

## THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN LITERATURE

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DOI: 10.24815/.v1i1.14503

### Abstract

This writing is entitled "The Role of Language in Literature" aims to describe how a language plays an important role in constructing literature as a medium of writing and communication in relation to culture. The theory used in writing this scientific article is Socio-cultural theory while the method used is descriptive method in library research. The writer feels sure that by using this method, he can accumulate all the data be found in terms of discussion. Through this writing, it is characterized how literary works like short stories, novels, and others be specified in literature, which cannot be separated from language, anyhow. Literature as a social science uses language and the use of language depends on what genres of literature be written by the authors. Many literary works like poetry, short story and novel are written in English and other languages like French, Dutch, Spain and Indonesian language as well, which show how important languages be used as the medium of literature, and it will be impossible for the authors to write a literary work without using language whether it is written or oral language regarding and found as the role of the language itself related to the finding of this scientific writing.

**Keywords:** Literature, culture, language, description.

### 1. Introduction

Using language is one of the most important things in human life since language is the system of a symbol has the meaning. Language is a social phenomenon. It is a means of communication between individuals. It also brings them into a relationship with their environment (Boy, 1975, p. 3). By using language, human beings can convey what they mean to others, and if there is no language, they cannot be able to say what they like to ask and say something to others. The language used by human beings is not the same as the language used by animals. Most people assume that only humans use language – it is something that sets up apart from all other creatures (Jamedy, et al., 1994, p. 20).

The language used by them depends on what languages in literature be there to write, for instance : English language which is dominantly used in writing literary works by the authors like "The Open Window" (a short story by Saki Munro), "The Ants And The

Grasshoppers” (a short story by Somerset Maugham), “The Diamond Necklace” (a short story by Guy de Maupassant), “Before and After” (a short story by Dr. Kemala), and some novels entitled “The Old Man And The Sea” (by Ernest Hemingway), “The Pearl” (by John Steinbeck), “The Assistant” (by Bernard Malamund), and some poems like “The Road Not Taken”, and Stopping By Woods on Snowy Evening” (by Robert Frost), “What is Nature” (by Siamir Marulafau), “Cinderella” (by Aminur Rahman), “Pygmalion” by George Bernard Shaw.

The main purpose of this scientific writing is to find out whether the language like English or other languages play an important role in literature or not. As a matter of fact, using the English language and other languages are obviously inseparable from the manuscript of literary works. But, although literature can be written and used in many languages, the researcher only used the English language as a limited discussion.

Every research has certainly a problem that should be tackled and this is a task for every researcher to find out the solution to overcome the problem. The problem is being discussed is: “Is the language positively used as an important role in literature?” If it is so, it is necessary to find out the proof of using language as a part of culture found in many kinds of literary works like poem, novel, short story or any other literary forms.

The study of English language and literature has an important influence on improving the learners’ skill to use language. Therefore, the role of language in literature is also important to be discussed because of language skill in case of writing and reciting literary work like poem increases from the basic understanding and expression to deep understanding and literary expression. The more language is studied, the more literature competence there will be. That is why language should be improved by the authors so as to create a high quality of literary works.

## **2. Method**

The method of the study used in this paper is descriptive method in library research and with socio-cultural theory. The researcher believed that by doing this method and using theory, the problem being discussed could be solved completely. For the first time, he read all the material study and collected the data as proof to be solved and discussed. Then, he formulated all the data that be the source of writing in case of searching the true material study related to the specific topic of literary works like “The Open Window by Saki”, “The Diamond Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant, “The Road Not Taken” and “Stopping By Woods on Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost, “What is Nature” by Siamir Marulafau, “Cinderella” by Aminur Rahman, and “Lovers or Strangers” by Nilavro Nill Shovro, and “Pygmalion” by George Bernard Shaw. Though there are so many literary works found in the library, he only selected 7 literary works of some as mentioned above as a limitation of discussion.

## **3. Discussion**

What is going to be discussed in this paper is really true if a literary work written in English by Saki entitled “The Open Window” as a proof that language plays an important role and seen in the following that the writer of the short story composed the short story using English with choose words and arranged sentences.

### *The Open Window*

"My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime, you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavored to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing. "I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, was quite nice."

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction came into the nice division. "Do you know many of the people around here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

"Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here."

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.

"Only her name and address," admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

"Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time."

"Her tragedy?" asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

"You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

"It is quite warm for the time of the year," said Framton; "but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy? "Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favorite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back someday, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walks in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening until it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?' as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window –

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"I hope you don't mind the open window," said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; "my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They've been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they'll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you menfolk, isn't it?"

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic, he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary. "The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who labored under the tolerably widespread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause, and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued.

"No?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention - but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with a dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight, three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window, they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?"

