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## Use of Poetry in the English as a Second Language Classroom: A Study of Second Year Undergraduates in Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

P. N. Gardihewa

English Language Teaching Center, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka

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### ABSTRACT

*This study focuses on the effectiveness of the use of literature among English as a Second Language (ESL) students. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether poetry has an impact on language teaching and learning in undergraduates in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom. This study focuses on poetry as a motivation factor and as a productive method to practice language in the ESL classroom. The target population was randomly selected from the second-year students who offer Center for English Language Learning (CELL) as their core subject for their degree program. The students were chosen at random from the sample, with 20 individuals divided into two groups. After the class, the first group was tested using non-literature content, and their scores were recorded. The second group received the identical instruction as the first, with the same test results. As a result, after learning the lesson through a poem, the second group was tested again, and their scores were recorded. They were also given a questionnaire to gauge their degree of satisfaction. The effectiveness of using poetry in learning and teaching was examined by comparing the independent variables. When the effectiveness of the employment of poetry in second language learning students is measured, the outcome-oriented examination shows no difference. There seem certain positive and negative effects.*

\*Corresponding author

E-mail address:

nirmani@gwu.ac.lk

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## **1. Introduction**

Language and literature are considered to be sections that cannot be separated in the acquisition of a second language. In addition to the various techniques used in the acquisition of the second language, poetry can be used in language learning classrooms. Moreover, to learn and teach a second language interactively and communicatively, poetry can be used.

The British first introduced English Literature to the Sri Lankan classroom during the colonial period. The people of higher social classes and the privileged were educated in English and appreciated the masterworks in English Literature. Development of awareness in the use of literature texts, for language reasons, was observed throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. (Byram & Hu, 2013). Poetry was used in the classroom as a means for the students to practice and exercise language skills. Further, poetry was also used as a meaningful method for expression of language apart from learning poetry for appreciation. As a consequence, teachers initiated to select literature materials as a teaching aid to teach language.

### **1.1 Literature Review**

Three notable approaches to language classroom education include the culture/literature model, dialect or language pattern model, and individual development model (Carter & Long, 1991). The cultural model is made up of the student's perceptions, elucidations, and contemplations as part of a scholastic effort that makes him or her aware of a certain culture or social group's thoughts. Essentially, this inferred the views of a certain social gathering of which the student was maybe unaware. As a result, as a teacher, I am concerned about grounded education since the instructor provides foundation material of a specific philosophy while pupils are unable to progress in the dialect.

The student focused on memorizing content in a precise and organized manner to grasp linguistics highlights the literal and metaphorical dialect, dialect models, and so on in the language model. This method lends itself well to the collection of methodologies used in dialect instruction – the cloze method, prediction exercises, disordered verdicts, writing a summary, imaginative writing, and role-play – that make up a frame portion of the collection of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) exercises used by instructors to decompose scholarly writings to help specific linguists. (Savvidou, 2004). This is a student-centered method, or perhaps an increase in the importance of literary devices in poetry, in which the learner focuses on grasping the content, dialect paradigms, and upgrading dialect information (grammar, vocabulary) from one side of the lyric to the other.

In reality, the customized development display is based on the student's unique experience. This bridges the gap between the language and cultural models. Generally, this is shown in the student's ability to read the manuscript, respond to the dialect communicated within the section of writing, build trust with the student, and improve the student's inventiveness. When exhibiting and producing recommendations on the topic, the student essentially strives for individual expertise. In general, it appears that the dialect learner should be aware of the philosophy of writing content, dialect knowledge, and, finally, when communicating imaginatively with the individual.

#### **1.1.1 Theories Related to Language Learning**

During the audio-lingual approach, the learning was identified as closely associated with behavioral psychology. As Richards (2007) mentioned in *Methodology in Language Teaching*, learning may be fruitfully controlled in three in case three components

were recognized: 1) a boost, which serves to inspire behavior: 2) a reaction, activated by boost: 3) fortification, which serves to check the reaction as being suitable (or improper) and encourages the reiteration (or concealment) of the reaction within the future.

Significantly, the communicative dialect educating, can be caught on as a group of principles around the aims of language educating, how students learn a language, the kind of classroom tasks that are worthiest to motivate studying, and the portions of teachers and students within the classroom (Richards,2007). This mainly concerns the use of language for diverse purposes and capacities, the utilization of dialect agreeing to the setting and members, creation of diverse sorts of writings, and the preservation of communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge. Communicative language can be regarded as not merely a method but an approach for communication. It aids language learners to make real communication while focusing on language learning,1) it gives openings for the learners to test and try out what they know,2) it requires one to be lenient of students' blunders as they show that the student is structuring up his or her communicative capability,3) it gives openings for students to generate equally in accuracy and articulacy,4) it joins the diverse abilities such as talking, perusing, and tuning in together since they, as a rule, happen so within the genuine world, let understudies initiate or find language structure rules.

During the 1970s and 1980s, four methods came into importance such as communicative language teaching, Suggestopedia, Total physical response, and Silent way. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) Suggestopedia is a technique established by the Bulgarian psychiatrist-educator, Georgi Lozanov. It emphasizes on memorization of lexicon pairs-target dialect thing and its local dialect interpretation –which suggest a set of dialect

in which lexis is central and in which lexical interpretation instead of contextualization is pushed. In this method imitation, question and answer, role play, listening activities, games, song, were practiced as techniques. Remarkably, memory in learning has become an important factor in this method while learner and teacher are supposed to make interaction in the classroom. Here the use of literature in the form of poems is also one of the methods in this imitation. As a consequence, students gain the practice in speaking the language.

