
**A CRITICAL STUDY ON DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH THE TEACHING OF
POETRY IN INDIA**

**Satya Parkash, Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Himalayan Garhwal University,
Uttarakhand**

Dr Veer Singh, Professor, Dept. of English, Himalayan Garhwal University, Uttarakhand

ABSTRACT

A universal language should be concerned with adapting its norms, descriptions, and prescriptions to the requirements and expectations of many civilizations. And English is unquestionably one of those languages that has always adopted terminology and notions from various cultures and incorporated them into the standardized variation. It has also never been rigorous when it comes to coinages. It's interesting to notice that Englishmen could never be called "settlers" in any country; wherever they went, they were called "colonizers." However, the English language, on the other hand, was effectively established throughout the colonies and served as a unifying force, earning it the moniker of "world language." According to McKay (2018), "EIL (English as an International Language) belongs to its users...a theory of EIL teaching and learning must be influenced by linguistic rather than attitudinal descriptions of language diversity" (p. 126). Because English has expanded its wings around the globe, knowing the proper words to say at the right time has become a requirement. As a result, soft skill training is becoming increasingly popular among people of all ages. Most interviews these days are geared toward evaluating candidates' finer abilities. While technical and mechanical components of a work are easily taught, skills such as communication, leadership, and time management are more difficult to convey; yet, with enough experience, they may be polished. It's a common misconception that these abilities are solely valuable for working professionals. Because soft skills are better acquired early in life, many schools and institutions have begun to provide soft-skills classes to students. Everyone aspires to be an effective communicator. Because communication is ubiquitous, it is difficult to understand the complexities of this talent. As a result, the researcher makes a modest attempt in this study to see if poetry may be utilized as an effective instrument to enhance a learner's communicative ability.

KEY WORDS: Teaching, English Literature, Communication Skills, Poetry, India.

INTRODUCTION

The Teaching of English Literature in India

India has always had a rich cultural legacy that has been reflected in its literary works. In Indian classical languages, several scholars have created timeless works of literature. The pendulum has swung towards a language that was originally a vernacular but has now become an antithesis for the upliftment of the country's native vernaculars in India, one of the world's oldest civilizations, packed with literary works in thousands of regional languages. Today's Indian littérateurs' infatuation with English literature demands special attention.

Let us begin by assuming that literature is a perspective and a way of looking at things differently; it is a way of life in and of itself, rather than engaging in the age-old habit of asking questions like "what is literature and how do we define it." The ability of literature to both instruct and entertain makes it a unique entity that, when used in the proper spirit, can work miracles in the classroom. "A very significant component of the language is learned through artistic and literary expressions," Mahapatra (2020) writes (p. 37). The majority of literature works are written with the dual goals of instruction and enjoyment in mind; among school students, the study of different genres such as theater, poetry, and fiction is done in the hopes of raising cultural awareness. India has nearly split into two factions: one believes that literature is far more than language, and that appreciation of literature transcends the development of linguistic abilities, and the other believes that literature is nothing more than a resource for language study. The second school of thinking believes that literature does not always aid and abet verbal competence. "Literature does not give learners the kind of vocabulary they truly need," Collie and Slater (2018) argue (p. 4), because the language of literature is so different from the English used in everyday life.

Genre of Poetry and Language Learning

Poetry is an especially appealing setting for learning a second language and improving communication skills. Poems are the finest place to practice grammar and vocabulary, and they also help to improve LSRW1 skills. Many people have referred to poetry as versatile because it takes on different forms with each change in words and phrases, but in the context

of this study, poetry may be said to be versatile in nature since it aids in the development of all four language abilities. The form's musicality aids in the development of listening abilities. Poems have a built-in communicative characteristic that aids in the development of speaking skills. The various patterns in poetry help readers improve their reading skills while also allowing them to acquire a critical eye for poems with ambiguous meanings. And finally, the act of writing poems inspires some readers to write their own poems. Poems' aesthetics place a premium on originality and expressiveness. As a result, poetry's variety lends itself to an ideal language learning environment. "There is adequate rationale to treat poetry as another form of language usage, and the inclusion of it in the educational program has its merits," Maley and Moulding 2019) write (p. 134).

Transformative Power of Poetry

Students can learn to emote better and be driven to create through poetry because of its transforming effect. According to Isenberg, poetry has such a high utility value that it results in "intellectual performance" rather than just performance (as cited in Pourgiv, Sagighi, & Ameri, 2018, p. 209). Many literary commentators have emphasized the advantages of poetry over other literary genres. The Russian formalist Victor Skhlovsky (2020) identified a critical distinction between literary or "poetic" language and common speech or "practical" language. The former, which is a non-causal and deliberate verbal structure, has a distinct flavor from the later, which is a causal verbal structure. So poetry is the use of language that involves deautomatization and defamiliarization procedures, in which the familiarity film is willingly halted in order to look at the ordinary through a new lens. This actually changes the sphere of the mundane into the realm of the fantastic. Presenting the ordinary in an unusual or new way serves to sharpen one's perception.

