

## **Text, Reader & Pedagogy: A Reflection Upon Teaching English Poetry to EFL Female Students at a Saudi Arabian University**

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### **Abstract**

This study is a descriptive-analytical investigation of the current approaches of teaching English poetry as a vital component of the English Department curriculum for English as a foreign language (EFL) female students at Faculty of Languages and Translation (FLT), King Khalid University (KKU). It aims at identifying teaching methodologies adopted to teach poetry and demonstrates learners' responses towards these practices. The study was conducted at the English Department of the female campus during the academic year 2018-2019 (1439-1440 H). Forty students who studied poetry (Eng-430) in first and second semester participated in the study. The study adopts a qualitative methodology with the questionnaire as the primary tool to collect data and descriptive analysis as a method to interpret data. The study finds out that most of the teaching methodologies practiced in teaching poetry are traditional teacher-centered. It views poetry subject as a type of "knowledge" where teachers are mediators to impart information about poets and poems, and the students are passive recipients for information without interactive, critical, creative and evaluative abilities. Resultantly, students' involvement in the class, interest in the subject, and comprehension of the genre are affected. The study finds the effectiveness of an interactive multimodal pedagogical model of interacting reader-centered educational tools and literary theories to promote language and literary competence, critical thinking, knowledge-cum-creativity in poetry classroom. The suggested methodology would help to provide a motivating medium for English language and literature learning as per the requirements of quality modern education.

*Keywords:* EFL, female students, King Khalid University, pedagogy, Saudi Arabia, teaching poetry

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## Introduction

There is a broad agreement on the fact that literature subjects in EFL classrooms play a significant role in fostering students' intellectual awareness and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and developing essential skills needed for foreign language academic literacy. Parkinson and Thomas (2000) postulate the advantages of teaching literature. They advocate that literature can offer relevant linguistic models such as excellent writing and linguistic diversity, an extension of linguistic competence, mental training, authenticity, openness for interpretations, memorability, and cultural enrichment. Hence, including literature in universities and schools' curriculums is vital for the acquisition of linguistic and cultural knowledge of the foreign language.

Poetry is one of the significant literary genres and a vital segment of the EFL curriculum in all English departments around the world. Many controversies charge poetry to be lexically and grammatically complex structure that is personal and not easily understood, particularly in EFL scenarios. Nevertheless, English Departments include different poetic texts to their EFL curriculums believing in its advantages in language learning. Poetry is a bite-sized and digestible form that can be easily handled and memorized, unlike fiction and drama. It offers a feel for the sounds of its language, facilitating learning pronunciation, and promoting language vocabulary. Poetry also gives unique access to the culture behind the writing, and students can learn all about art and literature from different cultures through poems. Language learning is somehow "messy", but poetry, when read and memorized, helps to provide a secure anchor back to the language to come out again when it's needed. Poetry empowers language learners and gives them the confidence required to handle the target language by re-enacting the experiences of poets through the medium of writing and making of it something newly real. Thus, poetry provides an essential tool in language learning.

Poetry can often be scary or intimidating in any language, especially a foreign one. However, achieving the goals of poetry and other literary subjects depends mainly on the methods, strategies, and techniques adopted to deliver it in the classroom. Brandes (1986) states: "Learning what is meaningful and relevant depends partly on what is taught and partly on how it is taught". (Brandes and Ginnis, 1986. p12)

Furthermore, the modern digital age, with its advance in science and technology, has swapped people from reading to the world of digitalization. Hence, teaching methodologies should be research-guided and up-to-date to meet the requirement of quality modern education, which focuses on the development of student information processing skills (Dresang & McClelland, 1999). According to Wagner (2005), literature shouldn't be taught as mere knowledge, but as a tool of investigation skills and critical thinking. Other scholars like Knapp (2004), Rosslyn (2005), and Showalter (2004) assert the idea that teaching literary subjects should be in line with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century education, which demands the development of students' higher-order thinking abilities and suggest varied pertinent activities to invigorate them.

Approaches to teaching poetry and other literature subjects can be listed as follows:

### ***The critical literary approach***

According to Maley (1989), this approach focuses on the 'literariness of the texts' including features as the setting, themes, plot, characterization, motivation, value, psychology, background,

etc. This approach can only be practical if students have already grasped the intermediate levels and are at a higher level with ample knowledge of literary conventions.