Many ESL classrooms in western countries have considered the overuse of poetry for language teaching and learning. The poem is considered a rich source in language teaching as it provides valuable opportunities for language learners. According to Tomlinson (1986), sonnets more than any other sort of content can donate profitable opportunities for learners to utilize and create such critical abilities as a derivation of meaning from etymological and situational setting; expectation; relating content to information and encounter of the world; perusing inventively, and the acknowledgment and translation of suspicions and inductions. In reality, this proposes learner-centered learning instead of a teacher-centered strategy within the dialect classroom.

Learning literature as a discipline would lead to learn style, usage of various types of language, and meaning in depth. Students would learn how to write in a variety of styles that are clear, succinct, and analytical. Students in-depth would learn British Literature, American Literature, World Literature, and Period Literature. However use of literature to teach ESL is diverse. For instance, simple poems can be incorporated in task based activities to teach students prepositions, grammar, subject verb agreement and so on. Poetry is regarded as a good and authentic teaching resource for language learners. Poetry can elicit interest and drive in pupils, allowing them to

converse about topics that are important to them, ultimately leading to improved language learning (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014). Poetry also provides a lot of room for experimentation. Pupils can broaden their lexicon. Students may learn, use, and remember more by using meaningful circumstances.

They can more effectively use vocabulary (Lazar, 1996). Poetry inspires and stimulates creativity. Poetry can be used to inspire creative writing (McKay, 1982). Incorporating poetry into the language classroom can result in a more meaningful language learning experience.

The presentation of English Writing to the school educational modules in 1992 could be an exceedingly obvious step towards the advancement of English Education in Sri Lanka (Pathirana, 2010). The learners tend to appreciate, critically evaluate poetry, and offer Literature at O/L and A/Level examinations. However, the learners were targeted in learning literature for examinations, and few studies were done on learning the language through poetry. Mainly poetry could be used to practice the language and even learners become confident in communication (practice the language skills) with the language as they can memorize the language used in the poetry.

As mentioned in the teachers' resource book *Appreciation of English Literary Texts Grades 10 & 11* (2008), that students should be encouraged to read literature by themselves, discover and make responses by themselves. Since literature is an authentic material, learners may grasp the structures and patterns used in poetry, and this may provide opportunities for learners to improve their language.

In the tertiary education sector the use of poems in language learning classrooms will also enhance the students speaking abilities. The use of rhythmic patterns in poems, tone

variation, pitch variation, pronunciation would definitely lead to break the monotonous and traditional way of teaching and would motivate and encourage the students to speak out the language rather than book learning. According to the research conducted by Ghazali (2017), the use of poetry in teaching English among university students is very productive. According to the findings of the research, she states that students' perspectives were favorable and it improved their attitude and found learning English by using literature is fun.

Mostly poetry is considered as a written activity in which learners tend to practice their aesthetic expression rather than considering poetry as a way to interact in the language classroom. Therefore, it is obvious to find the effectiveness of the use of poetry in second language learning and teaching.

Three distinctive hypothetical sets of dialect, and the nature of dialect capability unequivocally or certainly educate current approaches and strategies in dialect teaching (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). The three speculations are structural view, functional view, and interactional view.

Dialect is regarded as a framework of essentially connected foci on meaning coding in the structural approach. Phonological units, linguistic units, syntactic procedures, and lexical objects are used to describe the dialect. The dialect is seen as a medium for the conveyance of utilitarian meaning in the functional approach. Instead of components of structure and language structure, this advancement connects semantic and communicative labor. Dialect is defined as a vehicle for understanding interpersonal relationships and executing social trade between people, according to an interactional perspective. In reality –interaction|| was central to all these hypotheses of dialect instructing and learning since the 1980s. This interaction was centered on instructing not only reading and composing aptitudes but

moreover in tuning in and talking aptitudes within the second language classroom.

Communicative language learning was developed by Charles A. Curran which enabled learners to use the target language for communication and to increase the responsibility of learners for their learning. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLL combines inventive learning assignments and exercises with customary ones such as

1. Translation-teacher translates mother tongue language into the target language and learner repeats
2. Group work-group presentations to teacher and other learners
3. Recording—learners record the dialect they want to learn.
4. Translation- learners interpret expressions and discussions they have recorded for home and examination of phonetic shapes
5. Examine and contemplate target dialect linguistic and lexical usage—learners analyze and ponder target dialect linguistic and lexical use.
6. Learners reflect and communicate their involvement through reflection and observation.
7. Students who pay attention to what the teacher says.
8. Free conversation- the learner converses freely with the teacher and other students.

The learner becomes part of a community and the learner grasps the language through interaction with the other learners and teacher. The learner listens attentively, expresses freely the meanings, repeats the utterances, and expresses inner feelings such as joy or sorrow to become counselors of other learners. However, the textbook is not considered a necessary component, and interaction with the teacher and other learners becomes important. This mainly focuses on language for communication and learners are encouraged in self-evaluation.

