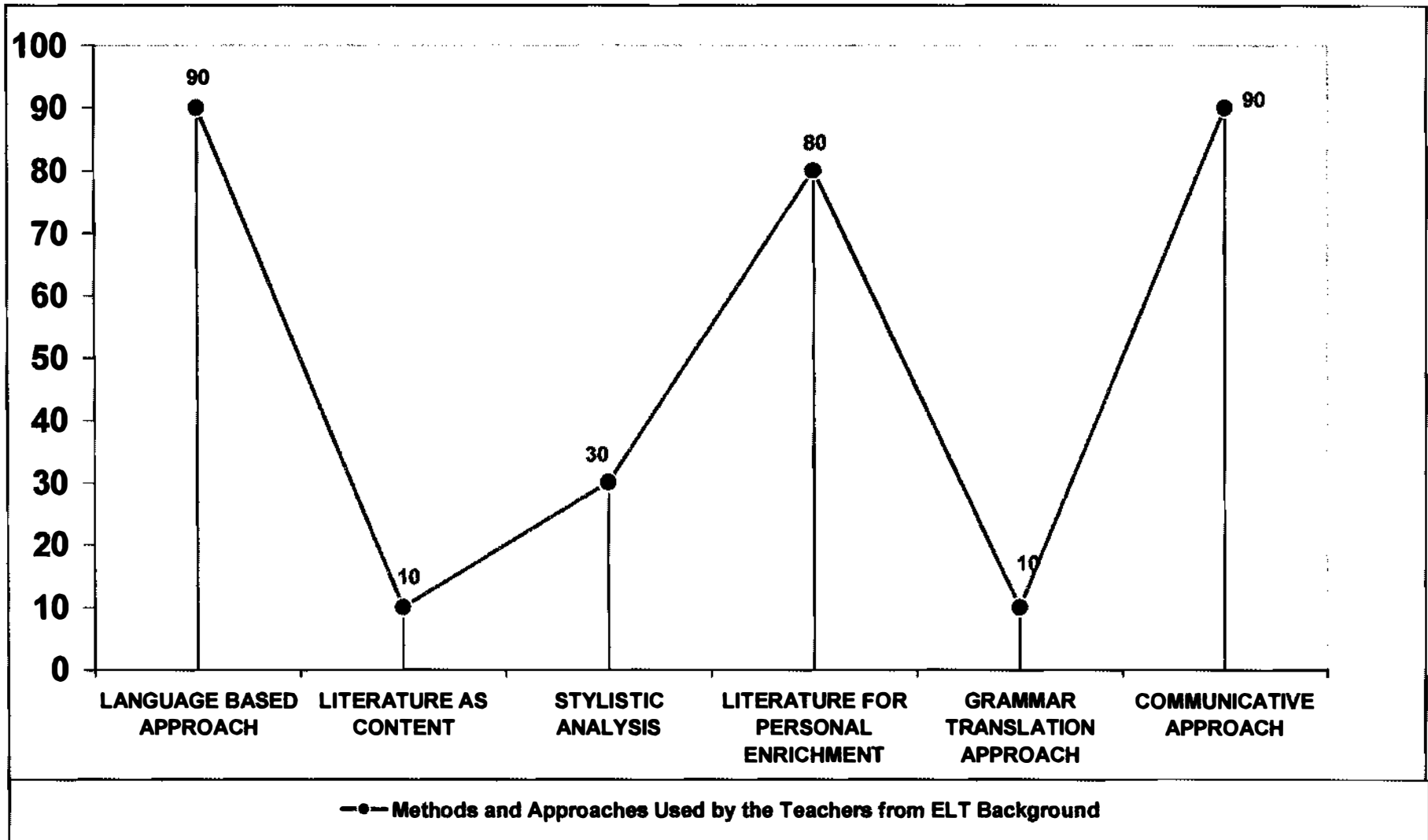


Figure-6: Methods and approaches used by the teachers from ELT background

Figure-5 exclusively presents the detailed information about the methods and approaches followed by the teachers from literature background. It illustrates that 10% of the teachers from literature background followed language based approach, 90% of them followed literature as content, 80% of them followed stylistic analysis and 30% of them followed literature for personal enrichment when they used literature components in their classes. However, 90% of the teachers followed grammar translation method and only 10% of them followed communicative approach.