### ***The stylistic approach***

This approach concentrates on literature as ‘text’, and it is precisely what EFL/ESL teachers need for their language classes. In contrast to the first approach, this approach includes explanations and analysis of language preceding to interpretations.

### ***Language-based Model***

In this model, the decorative feature of literature is reached only through the linguistic and discursual quality of literature (Lazar, 1993). However, care should be taken into account not to let the linguistic surface distort the pleasure of reading literature (Lazar, 1993). This approach to teaching literature is similar to what Maley (1989) calls the *stylistic approach*.

### ***Literature as Content or Culture Model***

In this model, literature is a perfect tool for presenting the cultural concepts language such as the history, literary theories, theory of genres, biography of the authors (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993), geography, custom, politics, art, etc.

### ***Literature as Personal Growth or Enrichment***

This approach considers personal experience as a method to engage the students in literary works (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993). Here, the students not only work out on the linguistic features but appreciate the *literary experience* which is i with the learners’ own real-life experience.

### ***The Story Grammar Approach (SGA)***

This approach establishes an interaction between the reader and the text. The reader gets aware of the text structure. It is nearly associated with genre-awareness in textual analysis to better students’ understanding. Recognizing the difference between two different text types will serve the learners to make better guesses about the text types and how ideas are developed in a certain text.

### ***Reader Response Approach (RRA)***

Reader Response Approach (RRA) has been having a significant influence in EFL literature teaching (Carlisle, 2000). It is the approach of teaching “literature for literature’s sake” rather than for mere knowledge. (Ali, 1994). Readers in this response are not passive learners but active having response to whatever they read. This reaction has been given four elements by Benton and Fox (1990), which are anticipating, picturing, interacting, and evaluating. RRA is grounded on constructivism that views reading as an interactive transactive process between the reader and the text to determine the meaning (Ali, 1994). The reader constructs a reflective and creative process where meaning is self-constructed. The meaning of the text is not innate in the text but invited by the writer and attributed to the text by the reader (Swaffer, 1988). Thus, readers are the meaning creators.

### ***Integrated Approach***

Timucin (2001) and Savvidou (2004) offer an integrated approach to teaching literature where two or more approaches are reconciled in a systematic way. This approach may be proved to be the best alternative approach for EFL/ESL classes. Timucin (2001) implements a combined approach containing language-based approach and stylistics in the Turkish EFL context. He explores the students' attitudes towards this mixed approach and its effectiveness. The results of his study show that there was a noteworthy association between the methodological approach the researcher adopted and the students' level of motivation, involvement, and appreciation of the literary texts. Savvidou (2004) put the following as the stages in her integrated model: (1) preparation and anticipation, (2) focusing, (3) preliminary response, (4) working at it – I, (5) working at it – II, (6) interpretation and Personal Response.

Moreover, literary theories that emphasize on the reader and assign the responsibility of meaning making on him like New Criticism, Stylistics, Poststructuralism, feminism, Marxism, Postcolonialism, New historicism can help to achieve the aims of modern education and can also help to overcome the limitations of the traditional approaches towards the teaching of literature (Yaqoob, 2011). Reader-based poststructuralist approaches offer an operative cognitive learning framework. Cognitive learning theories assert that comprehensive and meaningful learning occurs when learners are dynamically involved in the learning process. Literary theory working on the principle of cognitive learning engages readers independently in the process of meaning making. Students reading literature with literary theory see literature as a part of larger society outside the text and classroom. They are skilled to read a text in construction with the social and cultural realities and institutions. This helps them take the reading of literature as a meaningful activity (Yaqoob, 2011).

All the above-mentioned methodologies can be overall divided to two categories: teacher-centered and reader-centered. Teacher centered approaches like the 'cultural model', linguistic model' and 'personal growth model' and other where practice tends to promote students' aesthetic and linguistic understanding and assist them to read history as discussed by the author and poets. Students "shut out the world from [their] classrooms and [their] minds" (Lindblom 2003). All these mechanistic teacher-centered approaches only succeed in conveying the language, the culture and ideologies behind the text. While reader centered approaches such as RRA, literary criticism, and literary theories are in line with the actual objective of teaching literature, which is to empower students with the required analytical skills to create meanings, evaluate information, and grow a critical understanding of the world outside the classroom. Whatever methodology is observed, it should aim at the development of students' higher-order thinking abilities and make the reader the center of learning, allowing them to actively engage in the text to help the process of meaning making.