## **1.1.2 Research studies done on use of poetry in language teaching and learning**

### **1.1.2.1 Using poetry to teach reading comprehension strategies to English language**

Using poetry to educate perusing comprehension methodologies to the English dialect Learners by Norris (2010)

This is classroom-based research to find the benefits of using poetry to teach English language learners reading comprehension. The students in the study were intermediate English language learners in suburban middle schools, aged five to six. NWEA MAP (North West Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress), Reading scores, Pre-post assessment, Poetry response sheet, and Questionnaire are employed in the data gathering tools pilot research. The researcher was mainly concerned with learners selecting the correct strategy, the benefits of using these five strategies such as visualizing, questioning, making connections, summarizing, and evaluating, for their future reading. The major research findings of the research are:

1. The students can distinguish and apply a perusing technique each day.
2. Students composed important reactions to each poem.
3. The methodologies chosen most regularly when students were given a choice were assessing, and addressing, whereas the methodology chosen the slightest was summarizing
4. The two students had an increment in their review level NWEA-MAP perusing scores whereas three had increments in their account comprehension scores from drop to winter.

The researcher further suggests that results show students exceeded expectations at composing reaction parcel of the warm-up. The foremost curiously comes about

uncovered in responding to the lyrics, students choose to assess and address the majority of the time, with summarizing being used just infrequently. Throughout the study, it was as if it were only one time. Finally, the researcher finds that poetry is a creative way to make material accessible to students.

### **1.1.2.2 Enriching Fictitious Proficiency over Task founded Literature Education by Neranjani (2011)**

The participants were designated from three schools in the Gampaha district that offer English literature for students in the G.C.E. classroom. This research work aims to find the answers to the following questions

1. What are the factors that influence the development of literary competency in second language learners?
2. How might these points of view be used to develop literary competency in the Sri Lankan Literature classroom?

The investigation's specific destinations are determined by the above questions. The most important objectives are to examine how literature is taught to second language learners in other countries, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the existing learning-teaching framework in the Sri Lankan Literature classroom, to assess the literary competence of a selected sample of students, and to suggest exercises to improve the students' literary competence. For data collection, the analyst used to survey, perception, and pre/post exercises, and each activity is based on literary competency, the hypothesis on which the activity is based, the activity, and how it is executed.

The presumptions of the investigation are, there are crucial perspectives that contribute towards the improvement of literary competencies in Second language learners and these viewpoints can be utilized to create literary competence within the Sri Lankan literature classroom. The analyst concludes

that concurring to the information assembled from survey perception and interviews, the teacher-centered and student-centered methods were not successful within the classroom within the Sri Lankan literature learning classroom.

The researcher recommends that teachers who teach English literature in Sri Lanka ought to be given appropriate direction in preparing how to utilize both the teacher-centered and student-centered to create the literary competence of the students.

According to the researcher this was mainly because, though teachers were aware of the techniques to be used in teaching English Literature, they did not know how to obtain the maximum participation of students and develop their literary competence.

In fact the research also suggests that language competence is necessary to learn literature but literature can be used as a powerful tool to develop the language of the students. This also proves positive effects such as if poetry teaching methods were used in teaching literature, it can contribute towards developing higher skills of the students such as imagination and creativity. The results of the research are vital for the investigations of this study, and how the pretests and posttests activities are conducted. According to this research it states that the teacher centered and student centered approaches were not successful in the ESL learning classrooms.

### **1.1.2.3 Teaching and learning poetry in other countries**

Ahmad (2014) investigates how several devices of linguistic examination may be used to teach poetry to ESL learners to improve their skill in language structure, lexicon, emphasize, pitch, and coordination aptitudes. The study discovered that teaching poetry using linguistic and communicative strategies was extremely motivating and beneficial for

Saudi students. Both the stylistics and communicative-based approaches for teaching poetry in the ESL course empowered and related the students and teachers. Learners were energized to study the lyric etymologically, such as linguistic use highlights, lexical highlights, phonological highlights, and topographical highlights, using this complicated technique. In reality, this has provided learners with motivation and the opportunity to develop their learning styles.

According to Susikaran's research article (2013), lighthearted poetry can be used to teach grammar. This investigates the circumstances around the poem's queries, as well as how to educate framing inquiries. The paper suggests that simple poems and related exercises can improve linguistic usage learning at the elementary school level and that the quality of the words encourages students to acquire the linguistic terms used in the poem. Article assistance promotes poetry as a useful tool for studying specific grammatical structures, which may be a novel approach to traditional language structure training. In fact the research article suggests that linguistic-stylistic technique is more effective in enhancing students' achievement and retention in poetry than the traditional method of teaching. In fact using this linguistic-stylistic enable student to understand the poetry and it will be rewarding to teachers. It recommends English literature should adopt linguistic stylistic technique in teaching various poetry and text books, and that seminars should introduce this for English literature teachers.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The foremost research objectives of this research are to investigate:

1. whether poetry would be an effective source in learning and teaching, language abilities, language models, sentence patterns, etc. in the language classroom.

2. whether poetry would be a motivating factor for second language learners and a resource for language teachers.
3. if poetry would be an effective method in creating a good rapport with the teacher and the learner.
4. the attitudes of both learners and teachers about the use of poetry to teach and learn the second language in ESL classroom

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

H0 - Use of poetry would not be effective in second language teaching and learning

H1 - Use of poetry would be effective in second language teaching and learning

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The students are tested by using pre-test and post-test methods. The students' ideas are taken after the post-test and their ideas are discussed with the objectives of this study. One of the basic factors concerned in this research was the use of authentic materials such as poetry when teaching and learning a second language. The participants have learned the second language in the language classroom but they may not have used poetry for language learning. The effectiveness of poetry was studied by considering poetry as an effective learning material for language learners.

