



## CONNECTING LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE WITH ECONOMICS: AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

In today's rapidly changing world, isolating oneself in a specific field of study is impractical. It is beneficial to continuously learn and integrate various fields of knowledge to contribute meaningfully. Researchers must leverage multidisciplinary spaces, connecting their expertise with other knowledge areas. Transformation and change are essential realities for survival in the post-modern, post-colonial, and trans-cultural world. Clinging to traditional thinking and methodologies is unwise in this evolving global environment. For the national economy, it is crucial to market, advertise, and present our native products innovatively to attract international buyers. We live in an interconnected world influenced by dynamic forces of economy, politics, literature, society, culture, and relationships. This paper attempts to link economics with literature and the English language, showing how the English language and literature can empower economics students in multinational markets for socio-economic growth. It also explores the potential of connecting economics with English literature to generate innovative ideas that can boost the growth of Indian markets. The purpose of this research article is to explore new horizons in teaching and learning English language and literature.

**Keywords:** Literature, English, Knowledge, Economics, Environment, World, Indian markets, Language

We are living in a rapidly changing world. It may not be wrong to say that today we can't stay in a specific time zone, location and culture. We hate stagnation in any aspect of life. It is said that you cannot put your second leg in the same water in the river. In this way, the terrifically fast-changing technologies of the world compel human beings either to change or to disappear like dinosaurs. Transformation and change, therefore, are compulsory realities with hidden conditions to survive in the post-modern, post-colonial and trans-cultural world. Sticking to our traditional thinking and conventional methodology may be our foolishness in this continuously changing global environment. As far as the national economy is concerned, it is a dire necessity to advertise, market, colour, present, and exhibit our native products in such amazing and innovative ways that they can have international buyers. The use of literature can also help industries to demonstrate the native identities of their products and connect them with native buyers. Therefore, we are now living in a world which is interconnected in very complicated ways by some strange and constantly changing forces of economy, politics, literature, society, culture and relationships, personal as well as professional. An attempt has been made to

connect economics with literature and the English language in the paper. It demonstrates how English language and literature can help the students of economics to gain expertise, strength and power in the multinational markets for their socio-economic growth. It also points out the bright possibilities of connecting economics with English literature to evolve some strange but useful ideas which can help boost the growth of Indian markets with some apt examples. This is also a way to explore new horizons of teaching and learning English language and literature.

It is generally believed that economics is a subject based on some dire facts and reason and literature is an imaginative representation. It leads us to the world of fantasy and miracles. Romeo, Juliet, Macbeth, Satan, Ophelia, Jay Gatsby, Elizabeth Bennet, Sherlock Holmes, Becky Sharp, Hamlet, Pip, Miss Havisham, Emma, Madame Bovary, Dr. Faustus etc are dramatic fictional and everything is possible in the world of literature. Even God can save the lovers through *dues ex machina*. Trade, bargain, production, consumption, market, deal, recession, employment, welfare, efficiency, cost, profit, loss and of course money are some of the very common words used by those who are engaged in



learning economics. While feelings, love, hate, romance, lust, desire, faith, and betrayal are common words for the students of literature. But all these are related to human beings. Albert Camus said that “fiction is the lie through which we tell truths”. (Albert Camus 2016, p. 28) In the rapid and furious world, everything is interconnected and therefore bazar uses literary language, images and clichés Literature, on the other hand, is not only the representation of socioeconomic, political and cultural realities of the world but some literary post-modern critics including Foucault believe that it is designed and controlled by economic forces.

In 1965, Jacob Marschak used the term “economics of language” (Jacob Marschak 2003. p.6) in *Behavioural Science*. The connection of economics with language and literature is widely discussed. Many surveys have been conducted by Grin (1994), Vaillancourt (1983) and Grin, Sfredo and Vaillancourt (2011) to find out the advantages of connecting language with economics. They provide us understanding the idea how economic factors are related to language and how the skill of speaking a good language affects jobs, business, the market and the economy. For example,