On the others hand, Figure-6 distinctively presents the comprehensive information about the methods and approaches followed by the teachers from ELT background. It points up that 90% of the teachers from ELT background followed language based approach, 10% of them followed literature as content, 20% of them followed stylistics in classroom and 70% of them followed literature for personal enrichment for using literary texts in their classes. However, 90% of the teachers followed communicative approach communicative approach. On the other hand, only 10% of them followed grammar translation method.

#### **4.4 Activities Used by the Teachers**

Teachers from literature background and ELT background generally experimented on most of the activities listed in Table-1. However, their selection of activities varied because of the different methods and approaches followed by them for using literature components in the language classes. Teachers from both backgrounds shared more or less similar views on some activities related to reading exercises, oral presentation, group discussion, paraphrasing, vocabulary building, grammatical exercises and

summary writing. This similarity might be the result of the fact that these are very common activities English language classes and our students also feel comfort with them. Besides, the activities might be the preferential as those can easily be administered during the limited class time to individual students or to the separate groups.

	LITERATURE BACKGROUND		EFL BACKGROUND	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Reading exercises	90	10	80	20
Listening exercises	20	80	10	90
Group discussion	60	40	90	10
Oral presentation	40	60	90	10
Paraphrasing	80	10	70	30
Role play	20	80	30	70
Vocabulary building	80	20	90	10
Grammatical exercises	90	10	70	30
Stylistic analysis	80	20	70	30
Critical analysis	90	10	30	70
Identifying literary elements	90	10	20	80
Summary writing	70	30	40	60
Drama presentation	10	90	10	90
Dialogue practicing	30	70	15	85
Stress and intonation patterns	20	80	10	90
Discourse analysis	30	70	40	60
Cross cultural discussion	90	10	40	60

Table-1: Activities followed by the teachers to use literature components

On the other hand, teachers from both backgrounds showed less enthusiasm on activities like drama presentation, role play and listening exercises. The reason behind that less enthusiasm might be the limited class time which is not sufficient for the



demonstration of such types of activities. Moreover, these types of activities require much preparation and practice before presentation for successful demonstration.

The table also presents many noteworthy differences between the teachers from literature background and ELT background regarding the activities they followed. In general, the teachers from literature background had a tendency to experiment with some difficult activities related to stylistic analysis, critical analysis, identifying literary elements and cross cultural discussion. And they might feel comfort to experiment with these activities because of their having a strong literary background. On the other hand, the teachers from ELT background gave emphasis on the activities related to spoken and other language skills and sub-skills.

#### **4.5 Benefits of Using Literature**

More or less all teachers from both literature and ELT backgrounds had the similar perceptions regarding the benefits of using literature in the language classes. Table-2 shows the results of teachers' views on the benefits of using literature components in the English language classes. Overall, the results show that teachers from both backgrounds had very positive views on the benefits of using literary texts to teach English language.

To illustrate, more than 90% of teachers from both backgrounds felt that literature can provide motivating materials to teach the language, stimulate language acquisition and critical thinking, develop emotional awareness, and enhance students' language proficiency, critical thinking, communicative and interpretative power. Moreover, 100% teachers from both backgrounds believed that literature can enhance students' reading skills and add pleasure to the language learning process. Apart from these,

more than 80% of the teachers from both backgrounds felt that literature can cultivate moral values in our students. They also mentioned that literature can contribute to acquisition of practical language skills and offer authentic language examples.