In the same way as Frye (2019) believes that literature in general has a therapeutic role, the researcher argues that poetry in particular has a therapeutic purpose. Does poetry make you emotionally weak or does it give you a firmer foundation on which to connect with emotion? Many people have commented about how much fun it is to read and write poetry, but it was Robert Frost who said, "Poetry begins in delight and ends in wisdom" (as cited in Bright and McGregor, 1970, p. 223). However, this suggests that poems make some demands on readers,

and poetry must be read carefully since, as Jones, Jr. (2020) points out, “Almost everyone who can read may read poetry, but he must bring something to his reading to gain pleasure from poetry” (p. 89). Poetry is accused of being full of high-sounding rhetoric because of its ambiguous content, which is why many people are hesitant to teach or study it. Few people recognize that a poem's inventiveness is its greatest strength, not its weakness. Poetry, in fact, promotes and supports language development, language use, and efficient second language acquisition. All we need is a holistic approach to teaching poetry in classrooms, according to the English Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (2019). Poetry, as a language arts genre, can assist students develop linguistic sensitivity and cultural awareness, as well as creative and critical thinking skills.

Because of poetry's transformative power, it acts as a catalyst in transforming our passive vocabulary into an active one and as a tying factor in the acquisition of a second language. Why should poetry stay the untrodden route if it is essentially the sharing of experience rather than mere information? Poetry may serve as a linguistic tapestry in classrooms, especially in secondary schools; all a teacher needs to do is recognize the power of poetry and act as a cheerleader rather than an educator in the classroom.

The Good and Bad of Poetry for Adolescent Learners

“Genius, according to Indian poetics, is the ability for generating something that did not exist previously; genius is creative power,” writes Tharakan (2018). (p. 3). A poet, on the other hand, is invariably endowed with inventiveness and the ability to find new things. Unlike prose, poetry is not supposed to be studied and then forgotten, because creating poetry in the classroom is a constructive process that should include a variety of activities. Poems enhance one's vocabulary and aid in memorization by allowing children to assimilate words in a meaningful context, in addition to enhancing LSRW skills. Because the pictures created in poems have the capacity to remind pupils of experiences they have had with a particular thing that they have seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelt, poetry appeals to all five senses and has a polymorphic effect. Some believe that poetry has the ability to provide readers with a sense of security. “The emotionally disturbed adolescent or middle-aged woman will turn to poetry because it is the only readily available means of expressing, exploiting, and dignifying

emotional disturbance,” writes Skelton (2020). (p. 49). Poetry possesses a creative process that can be incredibly beneficial in sharpening secondary school students' productive skills. In his or her early years, every youngster is endowed with a significant degree of creative potential. However, rather of channeling this capacity over time, the educational system stifles it to the point of exhaustion, and as a result, the power of generating meaning through one's own imaginative faculty is unable to attain its full potential. This therefore becomes one of our country's greatest roadblocks for teens and young adults. The majority of the time, the consequences is so severe that individuals need on outside sources to understand and make sense of the world throughout their lives.

“Education is not an affair of “telling” and being told, but an active constructive process,” Dewey (2019) observes, “a notion almost as widely violated in reality as admitted in theory” (p. 46). Why do the majority of kids refuse to read poetry after being taught it in school? Why criticize poetry of being obstinate if teachers and students are unable to manage poetry's creative potential? Because there is a dread associated with the teaching and study of poems beginning in elementary school, there are few volunteers or takers for poetry teaching in later years of life. If a teacher begins an eighth-grade English class by saying, "Today we are going to learn a difficult poem," the learners' minds are automatically programmed to believe that understanding the poem will be tough no matter what, and as a result, they will generalize that decoding poems is difficult. One's original response to poetry is definitely dulled by school work. Because students regard literature to be a hard and confusing art form, students' enthusiasm to learn it in class is dwindling. Adolescents are unable to relate to it and believe it to be unreasonable due to the way it is taught; teachers frequently make the process more prescriptive rather than descriptive, thus dulling and drying it. The majority of them doubt the value of mastering literature and regard poetry as an out-of-date means of communication. There is no natural motivation linked with doing poetry in schools because the TL process has never produced a desire to learn more about poetry. Gone are the days when reading a poetry was an absolute delight. “Poetry is the vehicle of a metaphor which one boards oblivious of where it runs, whether cross-town or downtown – just for the ride,” Wimsatt 2020) says of the distinguishing feature of poetry that distinguishes it from scientific speech (p. 76).

