Students’ and Teachers’ Perceptions on teaching of English Poetry at Secondary levels.

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Abstract
Teaching of poetry is an imaginative and fascinating experience. But when it is taught like prose, it loses its entire luster. At all levels, it covers 20% of the syllabus as recommended by various secondary and intermediate boards. However, despite being an integral part of the course, it is not enjoying its due respect and weight age. Dearth of literature in contemporary times shows lack of interest in the subject on the part of both teachers and students. The present study aimed at gauging how teachers’ differentiate between prose and poetry and what type of treatment is accorded to poetry in terms of classroom teaching. Hence the study adopted qualitative stance. Data was collected, using the inventory and interview to elicit spontaneous reactions. Population comprises of eighteen English language teachers teaching poetry at secondary level. Analysis of the inventory used to gauge thirty five students studying in class 9th and 10th, from twenty three schools Karachi (Pakistan) to know their interest and knowledge of the English poetry. Findings strongly suggest that teachers lack of knowledge and motivation in teaching poetry the way it should be taught. Students lack of interest and appreciation in English literature in general and English poetry in particular. There is wide difference in the way poetry is taught in difference streams of school.

Keywords: prose, imaginative, entire luster, gauging, motivation, dearth of literature, difference streams

Introduction
Poetry is a timeless, valued form of expression. It provides immense opportunities to unfold hidden faculties in order to express his/her private world of emotions, feelings and imaginations. The purpose of poetry is to identify some ways in which this experience is valuable for students in gaining writing skills, confidence in learning, self awareness and social consciousness. Poetry is also one medium for telling truth and sharing personal expression. The poetry research project 1998 continues work began in 1982 which analyzed the practice of secondary school teachers when teaching poetry and their attitude towards it. 170 teachers in a single local education authority (LEA) completed a lengthy questionnaire and a great number were interviewed. The information gained by this means highlighted both good practice and a number of problem areas which teacher encountered. Sixteen years after that first survey, and following considerable changes of English and poetry as a result of such initiatives as the national curriculum, the survey was repeated with a group of over one hundred teachers from the same LEA. A major problem faced by substantial number of teachers themselves in the survey was a sense of inadequacy about their own knowledge and teaching skill where poetry was concerns.

Mathew Report believes that there are two streams of teachers, one stream of teachers’ analysis of poetry for the purpose of examinations and other, by their desire to let the pupils explore themselves. Andrews 1991 asserts that many of the disempowering approaches to the teaching of poetry are the result of having to teach within the requirements of an assessments systems and certainly this view has been expressed by educationalists such as Matheson (1980) and many teachers quoted by Benton 1986. There are of course many reasons for the decline of poetry studies within the academy, not the least of which is failure of primary education to introduce students to poetic devices at an early age.
The chief virtues of poetry are found in its conciseness and in its ability to plant verbal seeds that explode into multiple meanings and entice in mind at level after level at one’s sophistication grows. Poetry can help students increase their cognitive sophistication, but the genre has to be taught with considerable sensitivity to what students will and will not accept at various stages of their development.

Poetry is the best tool through which students of marketing education can polish their creative writing skills. On other hand educators are calling for pedagogical innovations that bring relevance, pleasure, meaning, joy and understanding into the classroom to combat an educational environment in which a narrow focus on content and skills has come at the expense of the development of the contextual understanding and thinking skills.

The recent times the teachers of English language and the teachers of the English Literature have tended the coexist in many different ways especially where the language is being studied by non-native speakers of English. In some cases (for the ESL, English for the Specific Purpose) English start purely as a tool and literature has been omitted altogether because it was judged to be not practical and necessary in order to obtain specific skills. In most of cases literature is taught like language. It is imparted and conveyed like a mechanical routine.

At the school level especially it is seen like a body of facts taught without creativity and finesse. Teachers teach all the components of literature in the same ritualistic manner without giving it its true treatment. Poetry one of the vital elements of literature is usually taught as a specific body of facts, at all levels. It does not develop the creativity and aesthetic sense is meant for. Fleming, M. (1992) Pupils, perceptions of the nature of poetry: r. While there are other reasons, teachers understanding and knowledge also proves to be a major stumbling block in the process.7 The present study attempts to explore the phenomena at the macro level.

Moreover, recent empirical research in the marketing suggests that from the perspective of student’s creativity can be learned. It is based on their results, the authors recommended the marketing faculty give imaginative assignments to foster creativity, creative classroom environment in which risk taking is encouraged and reward creativity.

The two Phenomena exist in isolation and there is a considerable resurgence of interest in the study of literature in relation to language. Poetry writing as an experimental reflective and creative exercise develops students’ practical skills Peterson1996 and offers opportunities for spontaneous information processing. Pollard class her study, she calls “Lyric commerce” this is not a foray into actual economic of contemporary poetry but instead a look at lyric utterances as exchange and trade, where the treasured intimacy with a “you” is mixed up with” violent impulses of appropriation, possessions, transformation, trade and barter.8 The scientific study of color has strangely lagged behind that other phenomena infect its only of recent years that men of science have attempted to construct scientifically accurate color nomenclature9.

