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**The Role of Poetry in Language Learning**

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the integration of poetry in language teaching. As a significant branch of literature inherently linked to language, poetry warrants application in educational settings, particularly for university students and language educators, as a reference for instructional practices. The author employs a descriptive approach through library research, utilizing data collected from relevant library sources as evidence. This methodology is deemed effective for addressing the research problem. The study highlights the use of the Communicative and Discussion Methods in teaching language through poetry. The incorporation of poetry into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction underscores the importance of literature as a rich and authentic model of language use. The aim of using poetry as a teaching resource is to affirm literature as an authentic pedagogical tool while familiarizing EFL educators with the benefits of employing poetry in their teaching practices. Exposing language learners to poetry reveals its extensive potential as a subject of study with direct applications in language instruction. Poetry fosters language development by enhancing students' proficiency across the four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—while providing them with specialized knowledge to improve their overall language competence.

**Keywords:** applied, discussed, teaching poetry, language development, separated

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## **Introduction**

In today's world, poetry is frequently discussed, especially among poets and writers. The role of poetry as a branch of literature is significant, particularly in language teaching, as poetry is inherently constructed through language. Many language teachers incorporate poetry into their lessons, recognizing its potential to enhance language competence. Teaching poetry in the classroom is considered engaging and effective because it helps students develop skills in selecting appropriate diction when writing poems and improves their ability to recite them. Furthermore, it enhances students' understanding of literary devices such as figures of speech, as well as their knowledge of language concepts like semantics. In this context, a professional language teacher should view poetry as an art form, as described by Hornby, and apply it to students of language or literature in the classroom. Language teachers can use any poem as teaching material, whether it is written in English or another language, depending on their choice. This study focuses on English poems written by renowned poets such as Robert Frost, William Blake, Aminur Rahman, Siamir Marulafau, and others. The application of literature in language teaching can significantly improve students' competence in English, as it connects to key aspects of language such as syntax, semantics, phonology, and lexical knowledge. This connection is one of the reasons why the writer has chosen this topic, hoping that language teachers can use this writing as a valuable reference for teaching language through poetry.

It is acknowledged that teaching language through poetry has a wide field of teaching because it is a branch of literature. Though it is a matter of fact, the writer of this scientific paper tends to limit the discussion, and he only discusses how poetry is taught and applied in language teaching. Can a poem be a source of material study in language teaching in the classroom? These problems may arise due to the fact that in the modern way of teaching, these always come up and are experienced by the teachers and learners of the English language. It is because solving problems of teaching language through poems means the aims of teaching that should be known whether it is successful or not.

## **Methodology**

As outlined in the abstract, the author employs a descriptive research method in this scientific study. This approach is deemed suitable for effectively addressing the issues under examination, particularly those related to the analysis of data gathered from library sources and supplementary information accumulated through

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online research. The goal is to ensure that the scientific writing is both accurate and comprehensive. Every scholarly work aims to fulfill a specific purpose, and this paper is no exception—it seeks to contribute valuable insights that merit publication and readership. The primary objective of this study is to provide a reference for English language teachers, enabling them to expand their understanding of teaching through literature, specifically within the context of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). By focusing on poetry as a branch of literature, this research offers a useful resource for educators looking to integrate literary approaches into language instruction.

### **Discussion**

#### **Poetry in English Language Learning**

Literature was kept away from language teaching practices for some time despite the major role it had in the field. Widdowson (1982) asserts that the prominence of literature faded as a result of linguistics becoming the focal point of language programs. Linguists had different reasons for trying to exclude literature from language teaching. Topping (1968), for instance, argues that literature should be kept away from foreign language programs because it has structural complexity, does not conform to standard grammatical rules, and has a remote-control perspective (Turker, 1991).

In the modern educational landscape, many language teachers are increasingly incorporating poetry into their teaching methods. One reason for this is that poetry is often seen as an accessible and engaging way to teach language. Its simplicity and structure make it relatively easy to introduce and study, especially compared to other literary forms. However, some teachers and students may perceive poetry as complex due to its choice of words and figurative language. Despite this, it is a well-established fact that many educators and learners at the university level find teaching and studying poetry enjoyable and rewarding.

Poetry holds a significant place in the curriculum, as it can be effectively integrated into reading, writing, and language lessons. It aligns well with various classroom themes, projects, and even celebrations, making it a versatile teaching tool. Additionally, poetry can enhance students' listening skills, contributing to the development of their overall language competence. By engaging with poetry, students not only improve their language proficiency but also develop a deeper appreciation for the nuances and beauty of language.

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### **Significance of Poetry in ELT**

Professional language teachers who possess expertise in both language and literature should be adept at selecting and utilizing poetry as teaching material in the classroom. A skilled teacher understands that the selection of poetry for instruction is intentional, with clear objectives in mind for both teaching and learning, as outlined in the curriculum. The choice of materials should align with the student's language proficiency, ensuring that the poems chosen are appropriate for their current competence level. Furthermore, it is essential to remember that the language used in poetry is an artistic form, distinct from everyday conversational English, and this difference should be considered when selecting poetry as a teaching tool.

