

USE OF LITERATURE IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE

CLASSROOM

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

by

Bulathge Kusuma Padmaseeli Abeysooriya

Department of English
Faculty of Arts
University of Colombo

UCLIB



439361

07-12-1992.



ABSTRACT

This dissertation is based on a project carried out to explore the possibilities of introducing literature in the language classroom. In order to introduce literature to language learners selected for university admission, a sample of prose extracts was selected from the works of native as well as non-native writers and was used with a sample population. Neither poetry nor drama was used in this project as it was the first step in introducing literature for the students who participated in it.

The main aims of this project were to enable students improve their reading by exposing them to whole texts and to provide them with opportunities to respond to literary elements such as characterization, creation of atmosphere, and suspense. It also aimed at developing students' critical and imaginative powers through interacting with literary texts as well as in creating an interest in students to read literature, which is a rich source of pleasure and enjoyment.

This dissertation therefore contains a review of the place of literature in the language classroom during the last four decades. It then

analyses the responses collected by means of a questionnaire on the background and language proficiency of the sample population, which helped in gauging their ability to handle literature. Next, it discusses the criteria for selecting literary materials and designing the exercises used in this project, as well as the methodology used for teaching the materials. An analysis is then made of feedback collected from the students after the materials were used in order to identify problem areas, and also to enable making suggestions for future use.

Finally, the dissertation sums up the results of the project, discussing its shortcomings and making suggestions for improvement.