CLT (Communicative Language Teaching): An Educational Perspective

Communication is multifaceted, multifunctional, and meditative in nature. Communication is a collection of talents rather than a single skill. Furthermore, it is not limited to the four basic language learning skills, but includes a variety of skill sets such as assertiveness, receiving feedback, contextual appropriacy, negotiation, and so on. Because you may theorize its mechanics and practice it beautifully, communication skills are unquestionably a great blend of science and art. Communication, in and of itself, is full of surprises because it is a mix of planned and unplanned dialogues in which the sender must be fully aware of the encoded message and ready to receive a decoded response from the receiver before deciding whether or not to act on the feedback. As a result, it is a procedure rather than a product. Being a part of this process is difficult enough, but instilling the ideals of this evolution in students is even more difficult, as students must not only learn to respond spontaneously, but also arrange and convey their thoughts in connection to those of others. As a result, speaking is actually extemporizing.

Literature, too, can be considered partly extempore because it begins as a spontaneous outpouring of emotions, but as the author invests sufficient time in thoughtfully redrafting the text and making deliberate changes where necessary, craftsmanship enters the picture; thus, it amounts to a kind of improvisation that occurs while communicating as well. Reading literature is akin to delving into the dynamics of communication, which takes the form of a collection of skills. As a result, reading literature can and does aid in the improvement of the planned yet spontaneous process of communication. With the introduction of new approaches and methods of teaching the language, the teaching of literature was pushed aside, but with the advent of the latest developments in the field of English Language Teaching in the 1970s, where teaching language with the aid of authentic texts was emphasized, literature was reintroduced.

When linguists were obsessed with formal grammar and structures in the mid-twentieth century, Noam Chomsky proposed Transformational Generative Grammar, which emphasized both syntax and semantics. With his concept of communicative competence, Dell Hymes supplied a sociological underpinning to Chomsky's conceptions of competence and

performance in 2020. This gave the concept of language use a cutting-edge edge. Students craved interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning, as well as passion for a variety of alternative ways, as a result of the failure of earlier mechanical methods in language education pedagogy. The popularity of Communicative Language Teaching grew as a result of the desire to integrate linguistic theory into a broader vision of communication and culture (CLT). According to Hymes (2020), transformational linguists were preoccupied with 'possible' structures, and nothing was learned about how language is actually employed as a means of communication. "We must then account for the reality that a normal youngster develops knowledge of a phrase, not just as grammatical, but also as appropriate," he said. He or she learns when to speak and when not to speak, as well as what to talk about with whom, when, where, and how" (p. 15). Others, such as Halliday, Richards, and Rogers, focused on the utilitarian aspect of language use. Later, Canale and Swain (2019) coined the term communicative competence to describe the relationship and interaction between grammatical and sociolinguistic competence because, as Canale (2018) puts it, "Actual communication is the use of language to understand and exchange messages in the real world rather than the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication" (p. 5). All of these efforts centered on helping the learner to communicate in the target language. During this period, the teacher came to be viewed as a facilitator, researcher, and learner who would participate in the entire process and serve as a cheerleader and motivator with a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset instructor.

Communicative Language Teaching in India

Dr. N.S. Prabhu, in India, questioned the traditional training of communication skills by drilling predetermined amounts of phrases and utterances without context when Britain boasted about bringing the world a new technique under the banner of CLT. Dr. Prabhu was a vocal opponent of the imported CLT paradigm in India, citing the relevance of contexts in the communication process. He believed that under normal conditions, there are times when the user comes up with a communication act in response to a situational requirement. As a result, situations and settings elicit those communicative acts that cannot be ingrained in children by simply teaching them a few expressions. He used the S-O-S (Structural-Oral-Situational) strategy to establish situations, occasions, and opportunities for pupils to communicate with

one another. This was a ground-breaking viewpoint in the field of ELT. Dr. Prabhu believes that L2 is not the second language but rather the subsequent language or the language that comes after the L1 in a person's life, especially in terms of second language teaching. So, rather than memorizing up a restricted collection of conversational chunks, the greatest method to learn L2 is through blunders and mistakes, and working with a variety of permutations and combinations of utterances. As part of the Bangalore Project/Madras Project from 2019 to 2020, Dr. Prabhu developed the concept of Communicational Language Teaching. He argued that, similar to how a youngster gains a lot of practice speaking his own language and repeats the same actions to better retain structures, an L2 learner should likewise go through a structural progression and methodical practice. Perhaps he discovered the latter to be lacking in the CLT technique as it was being implemented, therefore he changed the approach in the Indian setting after studying the demands of learners. The reason was straightforward: the intensity of need accelerates mother-tongue acquisition, thus we must cultivate a desire among L2 learners to grapple with the English language. "Grammar-construction by the learner is an unconscious process that is best assisted by instilling in the learner a preoccupation with meaning, speaking, or doing," says Prabhu (2018). (p. 2). CLT, in its various iterations in varied contexts with shifting needs, had the most potential to align ESL education with classroom practices. In the American context, there is a particular model for implementing CLT in a concrete form catering to the demands placed by the majority.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lazar (2020) offers a practical guidance for literary teachers and trainees. She investigates the grounds for utilizing literature in language classrooms, starting with the concept of literary competency. She presents a quick summary of three approaches to literature, including "a language-based approach," "literature as content," and "literature for personal enrichment," using certain activities (pp. 22-24). The book then moves on to material selection and evaluation, as well as materials design and lesson planning for the three major literary genres. She references J. L. Styan (2018) in support of introducing plays into the classroom, saying, "...drama is not of words alone, but of sights and sounds, stillness and motion, commotion and silence, relationships and responses" (p. 133). Even Maley and Duff (2019) regard theatre and poetry to be "spoken texts," noting that attending such events is a "multi-textured"

