

Popular Literature: A Repository for Language Learning

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Abstract:

To acquire proficiency in the global language, the role of reading is indispensable. Books – a repository of all human emotions is a perennial source of language learning. There are number of ways to learn the language, among which language learning through reading makes the entire phenomenon colourful. The plethora of emotions recorded in a book enables an individual to learn and master the language. When the learner reads a literary piece with utmost love for it, he is motivated to interact with the text. This interactive relationship between the text and the reader will teach them to use the language judiciously to achieve the desired effect. In this aspect reading serve as a considerable aid in language learning. It deepens the learner's sensitivity to language through heightening their critical ability and creative faculty. This paper attempts to discuss the role of reading, the choice of books that could be suggested for readers at the beginning level, and language aspects which could be gained through reading, with select reference to Chetan Bhagat's novels in popular literature.

Keywords: Reader, language, text, learning, popular literature, interact

Introduction

“Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man...” says Francis Bacon in his essay “Of Studies”.

To promote interest among the students in reading the teacher has to make a careful selection in the book that is to be recommended. When the reader (a beginner) is introduced to books which are irrelevant to his culture, experience, language and background knowledge such books instead of motivating the reader holds back his interest. In contrast when the reader is introduced to books relevant to his culture, books written by native writers, works which are identical to his real life infuse greater enthusiasm among the readers.

Chetan Bhagat ,is an Indian writer in English ,author of five English novels-“**Five Point Someone**”(2004), “**One Night at the Call Center**”(2005), “**The 3 Mistakes of my Life**”(2008), “**2 States: The Story of my Marriage**”(2009) and “**Revolution 2020**”(2011).

“Five Point Someone” (2004) is a story of three IITian friends: Hari, Ryan and Alok. The story depicts their life in IIT the pressure they undergo, the pressure they create to the system, their very meager five point something grades, their friendship, Hari getting involved with Neha – who happens to be his Professor’s daughter and their struggles to get a decent job. The students can very easily identify themselves with struggles the characters undergo in their college life. The story is narrated in first person through Hari. The narrative technique pulls the interest of the reader.

“One Night at the Call Center” (2005) is written on the lives of six people who work for a Call Center. The story revolves around these six people their dreams, call centre culture, the management, recession, the uncompassionate boss and so on. The entire story is set in one night.

“The 3 Mistakes of my Life” (2008) is the story of a young boy in Ahmadabad called Govind who dreams of establishing his own business. To accommodate his friends Ish and Omi’s passion, they open a cricket shop. Govind wants to make money and thinks big. Ish is all about nurturing Ali, the batsman with a rare gift. Omi knows his limited capabilities and just wants to be with his friends. However, nothing comes easy in a turbulent city. To realize their goals, they will have to face it all – religious politics, earthquakes, riots, unacceptable love and above all, their own mistakes. Govind falls in love with his best friend- Ish’s sister which is considered to be an act of treachery according to the protocol of Indian friendship. The book effectively portrays the thinking process that goes on in young minds and clubbed with unique style of Chetan’s storytelling and effective customization with local culture, events etc makes an excellent read. The book describes the kind of inside view of election politics and Gujarat riots, the challenges and differences people face while chasing big dreams. It gives a real near life description of why many students hate Mathematics: Vidya and Govind go to market to buy guide books for Vidya’s exam- *“What is this? -Vidya said as she tried to lift the book with her left hand. She couldn’t. She used both her hands and finally took it six inches off the ground. ‘No seriously, what is this? An assault weapon?’”*-(Page 86)

“2 States: The Story of my Marriage” (2009) is a story about Krish and Ananya who are classmates in IIM-A meeting at the beginning of the course, falling in love, deciding to get married, trying to convince and win approval of their parents and in-laws. They are from two different states of India, deeply in love with each other. To convert their love story into a love marriage, the couple has a tough battle in front of them. The book gives an excellent insight of cultural differences between two states (Punjab and Tamil Nadu) and parental mindsets and considerations while considering a bride/groom. The cultural differences are expressed in hue of incidents. An interesting example will be this particular line, which gives a clear illustration of cultural shock and differences-“When Krish visits Ananya’s house in Mylapore Chennai, a

banana leaf was laid in front of them, to be served food on. “For a moment I wondered if I should eat it or wipe my hands with it-then Ananya said that this is the plate”

The blurb of the book reads like this:

“Love marriages around the world are simple:

Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy.