	LITERATURE BELIEFS		ELT BACKGROUND	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Literature can provide motivating materials	90	10	90	10
Literature can complement and contribute to the acquisition of practical language skills	80	20	80	20
Literature can be a rich language resource	80	20	80	20
Literature can evoke our students' emotions	90	10	90	10
Literature can add pleasure to the language learning process	100	0	100	0
Literature can stimulate the mind by offering students examples of real language use	80	20	80	20
Literature is essentially more dialogic	70	30	70	30
Literature can enhance students' reading skills	100	0	100	0
Literature can develop in students a feeling for the language	80	20	80	20
Literature can develop in students the awareness of multifarious language usage	80	20	80	20
Literature can develop in students different levels of discourse	70	30	70	30
Literature can develop communicative power	80	20	80	20
Literature can offer authentic language example	100	0	90	10
Literature can improve over all knowledge of English	90	10	90	10
Literature can cultivate moral values in our students	80	20	80	20
Literature can develop interpretative power	90	10	90	10
Literature can develop critical awareness in our students	80	20	80	20

**Table-2: Teachers' view on benefits of using literature in language teaching**

#### 4.6 Problems of Using Literature

Teachers from both literature and ELT backgrounds had more or less similar opinions regarding the problems of using literature in the language classes. Table-3 shows the findings on the problems that teachers usually faced in using literature component in their language classes. In general, the table shows that there were various problems that the teachers from both backgrounds faced.

	LITERATURE BACKGROUND		ELT BACKGROUND	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Students' low proficiency level	100	0	100	0
Students' motivation toward learning the literary elements	90	10	90	10
Students' non-interactive approach	90	10	90	10
Prepared materials are not available	100	0	100	0
It takes much time to preparing suitable materials	100	0	100	0
Insufficient training for teach language through literature	80	20	80	20
Unawareness of the authority to promote teaching language through literature	90	10	90	10

Table-3: Teachers' view on problems of using literature in language teaching

In general, the results illustrate that the teachers from both backgrounds faced some common problems. All of the teachers from both backgrounds mentioned that the low proficiency in English language of their students was the main problem in using literature in the classes. Besides, 100% of the teachers from both backgrounds mentioned the unavailability of the commercially produced materials to use in the class as another big problem. For this reason, the teachers had to prepare DIY (Do It Yourself) materials for the classes. And they identified it as a great problem as it required much time and labor. Besides, about 90% of the teachers from both

backgrounds mentioned that insufficient training for teaching language through literature was also a big problem and they also identified the non-interactive approach of their students as a problem for using literary texts in the language classes. However, 90% of the teachers from both literature background and ELT background talked about the callousness of the authority to promote the literary texts in language classes.

#### 4.7 Suggestions for Using Literature

The teachers from both literature and ELT backgrounds had given some practical suggestions from their own experiences for using literature components in language classes. Table-4 presents the suggestions given by the teachers. The table depicts that 100% of teachers from both backgrounds suggested that the teacher should take much preparation before using the literature components in the language class.

	LITERATURE BACKGROUND		ELT BACKGROUND	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Teachers should take much preparation before using literature components	100	0	100	0
Selection of the texts must be according to students' need and interest	90	10	90	10
Teachers should help the students if they face any problem	100	0	100	0
Teachers must be cooperative	100	0	100	0
The authority should take attempt to prepare commercially available materials	100	0	100	0
Insufficient training should be arranged for the teachers	100	0	100	0
The authority should take attempt to promote teaching language through literature	90	10	90	10

Table-4: Suggestions given by the teachers for using literature in language teaching

They might have given this suggestion as it is very difficult to use literature components to the language learners. They also suggested that the teachers should give priority to the students' need and interest in case of choosing materials for the language class. The teachers also mentioned that sufficient training should be arranged for the professional development of the teachers. Besides, 90% of the teachers from both backgrounds mentioned that the authority should feel the urgency of using literary texts in teaching language to the students of their institution. However, the suggestions presented in Table-4, are very much realistic and essential for teaching language through literature. The table shows that in this regard all the teachers had the similar opinions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION



This is the final chapter of the research. Apart from the general introduction, this chapter deals with an overview of the study, review of the findings, implication of the findings, limitations of the research and suggestions for future research. And the chapter ends with concluding remarks.

