



## Poetry is a Soothing Balm for Language Learners

**Dr. Reena Mittal**

M.A. (Eng.) Ph.D., M.B.A. Reader and Head, Deptt. Of English DAK Degree College, Moradabad

M: - 9412135835

MailId: mittal.reena23@gmail.com

### Abstract:-

*Change is always there with us, but the rate of change is fast, speedy and revolutionary. It has become drastically evolutionary and three dimensional. Technologically we are advancing day by day but we must remember that technology has to be state of heart instead of state of Art. So, people will accept it easily and heartily. In this way, an engineer has to be a poet and a poet has to be an engineer. Among all the genre of language writing, poetry make all of us closer to heart. So, why not make blending of technology and poetry, a way of language literacy. The present paper is focussed on use of poetry is language teaching as my personal experiences are really very fruitful.*

### Keywords:-

Technology; Motivator; Activities; Nursery Rhymes; Grammar

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#### Poetry and ELT:

Always the month of April fills my memories with childhood rhymes and poems, I learn as a child. We all remember Wordsworth's 'Daffodils', Keats 'Ode to Beauty' as they remain in our mind forever. This idea always struck in our mind and gives us a thought, why we can't use all this in making our students well versatile in English language. We all are familiar that everybody enjoy reading and listening to poetry in our Mother Tongue and sometimes in L<sub>2</sub> also.

Poems are always great motivator as we have seen people using poems and songs during wars, freedom fights and as inspirational songs. But we as English Teachers noticed and believe that Poetry has been either terminated or removed from Basic English courses as the policy makers believe that poetry is tough to understand.

I face this problem myself in my university General English Course which is a compulsory/ optional subject for under graduate students. They study it in I Year and II Year classes. But it is really disgusting that their course has everything like Grammar, Translation, Short Story, Essays, One Act Plays etc. but no Poems. When I discussed it with my students, they also show their interest in Poems. I give them some assignments in Poetic form. And to surprise us, the students who can't speak fluent English, learn English poems and songs in a much disciplined manner. They reproduce it really is a fantastic way. It gives me a way out to make my students well versed and fluent in English with the help of Poems.

#### Poetry as a Balm:

We are basically non-native English speakers and our Mother Tongue is any other than English. But we all learn nursery rhymes in English in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of our life and to everyone's surprise everybody speaks them fluently. It gives me idea to introduce and make poetry a part of our English teaching. Many Poetsopine about poetry in following way:-



- **“Poetry is emotion put into measure. The emotion must come by nature, but the measure can be acquired by art.”**

- Thomas Hardy

- **“Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal.”**

- T. S. Eliot

- **“Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind.”**

- Thomas Babington Macaulay

Poetry is called to the core of literature. Aristotle mentioned, **“Poetry is more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history.”** We always connect poetry with literature and philosophy of life. Our great poets have mentioned philosophical aspect of life through poetry. But that is merely a philosophical explanation of poetry. Here we are discussing positive points and use of poetry for non-native English speakers to make them versatile in English.

### **Making Poetry a Necessary Tool of ELT:**

My main purpose of producing this paper is to discuss that poetry is a tool which can be used for language learners. It is not meant for literature students only but it can enhance student's worth of adapting English. Poetry is a great motivator as it talks about culture and traditions too. As a teacher we can introduce basic activities in classes to bring poetry in language class such as:

: Speaking activities,

: Writing activities,

: Activities to remove Pronunciation problems.

### **Some Targets for Students:**

The very first target which ELT should introduce has to be some reading and speaking

activities. First, we must ask them to reproduce poems they learn so far from their early childhood.

- We can make mock exercises in classroom, such as singing any poem they learn, in the given time on certain music. Or they can reproduce any given paragraph in particular poem's style.
- This will work well and students who hesitate in speaking even a single sentence in English will come out with flying colours and try to open up.
- It will give teacher a chance ever to correct their pronunciation.
- Similarly ELT can convert this oral exercise into a written way to make then write down 4 to 6 lines about themselves in poetic way.
- Students can do one more exercise i.e. to summarize long poems into 4-6 lines poems.
- All these activities will not only make classroom teaching interesting but also productive and worthwhile.