### **2.1 Field setting of the research and study sample**

Participants were selected from the second-year students of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka who are studying Core English Language (CEL) as a core subject in their degree program. The students are mixed ability groups who have entered the university from varied areas of the country and they possess varied knowledge and skills in using the English language. Mainly, the sample consists of English medium A/Level educated and mother tongue A/Level educated students while they have different

attitudes when using the second language for day-to-day communication.

The students represent both male and female groups and who are not offering English as their major subject. Before the tests were conducted, the students were asked their opinion on learning the language through literature. Secondary data also are taken into consideration, especially the language through literature-related articles and books.

This study considered only language learning through poetry and not poetry learning in the classroom, and it does not focus on any of the literary devices or the poetic diction used by the poet.

## **2.2 Data collection method**

The major data collection method used in this study was the secondary data (books, articles, ELT journals) on teaching the language through literature. Further, the research conducted in other countries similar to this study (as mentioned in Section two) were taken into account. The data from activities such as pre/post-tests, designed activities, questionnaires, and the opinions of the sample population were also taken into consideration.

### **2.2.1 Questionnaire**

The main purpose of the questionnaire is to find out the attitudes of second language learners (undergraduates) when learning the language through poetry. This sample is taken to get the feedback conveniently and to check whether the use of poetry is effective or not when it refers to second language teaching and learning

The questionnaire is made to measure their satisfaction level after pre and post-tests, and to find out the following:

1. How do the participants see poetry as effective in developing language skills, language models, sentence patterns, etc. in the language classroom.

2. The participant's idea, whether poetry is a motivating factor for second language learners, and if poetry is an effective source.
3. To find out whether the participants feel poetry builds a good rapport with the learner and the teacher.
4. To get the attitude of participants when using poetry in the language classroom.

### **2.2.2 Pre/post Tests and Activities**

Pre-test and Post-test are the measuring tools used to analyze whether the poetry is effective for language learners. The pre-test was designed by considering the grammar knowledge of the first group of participants, especially whether they could use prepositions accurately and meaningfully when using the second language, and if they have explained the use of prepositions in the English language. A cloze passage from a non-literary text is used for this test. The participants were tested by using the following criteria,

1. The ability to comprehend the meanings of the passage's words—what is the paragraph about?

According to the theory of language in the interactional view, the participants' language knowledge is tested as it leads to their comprehension. Language knowledge is considered as the basis for interaction with language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

2. The ability to put correct prepositions in the passage-put correct prepositions for the blanks:

This is based on the structural view of the theory of the language. The participants are focused on the structure of the language with its phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical expressions, and use of lexical. The learners are focused on the functional view which relates to the semantic and communicative function of the language



rather than the elements of structure and grammar.

3. The ability to read the passage with correct pronunciation and stresses-focus on listening and speaking:

The participants are focused on communicative language learning which enables the participants to use the target language for communication.

4. The ability to make new sentences by identifying the correct prepositions to be used in the sentence-how language models to be used in the second language:

The communicative language enables the participants to reflect and observe. The participants are to reflect and express their experience using the target language.

During the post-test, the second group of participants was provided the same nonliterary cloze passage and data was gathered by considering the above competencies of the participants. The post-test activities are designed according to the four objectives of the research study, the role of poetry in the ESL classroom, poetry as a motivating factor, poetry in building rapport with learners and teachers, and further, to obtain the attitudes of learners in using poetry for second language teaching. These objectives are the outcomes expected from the study and the learners are to engage in the activities as the researcher will be giving the instructions for the tasks and will be a facilitator in learning. The participants need to communicate with the researcher by making a real second language learning classroom.

### 2.2.3 Pre-test activity (For both sample groups)

The participants were given a prepositions lesson from Wren and Martin's (2006) *High School English Grammar and Composition*, as well as a chapter from the same book. (pg.346)

#### Activity 1

Understanding the meaning of the passage is a comprehension skill.

- The participants are taught a lesson on prepositions
- The participants need to read the passage and guess what the passage is about.

#### Activity 2

Understanding the structural, functional, and interactional views of language is essential.

- The participants are asked to fill the blanks in a passage by using their memory and knowledge of prepositions.
- The participants discuss the answers and justify their answers

#### Activity 3

The ability to express oneself in a language by reflecting on what one has learned: communicative language acquisition.

- Write 10 sentences by using the prepositions found in the passage-the participants reflect and express their experience
- The participants read sentences and analyze on target grammar, lexis use

### 2.2.4 Post-test activity (For one sample group)

The participants have completed the pre-test activities on the given poem –'Acquainted with the Night' by Robert Frost.

#### Activity1

The ability to comprehend: comprehend the poem's meaning.

- The participants receive a revision lesson on prepositions
- The participants need to read the poem aloud and guess what the poem is about.

#### Activity 2

Understanding the structural, functional, and interactional views of language is essential.

- The participants are asked to fill the blanks in the passage by using their memory and knowledge of prepositions.
- The participants discuss the answers and justify their answers

**Activity 3**

When using poetry in an ESL classroom, the learner's attitudes and interactions with the teacher are examined.

- The participants are asked to remember the stresses, pronunciation, language pattern used in the poem
- The participants are asked to repeat the poem after the researcher has recited the poem

**Activity 4**

The ability to express oneself in a language by reflecting on what one has learned: communicative language acquisition.