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the summary of the findings of the research. It will provide teaching implications for the teachers who are interested to use literary texts in their language classes. It will help the commercially material writers and the syllabus designers of the English Foundation Course.

#### **5.2 Overview of the Study**

This research was instigated to establish the effectiveness of teaching language through literature by describing the existing phenomenon of English language teaching under the English Foundation Course at different private universities in Dhaka and outside the city. In total 20 private universities of Dhaka and outside Dhaka were selected as research site for conducting the research.

English Foundation Course has been being offered for about two decades at different private universities in Bangladesh. And in most of the universities, the course is conducted by the teachers from literature background. This is because, ELT is a new discipline in our country and sufficient teachers from ELT background are not found

yet to conduct the course. However, there is a great controversy about whether the teachers from literature background are capable enough to teach the English language to the students of the English Foundation Course as the course consists of a lot of linguistic areas.

On the other hand, in case of the students, the scenario is totally opposite. The students, who enter into the graduate level after completing the 12-year education, feel bored with the linguistic topics as they are already habituated with these boring activities. Instead of these activities, they want something new and interesting issues to be taught. In this regard, literary texts can fulfill the demands of the students as these texts are “written mainly to entertain, to move, to amuse and to excite” (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000:12).

However, this research was conducted with a view to making familiar our teachers with the fashionable technique of teaching language by using literature components. This research would be helpful for the teachers who are from literature background for their professional development. And it is needed for them “to be empowered” (Murray, 2010) as “teacher empowerment leads to improvement in student performance and attitude” (*ibid.*).

Likewise, the teachers from ETL background might be benefited from this research as they would come to know about the needs and interests of their students. It would help them for designing interesting materials for their classes. Furthermore, they would become familiar with the technique of teaching language by using materials adopted from literary texts. Thus they would be able to make their teaching more interesting.

### **5.3 Review of the Findings**

In general, the findings of the research show that the teachers from both literature and ELT background had positive perceptions and attitudes toward using literary texts in the English language classes. All the teachers claimed that there might have some special benefits of using literary texts in learning English language. Some of the benefits mentioned by the teachers were that by reading the literary texts their students might be able to learn many moral values, many new words and many new sentence structures. Most of the teachers also claimed that literature would motivate their students to learn the English language.

Apart from that, the data collected from the teachers also revealed similar information and perception of the teaching English language through literature. To illustrate, more than 90% of the teachers from both backgrounds believed that literary texts should be included in the syllabus of EFC at different private universities of our country. Moreover, most of the teachers stated that the teachers should be more versatile in their teaching if they would like to use literary texts properly in their English language classes.

Apart from teaching and learning, the teachers, generally, agreed that there might have many benefits of using literature in the English language classroom. For instance, more than 90% of the teachers from both backgrounds felt that literature might provide motivating materials; stimulate language acquisition, enhance critical thinking, develop emotional awareness and improve English language proficiency. Besides that, 100% of teachers from both backgrounds claimed that training should be arranged for the profession development of our teachers.



#### **5.4 Implications of the Findings**

All the findings and discussion documented in the preceding chapter of the thesis, here, imply that the teaching of the English language through literature into the English Foundation Course, bears a fruitful response. Moreover, the findings of this research encompass the positive response from the teachers from both language ELT background. So, at this point, it can be said that the findings of the research imply that the teaching of the English language through literature in tertiary level is very effective.

However, now, the focus should be given to the professional development of our teachers so that they can properly use literature components in their English language classes to motivate their students to learn English with a lot of fun. In this case, all language teachers from literature discipline or from ELT discipline should work cooperatively to establish the effectiveness of teaching language in our country. Besides, the pre-service training is also important for our future English language teachers to face challenges and problems in addressing this technique of teaching language through literature.