**Methodology**

The study adopts qualitative paradigm with case study as the main mode of inquiry. One town of Karachi city (Pakistan) has been taken as a sample. The researcher has attempted to make an in depth analysis of the English poetry is taught at Pakistani schools. As problem required a detailed analysis, an attempt has been made to triangulate the results through different instruments. Teachers and students have been sampled to gauge the phenomena in its true essence. Population comprises of twenty three teachers were targeted population. Eighteen teachers (accessible population) from twenty three secondary schools. One hundred and fifteen students were targeted population; thirty five students (accessible population) were randomly selected from twenty three schools. The study hypothesized two major assumptions which were analyzed in through correlation and differential statistically procedure. Four research instruments were used to collect data for the study. A questionnaire was designed to collect the detailed data from eighteen teachers. The purpose of this tool was to know about the perceptions and opinions of teachers about English poetry. The questionnaires
addressed the question of what type of strategies teachers adopt to teach poetry, what their background knowledge of English poetry is, are they familiar with basic components of poetry and what type of problem they face during the teaching of English poetry.

A questionnaire for students was designed to collect the data from thirty students. The purpose of this tool was to know about their background knowledge, their appreciation and their perception of English poetry.

A pilot study was conducted on a small sample of the teachers similar to those who were to be included in the final sample. The draft questionnaire and interview schedule were tried out on a sample of 05 teachers and 08 students in order to refine each item of the questionnaire for meaningfulness and time. This process tremendously helped in refining and fine tuning the tool.

Inventory-1 for teachers: This is prepared to judge teachers subject and pedagogical background. This contains several items measuring teachers’ subject and pedagogical knowledge knowledge in teaching English poetry.

Inventory-2 for students: The purpose of this inventory to know the students’ understanding appreciation and their background knowledge of English poetry.

Results

Students lack of interest and motivation in English literature in general and English poetry in particular. One reason of this situation is lack of knowledge and skills on the part of teachers. They teach literature and language in isolation, while this is known fact that language is the means to foster literature. The study hypothesized two major assumptions which were analyzed in through correlations and differential statistically procedure. Three of these have been found true where one hypothesis has been rejected with null hypothesis accepted.

1. Lack of knowledge and skills of teachers in teaching English poetry at secondary level.
2. Poor understanding and lack of appreciation towards the subject.
3. Teachers’ less interest and familiarity with latest component of English poetry at Secondary level.

Implications of the study

Findings of the study have suggested that there is a wide difference in the way poetry is taught in difference streams of schools. The finding of the study revealed that in Parsy and missionary schools poetry is taught as an imaginative experience, while in local private and public sector schools it is taught just like prose. Resultantly two streams are producing two different generations. Moreover, the text book is old despite having good contents; it has lost its vigour. It clearly lacks a modern day touch. It does not develop the interest of both teachers’ and students’. The findings have also added that Teachers from Parsy and Missionary schools are aware about how to manipulate all senses through poetry, while other teachers are completely helpless and they are not well familiarize with the latest teaching strategies and techniques. They used to teach according to the old methodology.

One interesting observation is that even Urdu poetry has been taught like Urdu prose. Sindhi poetry is taught like Sindhi prose. Teachers make no distinction about the two. They teach students according to the old and monotonous strategy that students read poem and do the question answers. Teachers have shown unwillingness to refresh their subject based knowledge and the pedagogy due to lack of trainings and seminar. Examination system is old and fails to address the creative side of the students.

Parents are interested in marks only. They believe that if the student is taking maximum marks and his/her result is sates factory. They are not worried about creativity.

Students are desirous of writing short poems. But institutions fail to provide such environment where they can fully utilize their hidden crucial faculties. They are completely unaware about it and how became used to today’s poetry like prose.
Conclusion
Students like modern poetry much then old poems. They believe that old poems are boring and strange even they don’t understand words. In terms of content, they said that a lot were about God and religion because people were strong believers and poems were written not for enjoying but telling you what to do. Teachers have shown unwillingness to refresh their knowledge of the subject and the pedagogy due to lack of trainings and seminars. There is a wide difference in the way poetry is taught in difference streams of schools. Examination system also should focus at individual’s appreciation of poetry rather than on the memorization of specific facts in the poetry

Recommendations
Leisure should be accepted as part of learning. All school heads and coordinators should at least see to it that poetry is not taught like a prose. Simple rhyming schemes and recitations can easily be used by teachers. Poetry part of the text book should be culturally aligned so that teachers and children can associate with them.

Team teaching, peer coaching and cooperative learning strategy should be used to teach poetry. Given a chance, students come up with brilliant pieces of musical compositions like limericks, chinquapin poems and shaped poems. They should be guided and an encouraged by teachers for their creative expression.

Rhythm, rhyme and pattern should be integrated with other subjects like social Studies, mathematics and science so as to students a feel of poetry. The gap of understanding and appreciating of poetry, is widening day by day in different streams (private and public-sector schools). This gap should be reduced children from disadvantaged situations also be given a chance to enjoy poetry.

Teachers and teaching poetry should be made a worthwhile experience by equipping the teachers with necessary toolkit and by accepting music as a part of teaching. Schools should display student’s creative work to encourage self-concept and self expression in children. There should be reward system to incentives students. It is further recommended that, teachers be taught these simple skills and should be provided with opportunities to refresh their subject matter knowledge.

References
2. Ibid