- Write 10 sentences by using the prepositions found in the passage- the participants reflect and express their experience
- The participants read the sentences and analyze on target grammar and lexis use

**2.3 Data Analysis and limitations**

The data analysis is based on the objectives of the study. Each objective is represented by the data and analyzed for each objective.

**Table 1.** Data Analysis according to objectives

<p><b>OBJECTIVE 1</b> (To investigate whether poetry is an effective source in learning and teaching the second language)</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 2</b> (To investigate whether poetry would be a motivating factor for ESL learners)</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 3</b> (To investigate whether poetry would create a good rapport between the learner and the teacher)</p>	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4</b> (To investigate the attitudes of both learners and teachers in the use of poetry in the ESL classroom)</p>
<p>The data to achieve this objective was taken from the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research works</li> <li>- Theories and approaches used in language teaching</li> <li>- Test scores obtained at the pre-test and the post-test</li> </ul>	<p>This was achieved by considering the feedback provided by the participants after the post-test</p>	<p>The data gathered by observing the activities conducted in the pre-test and the post-test</p>	<p>The data gathered from the questionnaire which contained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- their satisfaction level</li> <li>- their ideas on learning the language through poetry</li> </ul>

**3. Results and Discussion**

The analysis of the data is concerned with the objectives of the study, and according to the objectives and competencies mentioned.

According to Tomlinson (1986), poetry has positive gains for language learners such as educational values, affective values, achievement values, individual values, and stimulus values and skills development. For example, with regard to the educational

values, learners can be educated through the poetry carefully selected. It provides an opportunity to gain experience in the world and the knowledge of the language. In considering the affective values, learners actively engage in discussion with themes presented in the poem and such interaction make the learner stimulated to communicate in the target language in the classroom. The poetry provides achievement values for the learners such as if the teacher helps the learners to learn the poems through prereading activities without language. The learners may grasp the meaning of the poem and respond successfully which is an achievement of the learner. In considering the individual values, as the learners can engage expressing themselves in the classroom,

mostly the weakest or the brightest students may express their deeper idea regarding the meanings of the poetry. Poetry brings stimulus values to the language learner. The learner engages intelligently and creatively expressing their ideas on poetry which makes them satisfied and proud. Further, such may lead to stimulation for the language learner as they can engage in the appropriate and accurate use of language in the follow-up activities.

In considering these secondary data with the following theories and methodologies used in the primary data collection, the pre-test marks, and post-test marks have shown an effective difference in scores.

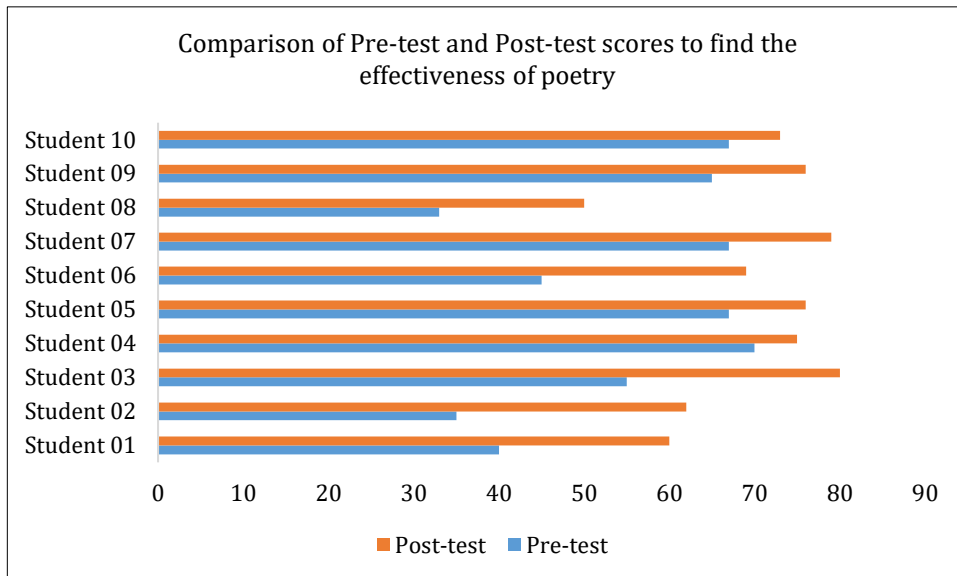
**Table 2.** Participants Response to Methods In Teaching

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Method of teaching</b>	<b>Participant's response</b>
– Culture/literature model	– Teacher based learning	– Positive Poetry was considered as a source of information and they were eager to share their knowledge, – Negative Few students were not interested in the topic but paid attention to gain the knowledge
– Language model	– Use language models, structures, etc. in poetry to develop the language	– Positive Prepositions are well understood as they are used with language structures and models – Negative Few students were not able to comprehend the poem and the use of prepositions appropriately in a sentence.
– Personal growth model	– Learn the language to express the experience	– Positive Students were able to express themselves by memorizing the sentence patterns, language patterns in poetry. – Negative Few errors in grammar, spellings were found in sentences
– Language theory	– Use poetry to view the theories of language	– Positive Students were able to study the structural view, interactional view, functional view of the language

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative</li> <li>Few students were not fluent in all four language skills</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicative Language Learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enable learners to use the target language for communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive</li> <li>Students were able to communicate in the target language and express themselves.</li> <li>- Negative</li> <li>Few errors were found in the pronunciation and stress of the language.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audio-lingual approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target language patterns were for memorization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive</li> <li>Students were able to memorize what they have learned through poetry.</li> <li>- Negative</li> <li>Few errors were made by students as they have created several patterns when they try to memorize the target language patterns.</li> </ul>

The participants' test scores are depicted in Figure 01 below. In the pre-test, the participants are assessed after learning the

lesson through non-literature sources, and in the post-test, they are assessed after learning the lesson through poetry.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test scores to find the effectiveness of poetry

Figure 01 depicts how students developed their knowledge in the post-test, as participants used prepositions appropriately

in their second language. Through the results it can be observed that H<sub>1</sub> is significant.