The use of poetry in language teaching is like opening new windows of learning. Students learn quite a lot and they open up easily. There is only a problem of indiscipline among students. They are sometimes time consuming also. As a result teachers have to suffer for their curriculum studies.

### **Technology and Poetry in ELT:**

These days when we are living in the world of Internet, Computers and other Devices, Apps and Technology which has made our teaching more intelligent, focussed and interesting. We realise that we have many technological search engines who are teaching English through poetry only; such as:-

- **Social Networking Sites:** - There are many social networking sites that have many poetic groups where people join and read, write and discuss English with the help of poetry. Many people have made groups and community for the purpose of learning English through poetry.
- **Internet Teaching:** - There are many sites that started e-learning and poetry lessons for English teaching. They post interactive videos where students can see and learn in an interesting way. There are many websites which throw lessons on teaching and learning English through poetry.

Actually poetry is also an approach to learning where learner can use many techniques to develop his/her skills. It is a verbal art that directly goes to the heart and a rich source of learning. Poetry enables exploration of image, sound and rhythm. We teachers can use it as verbal performing art in our classroom. We all know and admit that a language can only be learnt through oral practices more. We all learn our Mother tongue by default orally, first, than in written form. So, to make language acceptable fluently to second language learners, poetry can easily be used as verbal performing Art. Teachers can give small tasks to students in the form of speaking in poetic form, learning and enchanting poems in classroom and even compose short poems. Students can be given five to ten words on which they compose and recite poems. It is going to be a complete work out for learning second language.

When we talk about using poetry in classrooms, there is always a fistful of teachers lament and say that it takes a lot of time and they can't make justice with their curriculum. But student's aspect is different from it. I made this exercise not only among my students of B.A. II year but in a school I was surveying during one of my UGC minor project, I find students more enthusiastic about using poetry in classroom teaching. Even there are many

language games and activities available on net which even produce Grammar with the help of poetry. It not only makes teaching interesting but makes students learn Grammar, its rules by heart and inspire them for writing. They have a zest and curiosity for learning and the can only be fulfilled by entering poetry in our language classrooms. How can we all forget: 'Twinkle Twinkle little star', the very first nursery rhyme which we all learn in our early childhood and never forgotten it.

### Conclusion:

This paper has attempted to indicate how poems and poetry-related activities might enhance English language learning at under graduate level. It is suggested that a focus on the beauty of the words of the target language and on their student-directed use in non-grammatical as well as in grammatical contexts, can promote meaningful and relevant expression of personal meanings, in addition to focusing on particular aspects of structure. A great depth of poetic expression can be found in pop-song scripts, which voice the hopes and fears of artists who are often seen as role-models by students. By using poems and songs, language students can interact with the target language, while exploring issues which have deep meaning to them.

Poetry can enhance students to go for creative writing too. Creative writing activities arising from the poem offer many opportunities for genuine student interaction as students discuss ideas, draft and edit materials. As the students become involved in the writing task, they begin to understand better the ideas and language of the poem. Writing activities could include rewriting the poem from a different point of view. The poem could be used as a starting point for a story or an essay. Students could also create their own poems based on the form taught. Haikus, rhyming couplets, shape poems and sonnets could be written by students. The pieces of writing produced by students together with the products of other



activities should be displayed and shared. What must always be maintained through all these activities is a sense of enjoyment.

Finally, it is worth noting that poetry appeals to the senses. Like a piece of music it can conjure up many associations. Long after when a reading passage has been forgotten, a poem will be always being remembered. Its peculiar use of language enables it to be easily remembered especially if it is associated with pleasant, happy memories. We sometimes remember poems because of the way it was read to us and the pleasure which lit our teacher's face was transmitted to us. For students to enjoy using poetry the teacher has to enjoy it – poetry is not only taught but felt with the heart.

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