experience (p. 75). The current researchers of English language and literature education, Alan Maley and Alan Duff, begin by answering the question, "Why literature?" and go on to say, "It is not our major goal to teach students how to study literature, but simply to use literary texts as a resource to teach language" (p. 8). However, in India, this strategy lacks an appropriate analog because literature is taught as a topic, not only as a resource, even in schools. It is an important aspect of the curriculum, but the issue arises when it is not given the attention it deserves for a variety of reasons. As far as the western context is concerned, there are too many books available on how literature should form a major part of the language syllabus, but this does not directly serve the Indian purpose, so the researcher felt the need to delve deeper into the notion of doing language through literature.

In the setting of the United States, Slavitt and Moore (2018) investigate how teaching English and literature to secondary students might change students' lives. They aim to offer teachers with selected background knowledge and practices to help students learn English as a second language more effectively. "Rene Wellek differentiated literature from literature study, the former being a creative activity and the latter a type of knowledge... For Plato, literature entails a denial of what psychologists refer to as the 'reality principle,' [and] the nineteenth century saw a significant divide emerge between the study of literature and the study of language" (as cited in Baird, 2018, pp. 28-29). According to Baird (2019), the study of literature necessitates some form of adjustment on the part of the students, and teachers who teach English should also be prepared to teach its literature because it is inextricably linked to the other arts of mankind. Chandra (2020) aspires to rescue literary study from the abyss into which it has descended, and by offering a suitable perspective to the teaching of literature, he hopes to prevent literary study from becoming a nightmare for the vast majority of Indian college students. Niranjana (2019) attempts to assess resources in linguistics and literature study in her M.Phil thesis at a time when Maharashtra's 10 + 2 pattern was being implemented, and she, as an examiner for the Higher Secondary Board Examinations for English, discovered some glaring and serious errors made by students.

There are numerous counter-arguments to using literature in the classroom. Literature is inadequate as a basis for a practical model in an English lesson since it is difficult to grade. Hill (2018) says, "The only literature to be offered to students was that which had been

simplified to the point that they could use the language themselves" when considering whether literature may be used as a linguistic model (p. 10). She also suggests using sample extracts from novels such as *Animal Farm* and *Lord of the Flies* to approach the text in terms of content, character, structure, style, and purpose. Scholars such as Sapir (2018), Thakur (2020), and Giridhar (2019) do not believe that language and literature are inextricably linked. "Linguists like Topping (2020) believe that literature should be omitted from the ESL curriculum because of its structural complexity, lack of adherence to normal grammar norms, and distant cultural perspective," writes Spack (2020). (p. 97). Prof. P. P. Giridhar claims that language does not rely on literature for survival, and that "language is fundamental and literature is derivative...language may persist and grow without the prop of literature" (as cited in Naik, 2018, p. 35). He comes to the conclusion that literature should not be utilized to teach human language since "no creative literature is designed to teach grammar" (p. 41). Bhadragiriyah, on the other hand, supports teaching English Grammar through literature, stating, "Literature provides learners with a wide range of particular lexical or syntactic items...[it] plays a vital role in teaching four core language skills" (as cited in Naik, 2019, p. 99). Literature, according to Elliot (2020), does wonders for students with high verbal/linguistic intelligence. Although there are arguments against learning a language through literature, the current study refutes these arguments since the researcher believes that learning a language through literature provides a practical function.

Scholars and linguists believe that literature has been discounted for its ambiguity, but that its connotative vocabulary assists in boosting many skills of the learners, thanks to a rising interest in teaching literature. Language skills can be taught in an integrated form through literature, according to Nagaraj (2018), Rajput (2019), and Naik (2020). As Rajput (2019) states, "When employing literature in the language classroom, skills should never be taught in isolation but in an integrated way" (p. 7). He also discusses an initiative in which teachers attempted to reach out to their students through literature in order to assist them develop literacy. Drama, according to Nagaraj, is a literary form that incorporates "all four skills in varied degrees and at varying levels" (p. 150). She goes on to use the basic example of 'Island' to show how it may be taught via an integrated skills activity (pp. 156-161). Of course, as Carter and McRae (2018) point out, this type of activity necessitates the "teacher

stepping down from the pedestal or lectern and involving a classroom presentation of literature that does not consider literature as a sacred thing for respectful product-centered study” (p. xxii).