### **Study Questions:**

The study aims at answering the following questions:

- 1) What are the current teaching practices in poetry classrooms at FLT female campus, KKU?
- (2) What are the students' responses towards the effectivity of these practices?
- (3) What effective pedagogy can be suggested to promote language and literary competence, critical thinking, knowledge-cum-creativity in poetry classes?

## Literature Review

Literature thrived as the key basis of input in teaching in language classes in the epoch of the Grammar Translation Method. After that, it went on declining with the advent of structuralism and audiolingual models (Collie & Slater, 1987). Moreover, and with CLT, literature was entirely ignored as focus was centered on practicality in the EFL classroom.

Literature in EFL\ESL has started getting its value back by the 1980s (Duff & Maley, 1991). Abundant publications have brought literature back in language classes such as Collie & Slater (1987); Duff & Maley (1991); Hill (1986); Lazar (1993); Maley & Duff (1989); McRae, (1991) and Belcher & Hirvela (2000). These and other scholars advocate the uncountable advantages of literature as a promising tool in EFL\ESL class rooms. They view literature as an integrally authentic source of knowledge that provides authentic input for language learning (Ghosn, 2002; Shrestha, 2008). Literary texts are identically motivating owing to its genuineness and the meaningful context it offers (Ghosn, 2002, Van, 2009). Literature indorses cultural and intercultural consciousness (Van, 2009) especially in the era of globalization where there is a dire need for understanding of the whole world.

On the other hand, Literature is promoting extensive and intensive reading and the finest literary text for intensive reading purposes is poetry where students read verses meticulously to delve deeper into the text and dig out hidden meaning articulated through literary figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, allegory, etc. This can lead them to extract deep meanings embedded in texts. literature can advance sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge, as demonstrated in communicative competence models (McKay, 2001). Additionally, vocabulary and grammar knowledge can be expanded through extensive contact with literary texts which present both formal and informal language. (Van, 2009). Literature is rich with innumerable authentic tokens of language for the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills (Belcher & Hirvela (2000); Crain (1993); Erkaya (2005); Fitzgerald, (1993); Knight (1993); Latosi-Sawin (1993); Nasr (2001); Spack (1985); Stern (2001); Vandrick (1996). Reading literary texts also enhances emotional intelligence (Ghosn, 2002). It is a good medium for critical thinking development among language learners (Gajdusek & van Dommelen (1993); Ghosn (2002); Van (2009).

However, some scholars claim a few possible inconveniences Literature might cause in language classes. This includes syntactic and lexical difficulty of literary texts, deviation from normal phonetic, phonological and semantic structure, improper selection of texts, unfamiliarity with literary genres, conventional, religious and cultural barriers.

In the Arab world, teaching literature in EFL classrooms has been a vigorous topic of research and studies. Studies from different countries argued the effectiveness and validity of Literature as teaching instrument in classes. One of the fundamental issues considered by earlier studies since 1983 is the structure of the curriculum in English departments of Arab universities. Bader (1992) and Zughoul (1983, 1986 & 1987), for example, argue for increasing the number of language and linguistics courses at the expense of literature courses. Due to the moral, religious and social values embedded in foreign literature which often conflict with the students' Arab and

Muslim culture and values, Asfour (1983); Dahiyat (1983) & Zughoul (1983) stress that some English literature courses taught in universities do not meaningfully enhance students' competence because they primarily focus on content rather than on mode of expression (Bader 1992). Likewise, Zughoul (1983, 1986 & 1987) chiefly claims that the failure of English departments in the Arab world is due to the fact that the literature component of the curriculum is overrepresented at the expense of language and linguistics, which are the basic needs of needs of the communities.

Quite oppositely, Salih's (1986) survey on 118 Arab students majoring in English investigates their views on whether literature helped them improve their language skills. The study reveals students' general satisfaction with literature as it empowers their language competency. Obeidat (1997) agrees with Salih that the dominion of the language and linguistic subjects in the English curriculum hardly improves students' language competence. Literature benefits students in obtaining a native-like linguistic competence, practicing sound English, acquiring modern English linguistic features, speaking fluently and eloquently and becoming creative, critical, and analytical learners. Ben Zid (2015) also supports the same notion in a study at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman that determines students' positive views towards literature as a powerful tool for language competence enhancement. In Kuwait, Haggan (1999), surveying seventy-one of Kuwait University students, arrives at the conclusion that forcing unwilling students to study linguistics or literature courses could be counter-productive. Therefore, she proposes allowing students to choose either linguistics or literature as their area of specialization within the Department of English. Later, a similar study conducted at the Hashemite University in Jordan by Al-Kharabsheh, Al-Azzam, and Obeidat (2009) surveys seventy-five 4<sup>th</sup> year students of the English department to collect their views on different curriculum components. It reveals that students differently like subjects according to their interests and future planning.