They get married.

In India, there are a few more steps:

Boy loves Girl. Girl loves Boy.

Girl’s family has to love boy. Boy’s family has to love girl.

Girl’s Family has to love Boy’s Family. Boy’s family has to love girl’s family.

Girl and Boy still love each other. They get married.”

This description about the process of love marriage in our country will definitely heighten the readers’ enthusiasm in reading the book.

“**Revolution 2020**” (2011) is a triangular love story which also deals with corruption, ambition, and the failure of system in our nation, the dreams of young minds to fix the corrupted system. Among the three childhood friends: Gopal, Raghav and Aarthi, Gopal wants to use his intelligence to make money, Raghav wants to use his intelligence to start a revolution and Aarthi wants to become an airhostess. opal who is unable to crack his Engineering entrance and earn seat in an Engineering college, starts his own Engineering College exercising corruption. Gopal is torn between his conscience and his desire.

Reading books written by native author enhance the language understanding of the reader and helps him expand his language knowledge in diverse areas like Vocabulary, Expressions, Quotes, Sentence patterns, Idiomatic expressions, Conversational Styles, Quoting Examples, Literary elements and so on.

When it comes for Vocabulary acquisition text difficulty discourages the reader. Chetan always employs simple and lucid language in his works. ‘Big emotions do not come from big words’ says the author in his “**One Night at the Call Center**”. His choice of words could be inferred by a student with an average language background. Learners should be encouraged to combine inference and Dictionary- consultation methods to acquire holistic understanding of unfamiliar words. A beginner would learn thirty to fifty new words in a single chapter of his novel. Learning fixed and semi- fixed expressions are essential for vocabulary enhancement. Conscious and consistent attempts to improve vocabulary would bring out a big difference in the learners language. The right word used in the right place would facilitate better derstanding. Themes related to the learner’s contemporary socio-political situations would appeal to their interest and would make learning comfortable. Even if we were to learn a large number of new words in isolation it would not necessarily lead to expressing oneself correctly, as language also consists of group of words that usually go together. In learning English we need to focus

on larger chunks of the language, which would help us string words together and express ourselves fluently and effectively which are abundantly found in Chetan's works.

Next to vocabulary and ready to use expressions, quotations have an important place in the language to play. A conversation started with an interesting quotation will certainly bring life to the conversation. Quotations used in discourse convey the idea of the speaker easily to the listener. The Witty, subtle language of Chetan will definitely grab the interest of learners. Some of the interesting quotes and expressions from his works:

"The world's most sensible person and the biggest idiot both stay within us. The worst part is, you can't even tell who is who."

"Pretty girls behave best when you ignore them."

"Why should any guy want to be only friends with a girl? It's like agreeing to be near a chocolate cake and never eat it. It's like sitting in a racing car but not driving it."

(2 States: The Story of my Marriage)

"A girl's I'm Fine, especially with capital 'F', is like an' iceberg ahead ' sign for a Ship"
"Successful people don't have friends"

"Stupid people go to college smart people own them"

(Revolution 2020)

Conclusion

Popular literature enthralls the young readers' minds, it entertains and elevates their language level. The works of Chetan Bhagat contains so many quotes, expression, and usage. The subtle use of language, when the readers read, they can work to imitate the same in their conversation. Learning becomes an act of pleasure. Learners can take such interesting text and involve in post- reading tasks like Summarizing, Comprehension question task, Vocabulary exercises, discussion, debates, presentation, which would heighten their communication skills. Such activities help the learners to bring out their latent potentials. Reading Chetan Bhagat's books may not make the reader a better person, may not give insight into other culture, may not aid in intellectual development. But it will create a difference in the reader's language and will prepare the reader to comfortably move towards more "demanding" texts.

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