#### **5.5 Limitations of the Research**

Likewise, other research work, this research also has some limitations. Some factors such as participants, time and instruments has been identified as the limitations of the research and these are discussed in the following pages.

### **5.5.1 Participants**

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, the participants selected for this research were the teachers who took classes of English Foundation Course (EFC) at different private universities in Dhaka and outside the city. They were total 20 in numbers. Since the sample size was rather small and only covered a limited area, there was very little site to seek possibilities of comparing or contrasting other factors that might influence the results of the study.

On the other hand, because of the small sample size, it was thought that the best way to present findings on the teachers was to put them into two groups of literature background and ELT background. If the research site was larger, there might have the possibility to investigate other factors that could affect the findings of the research.

### **5.5.2 Time**

The whole research process took place within 4 months which was not sufficient for the research. However, the participants were very much cooperative and helpful. For this reason, it was possible to collect all the data within this limited time. Moreover, the participants returned the questionnaires without any delay. Above all, much time was lost in managing the schedule for class observations so that the observation might not create any disturbance in the regular class-activities.

### **5.5.3 Instruments**

The research instruments used in the study were questionnaire, interview and observation. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were structured questions. It

was thought that these questions would be most appropriate since there were more than 20 questions in the questionnaire. However, there might have some limitations in the structured questions here. Therefore, to illustrate, the responses revealed only a certain extend of the findings.

The interviews were taken more carefully to pick up the all possible data from the percipients. However, there might have some limitations as we are not above limitations. In case of class observations, the classes were observed as a whole. If it would be possible to observe the students separately, the findings might be better.

## **5.6 Suggestions for Future Research**

On the basis of the objectives of the research discussed in the introductory chapter and the findings and discussions presented in Chapter Four of the research a general instructive framework for the teaching English language through literature would be suggested here.

As this research is based on EFC of tertiary level, considering it as a model another research can easily be conducted on teaching language through literature in the context of secondary or higher secondary level in Bangladesh. Besides, in near future another more extensive research might be conducted to seek the evidence of the relationship between literature and language learning or literature and other personal development skills.

However, it is most important to ensure that our future English language teachers would be able to address the incorporation of this new tested literature component

syllabus successfully. And in turn it would aid in the growth and the overall development of the literature based English language syllabus in our country.

### **Including Remarks**

Literature in the end is only — only! — the most powerful, the most human, the most expressive and the most inclusive use of the language” (Walsh, 1982: 1). But literature has been badly discarded from our secondary and higher secondary English language syllabus by implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method for the development of the functional English of our students. However, Karim and Zaman (2006) shockingly observe that our students, who were taught in the CLT method, do not reach to a satisfactory level of functional English.

On the other hand, as a result of the exclusion of literature from their syllabus, our students are deprived of the ecstatic pleasure of literature. They feel bored with the rote learning activities of their English syllabus. And day by day, they consider English as a boring subject. Thus our students pass the secondary and higher secondary level considering English as an extra burden. When they enter into the tertiary level, they feel bored with the English Foundation Course (EFC) offered at most the universities to the students of all disciplines. Even most of the students suffer from English phobia too.

However, literature can make their English language learning much entertaining as it always provides a source of interesting facts. If the students are taught English language through literature, they will be motivated to learn English because literature motivates language learners by “promoting interesting language activities” (Lazar, 1993:

esides, “entering a literary text, under the guidance of appropriate teaching about the kind of participation almost no other text can produce” (Hess, 2003:

s, literature can also help the students in their self development. This is e, “self develops with external factors such as language and culture” (Iida, 29) and literature contains the both. So, the teaching of English language n literature is important not only to motivate our students in learning English to em in their self development.



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**APPENDIX A**

**East West University**  
**Department of English**  
**43, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka - 1212**

**Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry  
into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

**Questionnaire for Teachers**

Fill out the questionnaire. It is prepared for doing research. You do not need to write your name. Give tick marks (√) wherever appropriate.