In Saudi Arabia, literature subjects have always been put on the table as an apple of contention. Teaching literature has always been an unnerving mission due to many reasons such as Saudi religious and cultural restrictions, limitation of school texts books and the outdated teaching methodologies to teach them, views of western literature as a threat to identity, the focus on memorization as prevalent tool in learning, low language proficiency and learning outcomes.

The number of researches addressing teaching and learning English Literary subjects in Saudi Arabian universities is scarce in comparison with the hugeness of literature focusing on the topic of EFL. Among these studies, Mekheimer (2011) is prominent with his research that explores the perceptions and attitudes of faculty and students towards English literature at King Khalid University. The study concludes positive attitudes towards teaching/learning English literature by both instructors and students as they recognize the vital role of literature in learning language and culture. Mekheimer imparts the rigid socio-religious context, inappropriate selection of literary texts, and the inadequate employment of technology as main issues that negatively affect the teaching/learning of English literature. Similarly, Adam and Babiker (2015) support teaching of literature as it offers opportunities to improve student's language skills and enhances their creativity and critical thinking. Another study by Hussein and Al-Emami (2016) investigates the difficulties that face English instructors while teaching literature courses at the university of Hail. It concludes that student' low language proficiency, unfamiliarity with the cultural and social

background of the texts are main issues beside other issues related to the text selection and teaching practices.

All the above-mentioned studies, in general, conclude some sort of disappointment of both learners and educators and highlight issues that need to be studied and focused on more narrowly and precisely. They have tackled literature generally, but non-yet has tackled each literature subject individually to investigate further the situation of teaching and learning on the basis of the subject nature. Each literary genre stands differently from other genres: fiction is different from poetry, and drama is different from prose, and each requires separate focus. The present study aims at adding to the body of literature of teaching and learning literature courses in Saudi universities. It targets teaching poetry as the most challenging literary subject and emphasizes the role of teaching methodology in achieving the learning outcomes of the course. The study suggests significant practices that help the effective delivery of poetry lessons and engage the students in the process of meaning making, promoting their linguistic and literary capabilities.

### Study Context

The study was conducted at King Khalid University, Faculty of Languages and Translation, Department of English (Female Campus) during the academic year 2018-2019 (1439-1440 H). King Khalid University is one of the Saudi government universities which is located in the city of Abha in the southern region. KKU hosts more than 73000 students in more than 47 colleges and departments spread in the south region of Aseer.

Faculty of Languages and Translation (FLT) is one of the dynamic and significant faculties of KKU. So far, English is the only language being taught in the college. The college offers bachelor's degree (B.A) in English language and master's degree (M.A) in Applied Linguistics and Translation. Male and female campuses are set separately. The curriculum in the English department has been designed to cover Language skills, Linguistics, Literature, and Translation courses that are integral for EFL learning. Students study English skills for the first two years, then get introduced to core Linguistics, Literature, and Translation subjects in the second half of their academic tenure. All courses have course specifications which are approved by The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment and are followed strictly by all instructors in both male and female campuses.

Literature courses constitute 10% of the total courses the students are required to complete to obtain the B.A degree.

**Table 1. Literary Courses of in B.A Curriculum, English Department, FLT. KKU**

LEVEL	LITERARY SUBJECT	NO. HOURS	PREREQUISIT
1	-----		
2	-----		
3	-----		
4	-----		
5	Introduction to Literary Forms	3	

6	Short Story	2	Introduction to Literary Forms
	Drama	2	
7	Poetry	2	
8	Novel	2	
	Modern Literary Movements	2	

Poetry is taught in two courses: Introduction to Literary Forms (Eng-331) and Poetry (Eng-430). Introduction to Literary Forms is taught to level 5 students. Students are briefly introduced to the definition, forms and characteristics of poetry along with a few poems, while Poetry (Eng-430) is taught in level 7 to reinforce the theory of poetry previously studied in the Introduction to Literary Forms course and exposes the students to fourteen poems taken from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century English poetry. The learning objectives of the course are stated in the course specification as following:

- To reinforce the students' knowledge of the literary genre of Poetry (including but not restricted to the definition of poetry, the characteristics of the language of poetry, figures of speech, musical devices, themes, symbolism, etc.)
- To provide students with the basic literary and critical terminology and skills necessary for appreciating poetry.
- To enable students to analyze a variety of poems.
- To reinforce students' skills of comparison, analysis and critical thinking.