Grin states that “The economics of language refers to the paradigm of theoretical economics and uses the concepts and tools of economics in the study of relationships featuring linguistic variables; it focuses principally, but not exclusively, on those relationships on which economic variable also play part” (Grin. F. 2003. p.6). This definition points out one of the important queries about finding out how language variables affect economic variables. Many surveys on this issue prove that earnings are affected by language skills. Communication among people has become very important in the present global market. Those who have good expertise in language earn more than others. Those who are fluent in speaking professional and global languages earn more than those who cannot. We live in a multicultural and multi-transactional world. Therefore, it is our dire necessity to embrace a multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning at the higher levels of education. With the globalization of the world economy, it becomes crucial to juxtapose some diverse approaches in education. The present research paper has the following aims and objectives:

- a) To enlarge the area of multidisciplinary studies

- b) To introduce the connection of economy with language and literature
- c) To explore new definitions in literary works
- d) To explore new ways of learning languages
- e) To present some new strategies for teaching language and literature

There is a close connection between explorations of language optimization and economics. Language is an important tool in human economic activities. It has its economic aspects and characteristics such as value, cost, utility and benefits. Good communication in any language aims chiefly at three things: (a) to transfer the maximum amount of information with the minimum effort, (b) to get the maximum output of your use of it and (c) to convince people using minimum words and time. Mark Antony's famous speech is one of the best examples of convincing a hostile audience to buy his ideas.

Investment in education and other skills is the core of human capital theory. There are human capital attributes of any language. Many researchers believe that learning a language is a part of investment in human capital. In 2003, Grin emphasized that deliberately acquired language skills can be seen as a source of

economic advantage. The communicative function of language should be focused with a view not only to improving job, business and market conditions at a personal level but also to develop the national economy at a larger level. Several empirical studies done in Canada and the USA concentrated on the relationship between language skills and earnings displaying that there is a need to acquire skills in any language to develop economic conditions from personal to national levels.

Language is very necessary for development. Communication is its primary purpose. It is not an end in itself. It helps human beings to develop socially, economically and culturally. It is a powerful tool to trade and expand any business. It induces cooperation. When one communicates, s/he has some goals to achieve, some objectives to be accomplished, some aspirations to be realized and some target audience to convince. Effective, attractive and fluent communication can boost the development of any company. Since it is a kind of magnet which attracts consumers and inspires and convinces them to buy products, effective communication can play a vital role in the economic development of the nation.



For any developing nation, there should be a unifying language without necessarily undermining or sidelining other languages. In the case of India, the case is very strange and complicated and yet it is very interesting and beneficial. We have many languages and multiple dialects. Our use of languages is usually affected and influenced by our local dialects. For example, our national language, Hindi is spoken differently by people of different regions, states and localities. A unifying and fluent use of language is mandatory not only for our trade with other countries but also for creating new markets within our nation. This will boost our economic development. As already said, the local language must not be undermined or sidelined but it should be used to welcome and facilitate our foreign guests and entrepreneurs. It should be used to inform them about our cultural heritage and unique things/ideas of India which makes it the world's oldest, most significant and most democratic civilization with a variety of religions and faiths.

To improve the economic conditions both of Indians and the nation, it is useful to connect economics with language. We are one of the developing countries with problems of corruption and

poverty. Discussing the ignorance hypothesis, Daron Acemoglu and James R. Robinson note that "The Ignorance hypothesis maintains that poor countries are poor because they have a lot of market failures and because economists and policymakers do not know how to get rid of them and have heeded the wrong advice in the past. Rich countries are rich because they have figured out better policies and have successfully eliminated these failures." (Daron Acemoglu, James Robinson 2012. p.64)

As far as academic institutions in India are concerned, there should be drastic changes in the teaching and learning of languages. Using a communicative approach and teaching the economic advantages of acquiring fluency in any language should be our next level focusing on the economic development of our students when they get their graduation degrees. Our population is our asset. We have more buyers than other nations. There are ample vacancies in the telecom sector for those who can sell their products using sweet, attractive and magnetic language. This is also true for other sectors of Indian industry. As far as the Indian system of education is concerned, it will be advantageous to students who study in various colleges in

India to learn the advantages of language learning. In the case of English, it is important to make them fluent to empower them to market their products or communicate about the Indian products in the world market. They must be introduced to the economic aspects of language. Many innovative methods and strategies like mock interviews, projects, surveys, questionnaires etc. should be introduced and implemented in education to make them fluent in language. They must be taught less due to the inefficiency of language. They must learn that language is an economic asset. They must learn that the efficiency of language will increase their salaries, help them to achieve targets in the market and make them leaders in it. The teacher should train the students and make them able to communicate in professional language. They should be groomed to be leading professionals in behaviour, attitude, style and etiquette.