Graduate Degree :  MA in English (Literature)       MA in ELT  
                        :  Male     Female

Do you think literary texts can be used as authentic materials in language classes?

Yes                                   No

Do you think listening skills can be taught by using literary texts?

Yes                                   No

Do you think speaking skills can be taught by using literary texts?

Yes                                   No

Do you think grammar can be taught by using literary texts?

Yes                                   No

Do you think poetry can be used in language classes?

Yes                                   No

Do you think literary texts provide students scope to know about other cultures?

Yes                                   No

Do you think literary texts expand students' language awareness?

Yes                                   No

Do you think literary texts develop students' communicative power?

Yes                                   No

## APPENDIX A

**East West University**  
**Department of English**  
**43, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka - 1212**

**Business of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry  
into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

### **Questionnaire for Teachers**

Fill out the questionnaire. It is prepared for doing research. You do not  
write your name. Give tick marks (✓) wherever appropriate.

**Degree** :     MA in English (Literature)       MA in ELT  
          :     Male     Female

**Do you think literary texts can be used as authentic materials in language**

Yes     No

**Do you think listening skills can be taught by using literary texts?**

Yes     No

**Do you think speaking skills can be taught by using literary texts?**

Yes     No

**Do you think grammar can be taught by using literary texts?**

Yes     No

**Do you think poetry can be used in language classes?**

Yes     No

**Do you think literary texts provide students scope to know about other**

Yes     No

**Do you think literary texts expand students' language awareness?**

Yes     No

**Do you think literary texts develop students' communicative power?**

Yes     No

**Do literary texts offer varied authentic language examples?**

- Yes  No

**Do you agree that literature can make language teaching more effective and interesting?**

- Yes  No

**Check the N/A box if you do not use literary texts in your classes (and go to question no. 20)**

- Not Applicable

**Do you use novels in your class?**

- Yes  No

**Do you get your students to write reviews of the short stories in their own words?**

- Yes  No

**Do you use dialogues from the texts of play in the spoken class?**

- Yes  No

**Do you make your students play roles on a particular scene of a play?**

- Yes  No

**Do your students enjoy the class when you use literary texts?**

- Yes  No

**Do literary texts stimulate your students to express their personal opinions and feelings?**

- Yes  No

**Do you design exercise based on literary texts in the test?**

- Yes  No

**Do you face any problems in teaching language through literary texts? If yes, specify the problems.**

- Yes  No

.....  
.....

Some disadvantages there can possibly be for using literary texts in  
the classes (such as, do you think it can affect students' spoken English  
do you think it may affect student's functional English, etc.)



## **APPENDIX B**

**East West University  
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**Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry  
into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

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### **List of Questions for Structured Interview**

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**What is your opinion about teaching English language through literature?**

**Why should literature be used in English language classes?**

**What are the benefits of using literature in language teaching?**

**Which methods or approaches do you usually used in teaching language through literature?**

**Which types of activities do you use in teaching language through literature?**

**How do your students feel when you use literature components in the class?**

**Which genre (novels, short stories, poetry, play) do you usually use in language classes?**

**How do you select literary texts for your language classes?**

**Which types of problems do you face in teaching language through literature?**

**) What is your suggestion for teaching language through literature?**

## APPENDIX C

**East West University**  
**Department of English**  
**43, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka - 1212**

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**Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry  
into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

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### **List of Questions for Semi-structured Interview**

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1. Do you use literature components in your English language class?