The learning outcomes of the course are stated as below:

*“By course-end, students will be able to understand and evaluate poems belonging to different literary movements, pointing out both the original contribution of the author and the elements that they share with other poems belonging to the same literary movement.”*

The course covers 14 different poems from different literary movements. The poems are: *Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night* (Dylan Thomas), *The Two Ravens*, *Ballad of Birmingham* (Dudley Randall), *The Man He Killed* (Thomas Hardy), *She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways* (William Wordsworth), *The Solitary Reaper* (William Wordsworth), *The Road Not Taken* (Robert Frost), *Fire and Ice* (Robert Frost), *Those Winter Sundays* (Robert Hayden), *Richard Cory* (Edwin Arlington Robinson), *Sailing to Byzantium* (W.B. Yeats), *There's no Frigate like a Book* (Emily Dickinson), *Stopping by Woods* (Robert Frost) and *The Tiger* (William Blake).

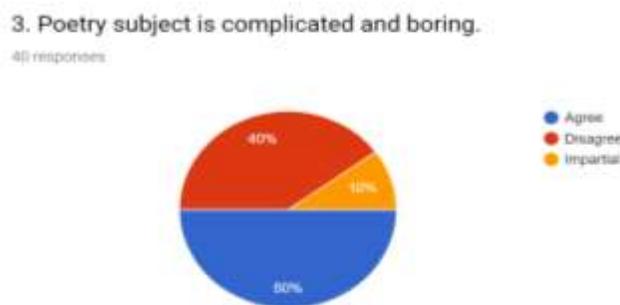
### Methodology

The study aims at examining the teaching methods adopted to teach English Poetry to EFL students from students' perspective. For this purpose, qualitative method was adapted. The data collection instrument is the students' questionnaire. The chosen method is particularly suitable for obtaining a specific type of data (Lawthorn and Tindall, 1994). Questionnaire is an effective research instrument that consists of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The questionnaire consists of forty questions divided into four parts: the first part is related to the students' responses to literary courses especially poetry, the second part asks

questions pertaining to course syllabus, the third part focuses on the text, and the fourth part targets the teaching practices and students' attitude towards these practices.

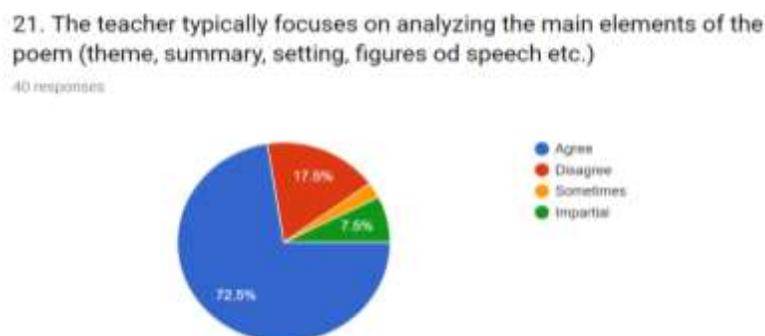
### Findings

The data collected has shown significant indicators of certain aspects of teaching Poetry in the English department. In the part related to poetry as a subject as shown in *figure 1*, students were asked if they believe that poetry and other literary courses are as important as other subjects, more than 47% percent voted no. A similar percentage believed that poetry is a difficult and tedious subject while 70 percent claimed that reading poetry in their mother language is easily accessible and more appealing to hem than to read in English. This shows that students are not aware of the learning objectives and not convinced of the importance of poetry in polishing their English and refining their language skills.