To attract the market globally is not only the challenge of economists of the nation but it is also shared by the teaching community. To market our products in the global markets, the students of twentieth-century classrooms must be taught with a multidisciplinary approach. It will help the students of the English or Gujarati Department to understand their worth in the national as well as the world market.

As far as the English language is concerned, it should be specified as English for Academic Purposes, English for Literary Purposes and English for Occupational Purposes. This English for Specific Purposes (ESP) may use specific strategies for teaching language in particular situations.

In the rapidly growing and expanding world market, all the boundaries are blurred. The role of a language teacher is therefore very crucial to provide cross-cultural training and education to his students to survive in national as well as international bazar. The students should be trained to gain cross-cultural competency. They should develop the capacity to communicate with respect. They should be non-judgmental and display empathy. They should be flexible and capable of listening. The modern language teacher should prepare their students for effective interpersonal interactions when dealing with individuals from other cultures. Since we are not a technologically well-developed country and that is why we must find out the ways to attract our international customers. Language is the key to opening the gates of International markets for our Indian products. English should be taught and learned with the purpose not only of conquering national consumers but of



attracting international buyers for our production. Moreover, our teaching institutions should have good infrastructural facilities which can be used by the students. Recently the Government of India has implemented a project “Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat”. This project aims to promote interactions between the students and teachers of paired states. This will also help the students to know about the culture, language, religions, literature, infrastructure, geography and many other aspects of the paired state. Moreover, the teachers and students will have ample opportunities to interact with their counterparts from other states. This will improve the cultural exchange between the students and it will help to earn their bread in another state in future.

The connection of language with the economics of any nation is not new. Implicitly it has empowered the Indian market with its power to magnify. This has been making some innovations in the Indian market. The most popular words are used in trade and business. They are also hoarding of shops in metros. They are used as adjectives to attract both local and international customers. Therefore, words like “Bambaiya”, Ahmedabad” and “Lakhanavi” before the Indian products show the power of language. The students

should not only learn how to use language fluently to get attention but they should also know how to use popular local words and cultural clichés with local smells to sell their ideas or products. They should be trained to attract an international audience and to empower the international platform through language. The connection of economics with language will bring change in the socio-economic life of our students.

Economics and literature are seemingly different and abstract subjects and it seems strange to connect them both but the post-modern scenario of education is different. It focuses on a multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning which juxtaposes strange concepts with purposes to derive some new meanings and outcomes of this hybridization. Literature can be studied and interpreted from many points of view. There can be multiple interpretations of a text. Roland Barthes, one of the prominent critics of the twentieth century, wrote an article “The Death of the Author” in 1967 and he proclaimed that the author is dead. “It is a familiar slogan, efficiently and evocatively representing the post-structuralist dismissal of the author, signifying polemically that the author does not matter, only the text- that we should

not care about the author.” (Jane Gallop 2011. p.1) This suggests a multiplicity of texts with different interpretations. That is why, everyone reads from his or her perspectives and everyone creates his/her text. Many twentieth-century literary theorists including Karl Marx believe that an author is influenced by the socio-economic and political conditions of his nation. The text is the production/creation under socio-political and economic pressures and tensions. Marvin Harris applied the term “Cultural Materialism” to “a scientific method of studying the interaction between social life and material conditions”. (Marvin Harris 2001. p.13)

To bridge economics with literature is the need of the day and that is why the twentieth-century class of literature in any language must be taught that any book must not be read only from a literary or academic point of view. Literature can also be studied keeping in mind the economic and financial tensions during its creation. Many great literary texts were written to get financial, economic and political favours. The twentieth-century class of literature must learn that,