This could be related to the study's objectives, as the members did not correctly understand the use of prepositions in a phrase according to the pre-test.

It appears that both student-centered and teacher-centered learning methods have been used to assess the effectiveness of using poetry in second language learning and teaching. In general, the educator should be cautious while picking authentic materials such as poetry for developing dialect abilities,

dialect models, and sentence structure in the dialect classroom. As students have focused on communicative dialect learning, techniques to teaching literature, and language theory, the Post-test shows show an improvement in results.

Table 03 shows how students have scored in the pre-test.

Table 04 shows how students have scored in the post-test

**Table 3.** Prepositions found in non-literature used by the participants in sentences

	Upon	In	From	Of	out	about	At	On	With	Over
Student1	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Student 2	×	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Student 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×
Student 4	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓
Student 5	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Student 6	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student 7	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
Student 8	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Student 9	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Student 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×	✓

**Table 4.** Prepositions found in poetry used by the participants in sentences

	With	In	To	of	out	by	at	on	against	down
Student1	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Student 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Student 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Student 4	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Student 5	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓
Student 6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student 7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Student 8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Student 9	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Student 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓

In evaluating the two tables it displays that learners of the pre-test have made many mistakes than learners of the post-test. For instance, the preposition –with was used

correctly by post-test learners than the pre-test learners. Furthermore, it can be observed from table 03 that with regard to the preposition ‘with’, eight students have gone

wrong at the pre-stage. But at the post stage as shown in table 04 with reference to the proposition 'with', almost all the students have correctly answered. With reference to the proposition 'on' as shown in table 03, four students have done mistakes at the pre-stage. Nevertheless, at the post stage as demonstrated in table 04, only one student has made a mistake.

This clearly shows an improvement in the use of literature in ESL teaching and learning. When comparing the two groups with the use of preposition it can be observed that there is a significant improvement or outcome of the majority of responses is correct in the post stage, that is with the use of literature. Through the results it can be observed that  $H_1$  is significant. When the results of the table 03 and table 04 are compared, it can be observed that a majority of the students have committed mistakes at the pre-stage but at the post stage as observed in table 04, only a few students have committed errors. Therefore, it can be clearly stated that a significant improvement in performance cannot be observed in traditional learning.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the students benefited and they showed improvement when literature was utilized in teaching ESL. The students were more keen and showed high interest towards learning which also inculcated more creativity.

### 3.1 Poetry as a motivating factor

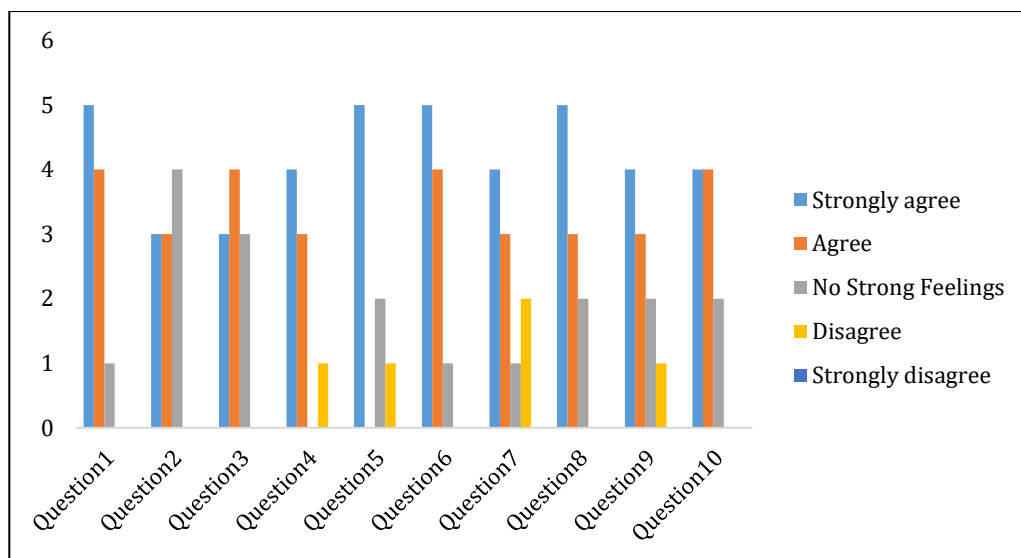
Poetry is often considered as a part of literature in the Sri Lankan School curriculum as students practice their writing to present their aesthetic expression to the target paper. According to *Appreciation of English Literary Texts*, the grade 10 & 11 teacher's resource

book (2008) literary texts by their very nature engage the reader both in terms of content as well as language, which suggests that while learner enjoys the poem, the learner also engage in improving the language.