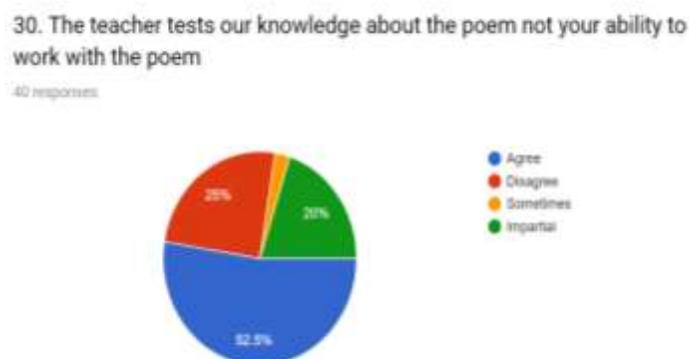
*Figure 1.* Students' response to poetry as a subject.

The second part dealt with the teaching methodology. As shown in *Figure 2*, 50% of the students believed that the teaching is “teacher-centered”, 73% asserted that teachers typically focus on explaining the poem's general structural elements like setting, themes, glossary, figures of speech while students only listen and write notes. Only a few agreed that teachers make them participate in the interpretation and criticism of poems. This demonstrated the traditionality of teaching methodologies in poetry classes, which has been a vital role in lowering students' interest in the class and understanding of the genre, and that has been undoubtedly a huge hindrance in the learning process.



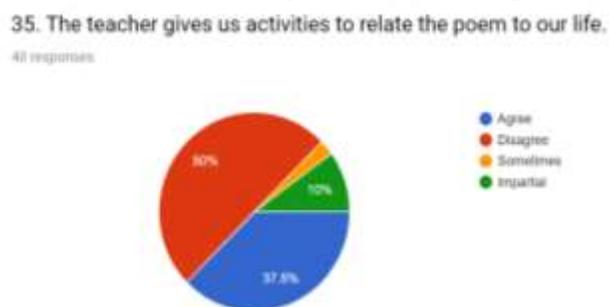
*Figure 2.* Students' response to the teaching methodology in poetry classes

In the section related to the extent of students involvement with the poems they study, more than half of the participants, as shown in *figure 3*, agreed that the only thing they get is information without the ability to work with the text. Students play the role of a passive listener in the class, storing superficial knowledge about the text they are reading with no chance to get involved in the text. Critical thinking, brain-storming discussions, cognitive development, and literary creativity looks quite ignored in such teacher-centered practices.



*Figure 3.* Students' response to involvement with poems

The data has also shown the lack of poetry related activities in the classroom, which engage students with poems and break the traditional shackles of “read and memorize” learning activity. This is evidently noticed in *figures 4*, where 50% of the students state that they have been deprived from any kind of activities that help relating the poems they read to their real life. Simultaneously, 65% reported that they were never encouraged to put themselves in the place of the author and were never fortified to try writing similar poetry to the poetry they study. This has created a gap between the students and the poems they read, stopping them from active indulgences with the poems, and instilling the sense of boredom, insignificance and impracticality of poetry course.



*Figure 4.* Students' response to activities in poetry classes.

Answers to the question of using literary theories in teaching poetry and other literary subjects show that students are rarely introduced to literary theory for criticism. The sole aim of students' attendance in poetry class is to comply with the requirement of course attendance and passing the courses at any case, even if with average or passing marks. Poetry as a vital literary genre is not

being taught using reader-based literary theories that would strengthen the student's bond with literary texts and boost their interest in the class. This is prominently noticed in *figures 5* as the majority of the students agree that they attend poetry class to pass exams and that they are being given notes and summaries to prepare for exams.

40. The teacher gives ready summaries and notes to memorize for exams.

40 responses



Figure 5. Students' response to attendance in poetry classes and poetry exams.

## Discussion

From the afore mentioned results and finding of the study, we can summarize the findings of the study as following:

1. Students study poetry in level 7 where their language proficiency and knowledge of literary forms is considerably normal and above low.
2. Poetry curriculum has been recently revised, and selection of poems in the course took place considering diversity of poems and easiness of English language. Most of the poems are from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century English poetry, which is substantially easier than classic poetry and old English.
3. The majority of students lack interest and motivation in literature classes, especially poetry, considering it difficult, boring, and unnecessary for language learning.
4. Teachers teach poetry in traditional teacher-centered models: language model, cultural model, and personal growth model, which are important but not enough as per the requirement of the modern digital era and quality 21<sup>st</sup> century education.
5. Modern reader-centered approaches like Readers Response Approach and Literary Theories are not used in the poetry classes due to which students' involvement in poems and their critical and creative abilities are low.