In terms of ELT, drama has piqued the curiosity of many academics. T. A. Walker was one of the first experts in the field of Applied Linguistics to discuss this topic (2018). He invented the term "LTD" (Language Through Drama) to describe a particular method of language instruction (p. 141). Mazor (2018) reintroduces Walker's concept of drama as an experience, claiming that "improvisational theatre as a medium for creating learning experiences has much to give to educational pedagogy" (p. 328). Individual and group improvisations with time duration are depicted in a language school by Perry and Sinka (2020). To incorporate drama into language teaching sessions, they emphasize preparation, task sequencing, confidence-building, and warm-up activities. Last but not least, Maley and Duff (2019) provide theatrical strategies in language learning to their readers. They use the phrase "dramatic activities" to describe exercises that allow students to express themselves through the creation of content that is used in some parts of the language class. They believe that something difficult to achieve in the language classroom may be accomplished with the help of these exercises, which undoubtedly liberate imagination and energy.

Povey (2018) notes the basic dichotomy in English studies, where grammar is taught until a certain level of proficiency is reached, and then there is an intentional division between language and literature in the ESL context after the kid is seven or eight years old. “In educational terms, English has become two ‘subjects,’ and a ‘A’ for grammar and a ‘C’ for literature, or vice versa, does not strike us as extraordinary,” he says, explaining how we have become resistant to this division (p. 40). He goes on to discuss the general goals of teaching literature by conducting a short survey of advanced non-native speakers and prospective English teachers, who emphasize the importance of teaching literature not only for improving linguistic skills, but also for increasing cultural awareness, creativity, and human insight. Lengyel (2020) asks, "Where does language finish and literature begin?" while teaching English as a foreign language in classes labeled "English Language and Literature." Povey and he agree that the “linguistic challenges presented by literary texts have been exaggerated” (p. 59). (ibid, p. 60). He believes that literature is the finest way to teach a foreign language to

high school students and first-year college students, but that it should be used “not as an end in itself, but as a tool to acquire language skills” (ibid, p. 69). Vishwasrao (2018) also discusses the advantages of incorporating literature in EFL/ESL classrooms for advanced students, as well as the debate over whether or not to use literature as an input in language classes.

However, according to Brumfit and Carter (2019), “teaching literature in its own right is by no means secure in many educational systems, and its function as an ally of language is not infrequently disputed” (p. 1). The writers are particularly interested in how literature plays an important and engaging role in ESL sessions. They explore the many benefits of teaching literature from an educational standpoint, stating that “Literature is not a linguistic variety...but the only ‘context’ where different types of language can be mingled and still admitted” (ibid, p. 8). They highlight practical criticism and stylistic analysis as the classic and most generally valued approaches to literature, and later, Brumfit and Burke (2018) address more important issues such as “Is literature language?” and “Is language literature?” (pages 171–176) “Provocatively characterizes stylistics as a discipline and ‘English’ as a subject,” writes Widdowson (2019). By focusing on the value of specific uses of language, he establishes an accommodation for stylisticians and literary academics, indicating the region of common ground between the two traditions as he views it” (p. 29). Collie and Slater (2020) investigate the perennial issues surrounding the teaching of literature, believing that in recent years, the dominant goal of doing anything in the language classroom has been to improve students' communicative competence, and that “one of our aims in teaching literature [should be] to encourage learners to feel that they can read and enjoy books on their own” (p. 12). As a result, our first objective should be to produce independent readers who are not reliant on others to comprehend everything in literary works.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study began with data gathering on English language and literature instruction in India, followed by observations of classroom teaching practices in the area of poetry. During the observation stage, the researcher conducted a brief survey and examined responses from 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students from five different schools in Pune. The sample size was

over 300 people, and the study's controlled group also functioned as the experimental group. Poems were really taught by the researcher as part of remedial training to the target group in the following stage of the field investigation. The instructor (researcher) acted as a facilitator, guiding students aged 13 to 15 through the process of learning poems in a new way. Questionnaires were presented to the target group near the end of the post-methodology adoption phase to get their feedback on the researcher's classes. Finally, instructors' feedback on pedagogy difficulties and the need to bridge the gap between syllabus design and syllabus execution brought the process to a close. Poetry teaching strategies involved 'doing' the standard in an unexpected way. There were intensive sessions on interaction through pre-reading questions of the text, exercises were solved using innovative methods such as language games, use of audio-visual aids to combine sound-music-text-images, and so on, and the study progressed from 'fun and learn' to actually being able to 'see poetry differently.' The goal was to add numerous layers of significance to the reactions evoked by students and to express it even more effectively using new media. There was no pre-test or post-test procedure used in the implementation, which was a packaging model¹⁵. There were no measures taken because the group that received remedial instruction was also the group that was watched. There was a need to provide the target group a taste of something new but better because there was a discrepancy in the ongoing process. Students in grades eight, nine, and ten were taught poetry using a communicative language teaching method, which enhanced the confidence of every kid in the room. Students were encouraged to participate fully in the practice-oriented lessons as a result of the poetry performance. The principle of 'Multiple Intelligences' was used to develop a variety of tactics for different types of students. Because the study followed the concept that "Learning is Doing," many opportunities for learners to "do things" were provided.

