

APPROACHING RESEARCH

Integrating Research in Language and Literature



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A very important discussion among the researchers in language and literature poses a challenge and tries to answer the question – “How to develop innovative research practices to overcome the challenges of language research?”

Integration of research in the language is mainly developed on ethical, epistemological and pedagogical issues. These parameters are best answered when the researchers explore their practices as co-researchers. The primary question that arises is what exactly does research mean? Who can lead, conduct, analyse, innovate, enact, or practice research?

A practitioner, a teacher, a teacher educator, and a researcher in language cannot shed one identity to take another but integrate all to emerge as a dynamic being. The notion of research and the way it gets integrated into teaching-learning can become an important topic to be considered by a language researcher. The changing paradigms of research have led to new doubts as to whether all research activities are ontological and epistemological. Each decision seeks to focus and complete attention. Any research should be technically convincing, systematic and innovative. Recent studies have shown that a large number of teachers consider research irrelevant. The critical question one has to ask is to decide how rigorous the research is, how impactful is the research and how original are the ideas.

In the domain of language and literature, critical questions like what the research agenda is, who conducts research, who generates the reports, what are the benefits of the research and how it matters for further research become very important. There is an urgent need to respond to the growing awareness of the large gap between research guidelines governing qualitative research and challenges in fieldwork during data collection. A large number of researchers in the field of language and literature face difficulties in accessing the right topic, and worries while dealing with sensitive information and many more.

Being more creative in identifying research topics is very important. It is essential to know how important and valuable information relevant to the research focus can be obtained. The researcher should be able to present both theoretical and practical aspects. Lack of empirical research can be due to pragmatic reasons such as time and access due to work pressure. This, according to relevance, document analysis, focus group discussions and interviews become very important.

Most of the researchers in languages aspire for more opportunities to engage with supervision and develop academic writing skills. But due to varied reasons, the researchers have expressed dissatisfaction in this regard.

There is a need for a strong base in theory and practical information for those researchers navigating the complex world of language research. There is a need for the integration of research, writing and teaching processes. Originality, clarity, and connectors of featured information should be the focus of research culture. Comprehensive research in new domains like applied linguistics establishes a positive correlation between both speaking and writing skills and enhances language proficiency. Language research requires the involvement of both the researcher and the researched. The research projects aimed at exploring the impact of different subjects should be able to analyse the glaring difficulties and devise methods to overcome them.

The specific challenges faced by language teachers in their research journey should guide them to sustain their commitment throughout the project and provide them with the strength to handle the physical and emotional strain. The potential language researcher should embark on this demanding but rewarding endeavour.

Specific challenges in language and literature Research: -

A basic question that arises in the mind of a researcher is what are the issues that affect the research and teaching in the present context and how have the researchers identified strategies to overcome them.

Interdisciplinarity has been instrumental in effecting changes in both fields and establishing the relationship between languages and the connection between literature and language. Nowadays research on language and literature has challenging concerns in the form of either specific queries or responses to those queries. The new systems of enquiry have enhanced the interest of researchers. Scholars are keen to address the questions and seek satisfactory solutions. It becomes appropriate to discuss the changes in research in the field of language and literature in the recent past. It may not be an overestimation to say that cross-cultural interaction has proven to be beneficial. The primary concern would be to take advantage of the technological innovations in cultural and political settings and whether they have impacted positively. The biggest challenge is to foster the development of new research topics and cope with the challenges posed by them. Hearing ecologies going beyond the normal need to be created and nurtured. The availability of basic resources sometimes remains underfunded.

The general component of literature broadens the level of understanding and creates cultural awareness and values which enhance skills like independent thinking and creativity. Literary appreciation helps researchers to develop critical sensitivity. It is important for researchers to facilitate the attainment of their research objectives through diverse themes like social vices, technology, history, gender, multicultural issues, politics, and governance.

As the world continues to adjust and cope with the new normal brought in by COVID-19 digital literacy, creativity, innovation, and soft skills have become the essential components of good research. A high level of efficiency is required to develop the necessary research skills.

Research in language and literature goes beyond reading a piece of literary work. Knowing the subject matter within the text is insufficient. Asking more questions, making relevant clarifications and active interactions is not optional but a pre-requisite for all researchers in the domain.

Literary appreciation should be enhanced by close and purposive reading and giving attention to intricate details. Researchers should engage in discussions which enhance their research focus. Researchers should be encouraged to actively engage in activities which contribute to gaining deeper insights and adopting different approaches. The socio-political and historical contexts of each text should be thoroughly explored. Literature should be used as a model for development and growth which becomes relevant in daily life.

The NEP 2020 has emphasized literature and identified it as a tool to create cultural awareness. It promotes art and culture, fosters nationalism, and explores new insights. Engagement in different aspects of language use and practice helps a researcher in discourses and the development of analytical skills.

Research not only provides higher degrees but also brings about the connection between experiences of the fictional world and individual experiences. Fundamentally we should understand that all literary works, irrespective of the genre, are about life experiences perceived by scribes at different places, during different times. Researchers in literature can understand human nature better than others and present the truth about human conditions. Literature coupled with good language skills enables a researcher to face the challenges of life.

Several studies have been carried out to improve the quality of research in literature and language. The studies have found that there is a lack of trust in socio-cultural and gender issues. If the teaching fraternity did not consider this domain irrelevant there could be an improvement in the quality of research in language and literature.