2. How do you use literature in language classes?

3. What skills do you teach by using literature?

4. What methods do you follow? Why?

5. What activities do you use in the class?

6. Do students like the activities?

7. How do you select literary texts for using in the class?

8. Do you use Indian texts? Why?

9. What are the benefits of using literature in teaching language?

10. Do you face any problem in using literature in language classes?

11. What are the problems?

12. How do you overcome the problems?

13. What is your suggestion for teaching English through literature?

## APPENDIX D

**East West University**  
**Department of English**  
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**Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry  
into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

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### **List of Questions for Unstructured Interview**

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- ✓ **Effectiveness of teaching English language through literature**
- ✓ **Reasons of using literature in language classes**
- ✓ **Common methods and approaches of using literature**
- ✓ **Common activities used to teach language through literature**
- ✓ **Benefits of using literature in language classes**
- ✓ **Students' response to the approach of using literature**
- ✓ **Students' motivation regarding literature**
- ✓ **Problems of using literature in language teaching**
- ✓ **Suggestions for establishing the effectiveness of using literature**



**APPENDIX E**

**East West University**  
**Department of English**  
**43, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka - 1212**

**Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry  
into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

**Observation Checklist**

Observer : ..... Date : .....  
Teacher : ..... Time : .....  
Number of present students : .....  
Description of material : .....  
Activity : .....

**Observation focus:**

Level of student motivation generated by the teaching material in use

**Instructions:**

- Observing the class as a whole, not individual student.
- Complete this sheet when the activity is drawing to close.
- 3 is an average mark for any item.
- Circle ONE number from each statement below.
- Add final comments at the bottom of the sheet

Mark the involvement level of the students in the learning task.

Not much involved    1    2    3    4    5    much involved

Mark the concentration level of the students on the learning task.

low    1    2    3    4    5    high

Mark the effort level of the students.

low    1    2    3    4    5    high

Are the students paying constant attention to the task.

not really    1    2    3    4    5    very much

i) **The students are enjoying the activity.**

not really    1    2    3    4    5    very much

ii) **The activity is easy to the students.**

not so    1    2    3    4    5    very much

iii) **The activity is appropriate for the students.**

not really    1    2    3    4    5    very much

iv) **The material is interesting to the students.**

not so    1    2    3    4    5    very much

v) **The material is motivating for the students.**

not so    1    2    3    4    5    very much

vi) **The material is authentic.**

not so    1    2    3    4    5    very much

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**Comments:**

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## APPENDIX F

**East West University**  
**Department of English**  
**43 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka 1212**

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**Effectiveness of Teaching Language through Literature: An Inquiry  
into the Teaching of English at Tertiary Level**

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### **Consent Form for Teachers**

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**Supervisor:**

Dr. Md. Akter  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
East West University



**Researcher:**

Dr. P. Datta  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
East West University

**Purpose:**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of teaching language through literature in the tertiary level as well as to establish the effectiveness of the teaching of English language by using literature components in the context of English Education Course (EFC) offered at different private universities in Dhaka and its surrounding areas. Specifically, the study is interested to reach the answer of the following question:

- Is the teaching of English language through literature effective in tertiary level in Bangladesh?

This research is conducted for a thesis as part of the requirements of the degree, Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching. We would like to invite you to participate in this study since we believe that this research question can be investigated through the exploration of your teaching approaches, practices, and experiences.

## **Procedures:**

agree to participate in this study you will be asked to do the following:

- Permit the researcher to observe your class. The researcher will remain sitting at the back of the classroom in an attempt not to interrupt the class unless there is your need or permission for the researcher to participate in any class activities.
- Participate in at best two interviews that will be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Interviews will be scheduled with the researcher at a mutually agreeable date, time, and location. Interview questions will be provided to you several days before the interviews take place.
- Answer the questions of the questionnaire consists of factual, structured and open-ended questions. You will be given much time to think about the questions of the questionnaire.

## **Confidentiality:**

researcher will make every effort to ensure your confidentiality. In order to do the following steps will be followed:

- All identifying information (e.g., your name, age, gender, nationality, etc.) will not be mentioned anywhere in the thesis.
- All information and data collect from the interviews and the observations and the questionnaire will be used only by the researcher named above.
- All documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- All computer documents will be kept in password-protected files.

## **Contact for Information about the Study:**

have any questions or require further information about this study, please contact at 01716225762.

**Consent:**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date