This study engages a specific focus on the subject of poetry. Poetry is not only a piece of writings, it is knowledge, culture, and personal development. The twenty-first century is the era of advancement and technology, globalization and multiculturalism. Education is regarded as a significant apparatus and operative resource for boosting creativity and empowering human

resources (Gould 1993). Modern educational theory and practice researches advocate evolving students' higher order thinking capacities. Stress is placed on enabling students to take decisions, create opportunities, evaluate available resources, work out multiple solutions for practice problem solving and be flexible to manage the globalized and multicultural world of today (Geertsen, 2003; Ruggiero, 1988; Feden and Vogel, 2003; Halpern and Hakel, 2003). Literature subjects are vital components of educational syllabuses. Therefore, the teaching of literature should "make the most sense in the context of the twenty-first century needs to be student-centered and guided by the research on education in the twenty first century" (Yaqoob, 2011). The findings of the study significantly show that beside what previous studies has established about the role of socio-cultural, religious, linguistic, and curricular factors that are challenging teaching literature in English departments at Saudi universities, teaching methodologies play a vital role. Traditional teacher-based teaching methodologies give rise to students' disinterest in poetry subject, their passiveness in the classroom, their failure in critical analysis, and dependence on memorization rather than comprehension. This has resulted into low academic achievement in the course. It is very well suggested by Dymoke (2009) that:

*"If you leave poetry on the page in your classroom you will be in danger of sounding its death knell: it is an organic, enriching communication tool, which taps into all our senses and is constantly renewing and reinventing itself to afford us new ways to express ourselves" (Dymoke, 2009, p.80)*

Based on Dymoke's statement, the study recommends some suggestions for promoting the process of teaching and learning in poetry course:

1. Students must be introduced to the importance of poetry in language learning. Course objectives and learning outcome should be clearly explained at the commencement of the course, and interest and motivation should be developed from the very first class.
2. Poetry should be related to students' life and culture. Students should be encouraged to read poetry which is related to their circumstances. Emerging Arabic & Saudi poetry in English can be referred to in order to upgrade the interest and familiarity and develop the poetic taste of students. Student may be given the task to choose the poetry they like and read & discuss it in the class.
3. Multimodal teaching using technology-assisted pedagogical practices should be adopted to narrow the gap between literature and the generation of iPad and social media. Students' visual and digital literacy skills should be tapped to enable them to, for example, create audio and video poems, podcasts, hypertexts and Wikis and other new ways of using language and experiencing poetry.
4. Teaching should be modern and interactive with focus on the students. Reader-centered methodologies should be adopted in line with traditional methodologies.
5. Teaching should include wide variety of activities related to poetry. Students must be all the time involved in the poem. Relations between poems and other forms of art should be

established to create the poetic world in the minds of students. Different poetry reading assignments, poetry slams & writing contests, poetry reciting presentations, and poetry forums and debates can be included in the course evaluation plan. Such activities allow students “to gain a much greater understanding and appreciation of how language and structure create effects and convey meanings” (Dymoke, 2009, p 82).

6. Higher order critical skills of students, rational thinking, critical and analytical writing should be encouraged in poetry classes. Focus should be shifted from mere memorization of information to criticism and self-interpretation.
7. Reader-bases literary theories like poststructuralism, new historicism, postcolonialism, feminism, and other critical theories should be introduced and practiced in poetry classes as well as other literary courses to promote critical consciousness and instill the notion of reflexivity in the reader.
8. Action researches should be done from now and then to assess the effectiveness of teaching methodologies and students’ attitudes towards them.
9. Reading and research in the field of English poetry by both teachers and students should be boosted.

### **Conclusion:**

The current study was intended to examine teaching and learning Poetry to female EFL students at FLT, KKU from students’ perspective. Data analysis reveals that the teaching methodologies are traditional teacher-centered which may give students the knowledge of literature but doesn’t assist making them critics and creative writers. As a result, students lack interest and motivation which results in low understanding of the literary genre and consequently low academic achievement. The study emphasizes adopting new reader-centered strategies and other corresponding activities and multimodal designs to impart motivation and interest to poetry classes and cultivate students’ interest in the subject, their critical thinking as well as creative writing. This study highlights some of the aspects of the teaching and learning process of English poetry at one of the Saudi public universities from the students’ perspective. Further investigative studies are recommended for more understanding of the topics mentioned, beside other related matters, on the level of the selected university and other universities from different standpoints.

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