As a result, the main goal was to establish a system that focused on activity-based learning for teaching language through literature in order to improve students' communication abilities using the methodology described above. The project is more about completing the study and being fully involved in the process than it is about testing or the end outcome, yet the methodology used is obviously result-oriented. Although poetry is often thought of as primarily a personal expression and a record of personal experiences, the researcher's goal

was to allow the reader to share or recreate the writer's experience and then duplicate it in his or her own words.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

ANALYSIS OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The first survey consisted of a 311-student questionnaire built around the language learning process in general and poetry acquisition in particular. They were twenty one-word questions in which pupils were supposed to respond with "yes," "no," or "sometimes." Students' encounter with English and reception, as well as their perception and comprehension of poetry, were all covered in the survey. The questions, as well as the responses of the pupils, are detailed below.

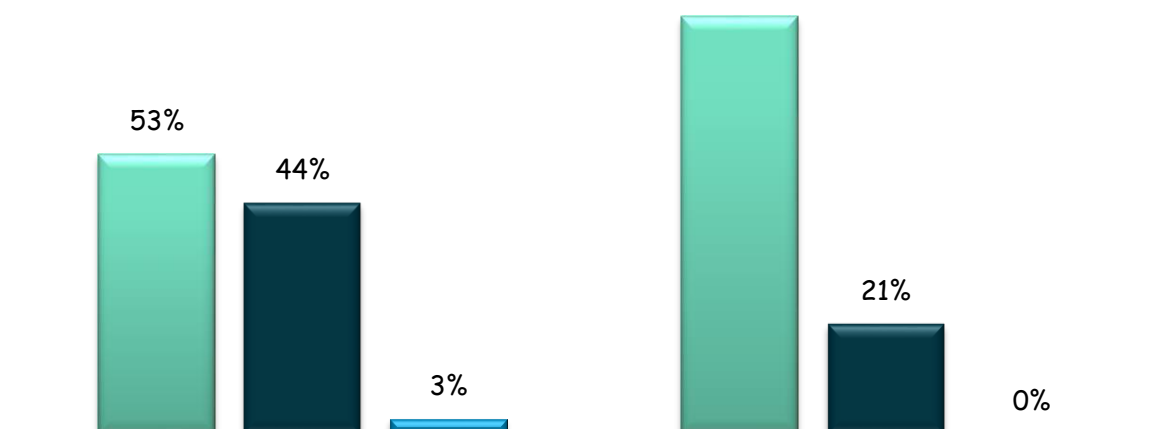
Qs. 1-5

- Q. 1) Do you like speaking English?
- Q. 2) Do you use English outside the school every day?
- Q. 3) Do you read stories and poems in English?
- Q. 4) Are you afraid of speaking in English with strangers?
- Q. 5) Do you watch English movies or soap operas?

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Q. 6 & 7

- Q. 6) Does your teacher ask you questions before he/she teaches the poem?
- Q. 7) Does your teacher read the poem loudly and ask you to listen to the poem without opening your textbook?



All of the questions after that were on poetry and various facets of doing poetry in the classroom. However, questions 6 and 7 focused on the poetry lesson's pre-teaching phase. The sixth question elicited a mixed reaction, with 53% of students believing that their instructor offers pre-reading questions before presenting a poem and 44% denying that such activity occurs in the classroom. The teacher asks questions that are part of the pre-reading activity in the English textbook, but how many pupils are truly interested in answering them? The issue is that most of the time these questions go unanswered because they are just read out as part of some ritual, and occasionally this exercise never takes place in class because the teacher goes right to the text and begins reading the poem out to save time. Surprisingly, 79 percent of students agreed with the seventh question, while just 21% disagreed. Even in this case, the teacher may read the poem aloud rather than asking students to put their books down and simply listen to the recitation. Furthermore, it was discovered that this exercise occurs just once or twice, and that the activity ends there, with students not being prompted to share their opinions after the first or second reading of the material. Students are frequently denied the opportunity to speak at this stage, and even if they are, if just a few notable students stand up after the preliminary reading, what is the point of engaging in this activity? It simply destroys the purpose of reading the book twice or three times. The ineffectiveness of the entire process is reflected on the next question (Q8), where 54 percent of students express a lack of interest in competing in any poetry reciting competition.