In practice, professional language teachers frequently incorporate poetry into reading lessons, aiming to help students become fluent in reading aloud while others listen attentively. This process fosters language competence by encouraging students to focus on the words they hear and to interpret their meanings in context. As students engage with poetry in the classroom, they enhance their listening skills and deepen their understanding of the language used in literary forms. Moreover, repeated exposure to poetry through shared readings helps strengthen students' reading skills and build fluency. These activities serve as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, with teachers guiding students through the careful analysis of each poem. For example, a teacher might encourage students to read and analyze well-known poems, such as Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" or "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," allowing students to explore the rich language and deeper meanings within the poems while developing their overall language abilities.

#### **The Road Not Taken**

**By Robert Frost**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel to both

And be one traveler, long I stood

I looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then, took the other, as just as fair,

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And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and I wanted to wear;

Though as for the passing, there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves, no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

The language teacher can encourage students to read the poem aloud to enhance their reading skills and improve listening comprehension. This practice not only helps students identify and correct their pronunciation but also fosters a deeper connection with the text as they actively engage with the language. By reading the poem aloud, students become more aware of the rhythm, tone, and nuances of the language, which are crucial for effective communication. The teacher can then apply the same approach with the next poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," guiding students to focus on pronunciation, fluency, and the interpretation of the poem's themes. This repeated practice allows students to refine their speaking and listening abilities while also developing a better understanding of poetic language.

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Additionally, such exercises promote critical thinking as students analyze the meaning behind the words and how they relate to the overall structure and message of the poem. Through this method, the teacher can create a dynamic learning environment that integrates both technical language skills and creative expression.

### **Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening**

**By Robert Frost**

Whose woods these are, I think I know.

His house is in the village, though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake

The only other sound is the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

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### **Explore Language and Vocabulary**

In other words, teaching language through poetry provides educators with a unique and valuable tool. This approach can have a positive impact, as students benefit from exposure to new vocabulary and language structures. By encountering unfamiliar words within a meaningful context, students can better understand and retain their meanings. Teachers can facilitate discussions about these new words, helping students to expand their vocabulary and strengthen their language skills, ultimately supporting the objectives of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in the classroom.

Poetry often includes a rich array of vocabulary and figures of speech, which can significantly enhance students' language competence, particularly in constructing sentences. In summary, poetry serves as an effective resource for teaching sentence structure, parts of speech, and grammar skills, providing students with a deeper understanding of both the mechanics and beauty of language.

#### **Inspire Writing**

Professional teachers should be able to inspire students to write through poetry. Poems should be crafted using carefully selected words. In poetry, we learn how to combine words to create meaning and context, as well as how to choose the right words. Teaching writing through poetry to university students requires thoughtful planning. It's important to remember that effective writing, especially in poetry, involves planning and brainstorming. Teachers should guide students in writing simple forms of poetry that follow patterns they can easily relate to. When it comes to writing poetry, teachers should provide examples by giving a clear topic for the students to write about. What would be the best topic to offer for a poem? For example,

#### **HARD STORM**

My boat is in the hard storm

Is it possible to sail?

Though the sea is not calm

But I try to do it once or twice

Let the sea birds fly and speak

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I don't care for a while

As long the sea is drying

Till I come to wait for the sun shines

The teacher can also help students enhance their vocabulary through poetry by having them fill in the missing words in each line of a poem. This approach encourages students to carefully consider which words should be used to improve their language skills. For example, Read the following poem and complete each line by filling in the missing words.

### BROKEN MAST

Siamir Marulafau

how can I reach \_\_\_\_\_

with my little boat

if the mast I used \_\_\_\_\_ is torn

It will be impossible

\_\_\_\_\_ the blue is bright

with no a hard \_\_\_\_\_

to walk on the sea would be sunk

that my body will be \_\_\_\_\_ by whales

I used to see the waves

which may not \_\_\_\_\_ thy breath

Another method for developing writing skills is for teachers to help students

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build their language competence by focusing on the landscapes, views, or pictures they observe. Teachers can encourage students to pay attention to their surroundings and write based on the images they see, using them as inspiration for the theme and topic of the poem. Alternatively, teachers may provide a specific topic or theme for the poem. For example, Write a poem in English based on the following topic and theme, with no more than 24 lines.

Topic: MY FAMILY

Theme: Love and compassion

Foster a Passion for Reading:

University students should develop a passion for reading and cultivate the skill of reading effectively. Teachers play a crucial role in introducing them to a wide range of writing styles and different types of texts. Students should be motivated to engage with poetry through active interpretation based on their understanding of what they read. The more students read the deeper their appreciation and knowledge of poetry will grow as their engagement with the material increases. However, this engagement does not necessarily mean they will approach poetry as if it were a dramatic performance to be enacted on stage. To encourage active reading, the teacher might ask students to read a poem and present their understanding of it in class. For example, the teacher could assign the poem "The Sick Rose" by William Blake, encouraging students to read it carefully and reflect on its meaning.