The book further suggests for Sri Lankan schools, the reading goals, and linguistic aims are of primary importance. In such a way learners are not tempted to interact with the teacher in the classroom and are even not encouraged to improve language skills in the classroom.

According to Sivayanesan (2007), literature is a fruit that tempts one to think, and thinking, in turn as it requires language leads one to the realization of the strengths and weaknesses of one's word power. The writer presents his experiences in the use of poetry in a university second language classroom. First and foremost, making the learners speak about the poems, then explaining the words, and improving learners' vocabulary, were the methods discussed in the book. Finally, the writer concludes by recommending the following examples to be considered when selecting a poem (a literary material) in the language classroom, such as word association, MCQ type, find poems with similar subjects, choose poems with similar themes in which learners can make comparisons, and consider about the language level and interest of learners.

In considering these secondary data with the primary data of the research, it seems that many participants have found poetry as a motivating factor in language learning. The following chart shows the results of their satisfaction when learning a language through poetry.



**Figure 2.** Attitudes of participants regarding poetry in ESL classroom after Pre-test and Post-test

The questions are based on the following factors, what the participants feel about the use of poetry in the ESL classroom. The use of poetry in ESL classroom:

1. Improves the language skills of students (listening, speaking, writing, and reading)
2. Makes language learning interesting and learner-centered
3. is an effective source in explaining the formation of language by providing examples.
4. Enables to make language learning meaningful and helps grasp new vocabulary.
5. Makes the learner appreciate the poem and learn the language both at the same time
6. Builds a good rapport between the learner and the teacher
7. Makes the learner think and memorize the language patterns
8. Allows the students to practice the language in the classroom.
9. Makes the learner use the language linguistically and interactively.
10. Motivates students to learn the language

According to the figure 03 it shows that, regarding question number 01, a majority of the students strongly agree on the fact that using poetry improves the language skills of the students. A majority of the students had a neutral response over the fact that using poetry is interesting and it is learner centered. A majority of the students agree that literature enables language learning meaningful and assist to grasp new vocabulary. Further, a majority of the students strongly agree on the fact that using literature enables the learner appreciate the poem and learn the language both at the same time. Moreover, a majority of the students strongly agree on the fact that using poetry enables a good rapport between the learner and the teacher. Further, a majority of the students had a favorable response over the facts that literature enables the learner think and memorize the language patterns and allow the students to practice the language in the classroom. Furthermore, a majority of the students strongly agree that using poetry makes the learner use the language linguistically and interactively.

In considering the above data, a majority of the participants were satisfied with the fact

that poetry is useful for practicing four skills, building a good rapport with the learner and teacher, and even practice the language in the classroom.

According to Hadaway, Vardell & Young(2001), the solid verbal quality of verse may be an effective educational additionally. The verse is implied to be perused out loud. The poem's meaning is more clearly communicated when both read and heard. In such a way the participants were interested in interacting with the teacher and practice what they have heard from the teacher. Mainly, the participants were interested in reading the poem and grasping the correct pronunciation, stress, etc. from the teacher. Further, many participants were interested in the subject matter presented in the poem. This made them express themselves concerning the language pattern, and language models of the poem.

In contrast, the chart presents that a few of the participants were negative towards several factors such as learning language through poetry is a learner-centered method, poetry as an effective source in explaining the formation of the language, and even memorizing the language patterns.

### **3.2 Strengths and weaknesses of using poetry in the language classroom**

In the article titled *English Literature and its position in the Sri Lankan ESL classroom*, Pathirana (2010) suggests that each dialect educator would concur that literature speaks to the most excellent that the dialect can offer and it gives the learner with authentic materials wealthy in historical and cultural content with a high degree of assortment eradicating dullness in which the learner picks up familiarity easily. In such a way, poetry can be considered as an authentic material which opens up to a world of creativity and imagination. Further, the writer suggests that literature is an interactive process, the major problem being

the shortage of qualified teachers. Teacher and learner both should interact in learning and teaching poetry, and mostly both can share experiences regarding the poem and make observations in the classroom. However, the learners are not well supported with specific syllabuses as they have altered with time. As mentioned in the article, qualified, experienced individuals are required for the classroom. This further suggests both teachers and learners should help each other to continue this process communicatively and interactively.

In considering the primary data of the research, the major strength behind the use of poetry in the ESL classroom was that the participants were interested in reading and practicing what they have learned. The selected poem contained an experience of a poet and the participants were interested in sharing their experiences using the target language. This made the participants interact in the classroom as every participant had a similar experience to share with the other which is also mentioned in the research conducted by Richard (2007)

However, when referring to the feedback provided by the participants (those who did both tests) they displayed several attitudes when learning language through poetry. Here are the conclusions drawn the participants

- The meanings of the words and the use of prepositions are a bit complex and incomprehensive
- The participants found the teacher as a facilitator and tasks are learner-centered, which may be difficult for weaker students
- The participants have found poetry as an interesting source as they can use language skills to express themselves in the classroom
- The learners were interested in reading, speaking, listening rather than writing.



- The few participants were not able to comprehend the tenses when using the target language for communication

According to the conclusions made by the participants, it seems the participants need several more activities to achieve the target language. Collie & Slater (1987) suggest the exercises chosen ought to empower a sort of profitable investigation which needs the certainty of the learners both to create their claim reactions and to examine and appreciate verse within the target dialect on their claim. They have introduced the warm-up activity, reading the poem, and a follow-up activity which can give a good result to teach poetry.