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall door, the gravel drive, and the front gate were dimly noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window, "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?" "A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of goodbye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

The next short story was written by Guy de Mauphassant entitled "The Diamond Necklace" was also written in English that seems to use language as its medium. Let's see the following.

### *The Diamond Necklace*

The girl was one of those pretty and charming young creatures who sometimes are born, as if by a slip of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by any rich and distinguished man; so she let herself be married to a little clerk of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was unhappy as if she had really fallen from a higher station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank, for beauty, grace and charm take the place of family and birth. Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make of women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.

"Do you remember that diamond necklace you lent me to wear at the ministerial ball?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back. "I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. You can understand that it was not easy for us, for us who had nothing. At last, it is ended, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier had stopped.

"You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?"

"Yes. You never noticed it, then! They were very similar." And she smiled with a joy that was at once proud and ingenious.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took her hands. "Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why my necklace was paste! It was worth at most only five hundred francs!"

In this following poem, it is found that Robert Frost, an American poet wrote a poem in the English language entitled "The Road Not Taken" and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". Robert Frost seems to use poetic language indicating a precisely good choice of words in writing the poems. Let us review the following.

### *The Road Not Taken*

By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,  
And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves, no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.  
I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

In the poem, “Stopping by Wood on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost seems to illustrate that the role of language in constructing words and arranging sentences in the poem is in the English language. Let’s see the following:

*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

By Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though; He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.  
My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.  
He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound’s the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.  
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

Another poet from Sumatera-Indonesia, Siamir Marulafau is a lecturer in English and Literature at the Faculty of Culture Sciences, University of Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia had ever written a poem in English entitled “What is Nature” found in his poem Anthology “Lighting”. The poems written in this Anthology are constructed in using the language of English as proof that language is dominantly considering as a medium of literature. Let’s see the following:

*What is Nature?*

By Siamir Marulafau

The Sea I explore enable me to change  
As long as nature would be familiar  
With no critical applied from  
But I know who I am because of a part of nature itself  
Supposed the leaves come down to beg  
The sea I explore enable me to change  
If the unity would be one from time to time

No wonder if it is so  
Man as the humble creature says  
Nature is a friend for all men  
Living would be in peace to settle one's place  
If the sameness would not be rejected  
No pride would be prohibited  
I confess the nature not to be wild  
As long as the earth considered useless  
A friendship between nature and creature is natural  
May not be dismissed somehow so as to be

A Bangladesh poet, Aminur Rahman also wrote a poem in English Anthology. In his poem Anthology, "Perpetual Diary" seemed that the language of the poem is constructed in English so as to be proof that literature may not be separated from language, anyhow. Let's see the following.

***Cinderella***

By Aminur Rahman

You have appeared to me at midnight  
When I have closed all my dream doors  
When I can hear the sound of darkness  
Suddenly you have appeared to me  
Appear out of fairy tales just like Cinderella  
Thousands of years I have been waiting for  
Waiting with my empty basket of a dream  
(Aminur Rahman, 2016, p. 46)

Another poet, whose name Nilavro Nill Shoovro also wrote a poem in English using language as a medium in a group of OPA, a monthly magazine published each month in all over the world. One of his poems entitled "Lovers or Strangers" is also found in the use of language. Let's see the following:

***Lovers or Strangers***

By Nilavro Nill Shoovro

Beneath the midnight moon  
Fervent touches of blind faith  
Side by side of the  
Mingling shadows of hope  
Lovers or strangers  
Imprisoned in flesh and blood  
When history unfolds  
It's palette of desire and design  
Men and women  
Lovers or strangers alike  
Can only dance like puppets  
Mesmerized by time immemorial  
Echoes of love around your kiss

Or even my penetration deep inside  
Like the decoding of the program  
Designed not by us, lovers or strangers...  
Beneath the midnight moon  
Eternity revolves around  
No matter how we define the words  
Or even refine them.....1st April 2019

A play entitled “Pygmalion” written by George Bernard Shaw is also constructed in the English language as a medium of literature. He used the English language to express his ideas in every act of the play in conversation related to the theme of his work as seen in the followings.

The Daughter (in the space between the central pillars, close to the one on her left)  
I am getting chilled to the bone. What can Freddy be doing all this time? He’s been gone twenty minutes.

The mother (on her daughter’s right). Not so long. But he ought to have got us (Pygmalion, 1957, p. 7).

## 5. Conclusion

Having discussed the above topic, the writer of article comes to the conclusion that language positively plays an important role to be the medium of literature written by authors in the English language. It is found that literary works like a poem, short story and novel cannot exist as manuscripts of literature without language.

Language is a part of a culture, which may not be separated from human life as a creation of the human mind. Through language, man may communicate between one with another so as to convey the ideas in terms of a daily conversation or whether in the forms of literature like poems, short story, novel or play.

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