The Sick Rose

By William Blake

O Rose, thou art sick.

The invisible worm,

That flies in the night

In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed

Of crimson joy:

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And his dark, secret love

Does thy life destroy

Reading for Appreciation

Reading poetry involves not just pronouncing the words but also understanding the deeper meaning behind the poem. Experienced English teachers encourage students to approach poems by interpreting and discovering their meaning. This process largely depends on the teaching methods used. Understanding a poem's meaning is essential, as it requires attention to its semantics, and a thorough appreciation will reveal its connection to both the subject matter and the context. Many readers struggle to grasp the meaning of a poem. However, when students understand the poem's meaning, they can be encouraged to write about it using their own language or at least engage in meaningful discussions by asking and answering questions during classroom activities. For example, students could read the poem "Let Me Go Alone," reflect on it, write a paragraph expressing their understanding, and engage in a discussion using their own English. Then, they could answer questions related to the poem.

Questions:

1. What is the theme of the poem?
2. What are the figures of speech found in this poem?
3. Why does the poet say —I will never be back again and again?
4. What are the repetitions found in this poem?
5. Is the topic of the poem concerned with the context? Explain.

LET ME GO ALONE

So far away I burst out of traveling

On my journey to a deserted land

Many ships welcome me

Since you let me go alone

But what I say

No one prevents me from going

All the hate in my pocket

No smile to go with me along

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If it is so,,,

I will never be back again and again

For so long, we meet

At the end of traveling, I say goodbye

No one prevents me from going

No smile attracts me

From time to time, there is a warning

To say goodbye

Never think of being back again

because the face is not like the moon

,,, smiling for a while

Where the leaves surroundings

,,, will be crying

To say no more tears, there will be

(Siamir Marulafau,2016: P. 60)

Another effective method for teaching language through poetry involves language teachers using poems to address various language skills, such as sentence structure, by analyzing the words chosen by the poet. For instance, after reading the poem "Perpetual Diary" by Aminur Rahman, students can be tasked with (1) identifying the subject, predicate, object, and adverb in each sentence of the poem and (2) constructing new sentences using the words found within the poem itself. This approach helps students not only understand the poem's content but also enhances their grammatical skills by focusing on sentence formation and structure.

### PERPETUAL DIARY

My perpetual diary never starts with you

And at the end, you are there

In between stories of days and Dagmar

In between stories of coffee and cuff links

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In between stories of secularism and sexual synergy

When you are sitting in front of me

Looking at me with sparkling eyes

I have touched your cheek

Held your hair, kissed you for a long time

Both tongues would move with the waves

Grasped you from top to bottom

held you tightly till the translucent torch went out

But you smashed you, and ate you

My strong presence in the uneven valley

Flying with enormous faulty fluttering

You were busy with pickle pamper

I have moved myself with daring into danger

Searching the gravity force with passion

Searching the poetry that was unwritten

Searching for the dream dragon root

My perpetual day's everyday starts with you!

(Aminur Rahman, 2016: 60)

1.

Answering Question no.(1)

1. I have moved myself with daring into danger

S P/V O/C

2. I Have touched your cheek

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S	P/V	O
3. My perpetual diary's everyday		starts with you
S	v	P/C
4. Both togue would move with the waves		
S		P/C
5. You	were busy with pickle pamper	
S	P/C	
2. Answering Question no.(2)		

1.touched : Has this poem touched your heart?

2.moved : We have moved to the new town

3.held : The poetry contest will be held this coming month.

4.starts : The class of poetry will be started at 4 p.m.

### Conclusion

After discussing the use of short stories in language teaching, it can be concluded that the primary objective of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching is to help students achieve fluency in the target language, enabling them to communicate effectively and confidently. Incorporating poetry into the language learning process offers significant benefits, as it helps students develop critical language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Poetry, with its rhythm, rhyme, and rich vocabulary, also exposes students to cultural nuances, figurative language, and emotional expression, making it an engaging and powerful tool for language acquisition.

However, for poetry to be effective in the classroom, teachers must carefully select poems that align with students' proficiency levels and interests. The chosen poems should be accessible yet challenging, stimulating students' imaginations and encouraging them to explore new vocabulary and language structures. Before beginning a lesson, teachers should ensure that the selected poems offer opportunities for various language activities, such as discussions, vocabulary exercises, and creative writing tasks.

In addition, using poetry as a teaching tool allows students to practice language skills in a holistic way, integrating grammar, pronunciation, and comprehension. Poetry can also be used to develop students' critical thinking skills as they interpret the deeper meanings and emotions behind the words. When approached thoughtfully, poetry fosters a more profound connection to language

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learning, making it enjoyable and memorable for students.

Moreover, using poetry in the classroom not only enhances students' language proficiency but also serves as a valuable reference for other educators. By sharing successful strategies and techniques for teaching poetry, teachers can collaborate and improve their own practices, ultimately boosting students' overall competence in language skills. This collaborative approach creates a positive feedback loop that benefits both students and educators, encouraging continuous improvement and a deeper engagement with the language.

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