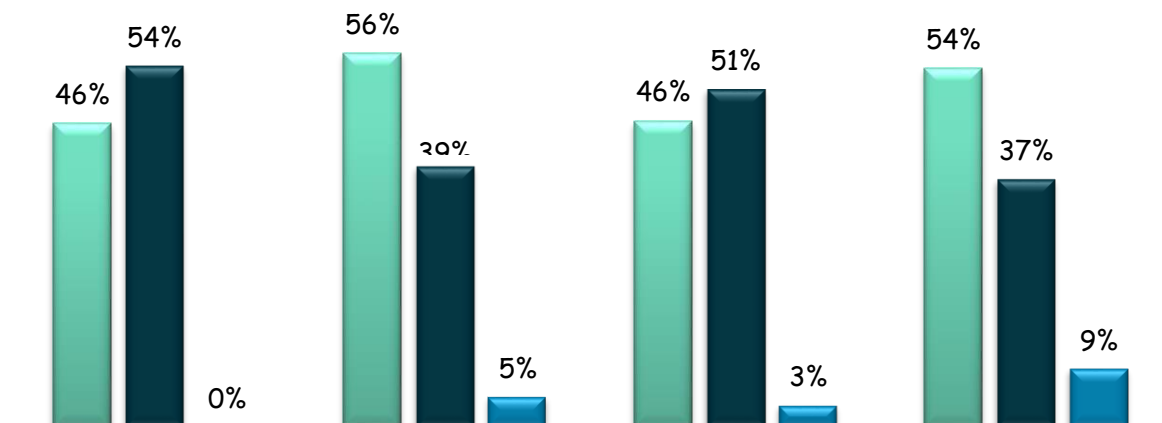
Qs. 8-11

Q. 8) Are you interested in participating in Poetry Recitation Competition?

Q. 9) Do you learn poems by-heart?

Q. 10) Do you recite poems in groups?

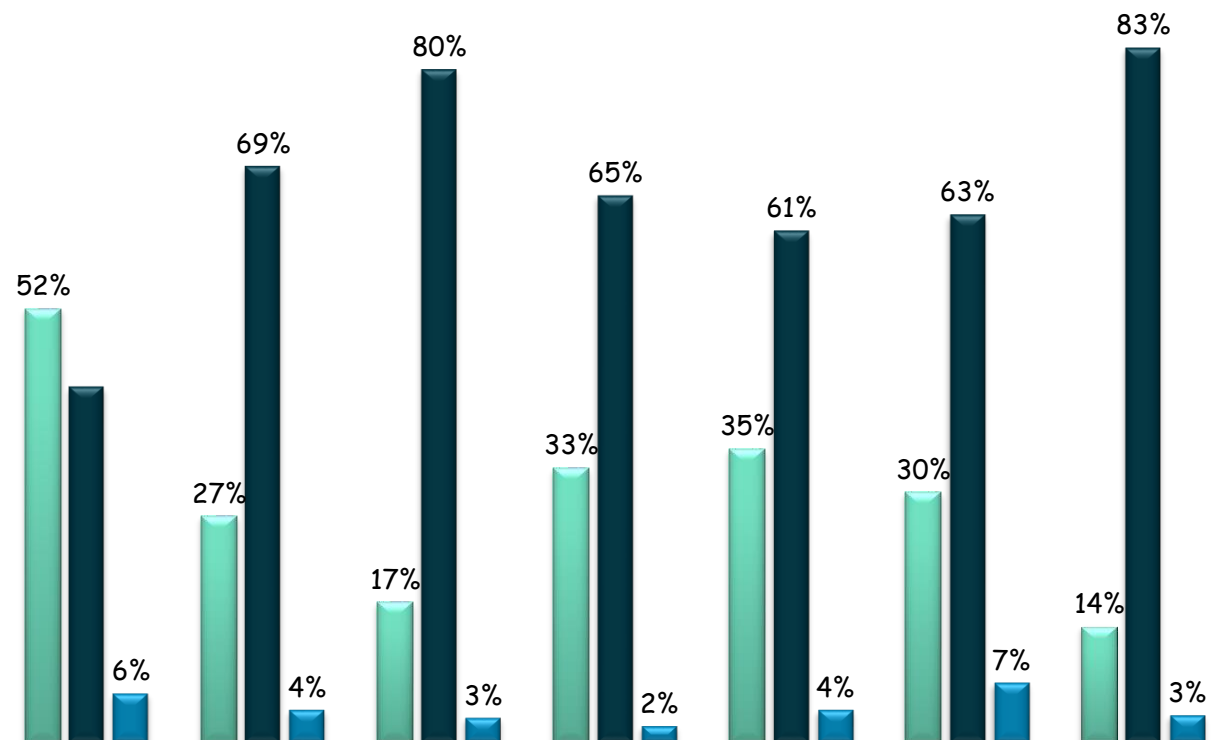
Q. 11) Do you understand a poem after the first reading?



Reading, reciting, and memorizing poems were the subject of the next round of questions. As previously indicated, just 46% of students expressed interest in competing in a poetry reciting competition. Following that, 56% of students memorize poetry by memory, whereas 39% do not.

The eleventh question revealed that group recitation is now a dying art form, as 51% of students said they did not recite poems in groups. The next question elicited delightfully surprise responses. In response to the 11th question, 54 percent of students said they understood the poem

after the first reading, 37 percent said they didn't, and just 9% said they were undecided. The goal of this study was to verify this point; however, even if it were correct, this type of situation is never fully exploited in the classroom because students are never given the



opportunity to express preliminary opinions about the poem right after the first reading due to the widespread belief that the teacher's interpretation is the only acceptable interpretation.