Finally, there is Queen Elizabeth, whom Spenser praised in poem after poem, and to whom he inscribed his *Fairie Queene* with a fine flourish: ‘To the most high, mighty, and magnificent

impressive renowned for piety, virtue, and all gracious government. Spenser’s admiration for Elizabeth was genuine, but he also expected recompense from her, which he received after considerable delay in February 1591 in the form of a pension of 50 pounds. (Albert Charles Hamilton 2001. p.13)

It is necessary to point out that the literary production of any writer is influenced by the economy and financial assistance. In recent ages, it has been controlled by the global market forces. It is believed by the critics and scholars of the East that the publication industry of recent times is controlled by the West. Examining the issue historically, the biographies of some well-known English writers like Philip Sydney, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden etc expose the fact clearly that they were influenced by the economic conditions of their times. Since the writer is also a social animal and s/he also needs bread and butter to survive, s/he has to colour his imaginative works with some propaganda. They create imaginative tales and stories but these creations are based essentially on the economic, social and political realities of their times.

The theorists of Materialism study literature from socio-economic and political perspectives. Though economics is about the production, consumption and





distribution of wealth, it indirectly influences literary creations. The economic dimension of any literary or imaginative creation must not be ignored. Charles Dickens in his novels exposes the disadvantages and limitations of the Industrial Revolution and shows how human relationships are formed, maintained and discontinued keeping in mind the economic status of human beings. Feelings are sometimes too costly and they can be bought and sold. Samuel Richardson conceived the idea of a novel as a kind of “self-help book” for the middle class which teaches how to behave in society. The social snobbery has a financial touch. Money makes the characters behave with some kind of attitude and etiquette. Therefore twentieth-century teachers of language should teach a text keeping in mind the economic perspectives behind its creation. S/he should make the students to re-think it as a product of that particular time comprising its cost and market values. The text should be taught with its blurred, mixed and unidentifiable complex boundaries. The teacher must inspire their students to examine and analyze any text keeping in mind the following key points which focus it as an economic product:

- Individual and cultural beliefs reflected
- Demonstration of social systems
- Presentation of economic realities of any location or region
- Imaginative colouring of socio-economic realities
- Politics and propaganda
- Religious beliefs and traditions
- Human relationships based on economic status
- Production and consumption of a particular text
- The portrayal of love and romance which influenced by the economic conditions

The connection between economics the literature should be explored in twentieth-century classrooms. The students should be provided with a comparative analysis of writers and their literary ideas with a materialist basis. For example, Jane Austin’s work can be studied in comparison with the ideas of Adam Smith who stated in *The Wealth of Nations* that “Man is an animal that makes bargains: no other animal does this- no god exchanges bones with another.” (Adam Smith 2010. p.47.) He also said: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their

interest.” (Adam Smith 2010. p.149.) Jane Austen understands this concept and she creates characters which make deals in human relationships. Her literary world is full of young women who do not have their good fortune. They usually make compromises for economic stability. Her Charlotte Lucas makes a series of speeches explaining that happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance and highlighting the importance of choosing a partner who can provide economic stability. Austen’s characters think of their best self-interest and undermine their feelings or sacrifice their emotions for financial prosperity and stability. There are multiple examples of literary texts exploring the economics of relations and feelings. Many works of famous authors including Shakespeare, Suketu Mehta, Eliot, Auden, Tolstoy, Mahasweta Devi, Vikram Seth, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams etc showcase the economic realities of their times and display how human relationships are also controlled by the financial conditions.

Twentieth-century students should learn how to earn money by using literature. Literary creations should not be used to impress or pamper our friends. The famous quotes by literary characters should not only used for filling up answer

sheets and entertaining classmates but they should be also used to earn bread. They should be taught how to use famous lines in textile manufacturing, i.e. printing them on the front of T-shirts to boost their sales. Literary phrases can be used to title a new company under the “Start-up Scheme” of the Government of India. The best example of using literature for financial output can be Vishal Bhardvaj’s adaptations of Shakespearean plays in his hit movies like *Haider*, *Maqbool* and *Omkaara*. Shakespeare can be sold in Indian flavours.

To conclude, the connection of economics with language and literature is very useful in twentieth-century India which is marching to be a developed country in the world. Our nation is rich in youth. They need a good direction. If they are directed productively, they can make the country economically powerful. In the multidisciplinary approach, this connection can provide multiple benefits to both institutions and nations.

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