The above information reveals that teaching the language through poetry needs some activities to stimulate the learners and to develop the language competencies.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research was to investigate:

1. whether poetry would be an effective source in learning and teaching, language skills, language models, sentence patterns, etc. in the language classroom.
2. whether poetry would be a motivating factor for second language learners and a resource for language teachers.
3. whether poetry would be an effective method in creating a good rapport with the teacher and the learner.
4. the attitudes of both learners and teachers concerning the use of poetry to teach and learn the second language in ESL classroom

The data were collected to achieve these objectives, and analyzed and interpreted according to the methodologies and approaches in ESL, in the previous section. In this section, the conclusions and recommendations will be presented by considering the analysis and interpretation of the data.

According to Vardell, Hadaway & Young(2006), there are some dos and don'ts for choosing and sharing poetry with English learners. Four accessibilities need to be considered when selecting poetry for language learners.

##### 1. Content accessibility

A poem needs to be connected with language learners either relevant to their lives or experiences such as topics familiar or easier to understand. The poetry with a deep symbolic meaning may confuse the language learner and invite learners to search for or share poetry that has personal meaning for them. This would be helpful to language learners to grasp the concepts, vocabulary, and meaning of the poem as well as enjoy the use of language. (Norris, 2010).

##### 2. Language accessibility

The language learners need to provide the poems with rhyme and rhythm, which enables the learners to predict how words and phrases sound. This enables language learners to read aloud and speak out loud which would improve the spoken competency of the learner.

##### 3. Visual accessibility

Poetry such as concrete poetry, shape poems are suitable for language learners as such poems provide visual support by reflecting the shape of what is addressed in the poem

##### 4. Cultural accessibility

In selecting poems for second language learners, it is best to select poetry with appropriate words, sounds, rhythm, and meaning.

According to the above factors and conclusions made by the participants, it is best to select simple poems for the ESL learners, as they can grasp the meaning which

makes them practice language skills and patterns of the language. As the participants suggested, the ESL learners need more activities which should accompany the teaching of the poem such as sharing their own experiences, reading out the poem, correcting their pronunciation by imitating the teacher, etc.

In considering the findings and the feedback provided by the participants, the ESL learners need both the teacher-centered method and the learner-centered method. Poetry alone would not provide any aid for developing grammar knowledge and the learners face difficulties in using the language patterns along with the grammar in communication. Therefore, the poetry teaching needs to be expanded with several activities to make language learning through poetry interesting for ESL learners.

The findings of the study show that poetry in the ESL classroom is an effective tool for language teaching and learning. Below are a few examples of both poor and favorable consequences.

#### Positive

- ✓ The students were able to grasp the pronunciation, stresses, and rhythm in poetry, as well as exhibit an interest in expressing their thoughts in the ESL classroom, and were eager to improve their communication skills by talking with peers and the teacher.
- ✓ The students discovered learning the language with literature is more interesting rather than non-literature material. (as shown in figure no.1)
- ✓ The attitudes of the participants about poetry in ESL classroom shows that many participants agreed with the fact that poetry could provide the opportunity to practice the language in the classroom and interact with the teacher
- ✓ According to the secondary data, learning language through poetry needs some

expanded activities such as warm-up, reading poetry, and follow-up activity

#### Negative

- ✓ The students came across difficulties using grammar in the construction of sentences as poetry did not assist in such issues.
- ✓ In both teacher-centered and student-centered classrooms the usage of poems disables the student to understand the poem.
- ✓ Since language had its structures the learner was not in a position to memorize the language structures.
- ✓ Some learners believed that language learning through poetry is difficult and complex since it requires more time to understand the poems. (time was limited in post-test)

According to the findings of the study, poetry can be employed as an authentic material to help students improve their language skills. The primary goal is to help students develop and improve their oral communication skills. It is also critical that the poem be recognizable to the students. For example, a short poem can be useful and successful in helping students understand concepts.

According to analysts in other countries, the stylistic approach and communicative-based approaches appeared to strengthen the dialect since they provided inspiration and opportunities for learners to develop their learning process. This would be suitable for Sri Lankan ESL students because they have discovered that communicative learning is appropriate in dialect acquisition and that students need both learner-centered and teacher-centered strategies when learning the language.

According to Susikikaran (2013), humorous poetry may also be used to teach grammar, which is a novel way to grammar learning. Furthermore, the research studies advise that

literature teachers should attend seminars to learn about linguistic and stylistic techniques for teaching various poems and textbooks. However, the participants did not agree with the grammar learning through poetry according to the pre and post-test results. In reality, this could be a novel technique to teach specific grammatical structures utilized in poetry to Sri Lankan students.

When selecting poetry for dialect learners, instructors must consider a few factors to persuade dialect learners to grasp the dialect and practice it. This entails introducing texts with rhymes and rhythms that encourage the student to read out loud and practice the dialect. In any event, educators should be creative when choosing poetry because it will provide an authentic thread for sharing the learning experience with the students. As noted by Collie and Slater (1987) in *Literature in the Language Classroom*, numerous actions must be followed with the poetry written by the teacher. Since many participants thought that poetry is useful for practicing the language, the activities of this study developed the hypothesis that poetry in ESL classrooms influences language learning. As a result, poetry might be recommended for language learners who want to be motivated and self-taught.

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