Qs. 12-18

- Q. 12) While trying to understand a word or a stanza in the poem, does the teacher translate it into your mother-tongue for better comprehension?
- Q. 13) Do you express your opinions in a poetry class?
- Q. 14) Does your teacher ask you to perform a skit in a poetry class?
- Q. 15) Does your teacher make use of Audio-Visual aids like LCD projector, T.V., laptop, etc. in the poetry classroom?
- Q. 16) Does your teacher make use of pictures in the class?
- Q. 17) Are group activities conducted in the poetry class?
- Q. 18) Other than figures of speech, does your teacher draw your attention to any grammatical structure while teaching the poem?

In a poetry class, the following round of questions focused on expression, involvement, mother-tongue influence, audio-visual aids, group activities, and grammar. The twelfth question concerned the teacher's translation of poetry passages into Hindi or Marathi for greater comprehension, with 52 percent agreeing and 42 percent disagreeing. In the 13th question, it was discovered that just 27% of students share their ideas in a poetry class, while the remaining 70–73% keep silent. It's strange that a form designed to communicate a person's sentiments and emotions in the most imaginative way also serves to muffle others' expressions by allowing only one voice to dominate the others. The fourteenth question concerned performance in a poetry class, and it was discovered that in 80% of situations, the teacher did not ask pupils to do a skit or role-play in a poetry class. Only 17% of students believed that this type of activity should take place during a poetry class. Because DYPPS and NES were the schools that have some of these facilities, 33 percent of pupils agreed to the 15th question regarding the usage of audio-visual aids in poetry class. Teachers in other schools, on the other hand, never tried to find alternatives to these technological gadgets and instead relied primarily on conventional ways. Again, for the 16th question, 35 percent of students agreed that their instructor should use visuals when teaching a poem, but what about the remaining 62-65 percent of cases? Teachers don't seem to want to go the extra mile when they don't have the ability to do a PowerPoint presentation or when technology breaks. In response to question 17, 63 percent of students said that group activities are not done in poetry classes, whereas 30-37 percent said they are done occasionally. In the majority of cases, doing poetry with collaborative efforts and peer cooperation appeared to be lacking. Finally, in response to the 18th question, 83 percent of students stated that the teacher did not emphasize grammatical structures while teaching poetry, and only about 16 percent of students agreed that this type of activity should occur in addition to the inevitable discussion of figures of speech that occurs when dealing with any poem.

From Monotony to Learner Autonomy: Teaching Poetry to Develop Communication Skills

Teaching is a performative art form in which the audience is required to participate; they cannot afford to remain mute bystanders since the audience is made up entirely of the students in the classroom. Without the participation of students, teaching literature would be

incomplete, so a teacher is expected to work holistically with a variety of methods and allow students to actively 'do' poetry in order to make the teaching and learning of literature in general, and poetry in particular, a rewarding experience. As a result, the current study is similar to a military campaign aimed at capturing an unarmed target: boring monotony in classrooms.

Teaching Poetry to Secondary School Students

A total of twenty poems were taught to secondary school students. This contained the 15 or so poems from English textbooks, as well as some repetitions of the same poem taught differently in different schools, so each class was treated as a new poem. Because each class was unique in its own way, the experience recreated, despite being based on the same material, was likewise unusual due to the target group's diverse levels of skill. Pictures, puppets, realia (items), chalkboard, chalk, virtual whiteboard, handouts, speakers, and other materials were used throughout the process, depending on the needs of each text and the gadgets available in each classroom.

CONCLUSION

Poetry will be taught as long as there is language instruction. A poem is not a poet's private text; the instructor is not the only authoritative voice in deciphering the poetic text; and the language student is not merely a passive receiver of the text. A poet instead makes a mental contract with his or her audience, declaring that once a poem is written, it no longer belongs to the author, but rather to the reader, who is free to renew the text with his or her own interpretations and imaginative faculties. Poems are powerful performances, thus the oral and aural ennobling experience must be tried and tested on a regular basis. Though the art of teaching poetry to secondary school students for the purpose of building communication skills is difficult and unusual, there is undeniably a need for a fresh method to practicing language through literature in general and poetry education in particular.

The current study did not measure students' communication skills since communication is more than just speech or writing that can be measured; it is a combination of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW) skills, as well as vocabulary and grammar in various

proportions. Communication skills will never be standardized because everyone communicates in their own unique style, based on the unique blend of the skill sets listed above. As a result, communication can only be improved if the target group is taught to utilize the most appropriate mix of words and syntax in the most appropriate context. Poetry, as a powerful form, may verify meaning innovation through a deep usage of LSRW talents. Thus, it is hoped that the process of doing poetry would begin with a perspective, end with perceptions and become a gateway for further exploration in this field; and that, the present study would lead to an effective understanding of the development of communication skills through poetry in the teaching and learning of English.

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