Chapter- II

The Teaching of Poetry

2.0 Introduction

The phrase ‘teaching poetry’ leads us into a world of conflicts. The very words ‘teaching’ and ‘poetry’ appear antithetical, as there is a view that poetry cannot be taught, but can only be appreciated by the reader. Yet the teaching of poetry figures in our curriculum and has invited the language-literature dichotomy.

To teach poetry to general English students, or not to teach it, is a never-ending question. Form vs. content, need vs interest, restriction vs freedom, scholarship vs. appreciation, knowledge vs. skill -- these are only a few of the innumerable pairs of conflicting elements in the field of teaching/learning poetry. These conflicts arise due to the presence of linguistic devices in poetry which are mostly unfamiliar to the learner.

2.1 Poetry and the Linguistic Devices

Poems make use of a variety of linguistic devices, which though found in ‘ordinary’ language, are more frequent in poetry. And in poetry they are consciously constructed to achieve an effect.

The linguistic devices include rhyme, rhythm, repetition, inversion, use of figurative language, use of semantic ellipses, use of unusual collocations, juxtaposition of unfamiliar elements, and convention about the appearance of a poem on a page. The
effect of these is to distil and heighten the meaning of the message, which is achieved more economically than in prose.

2.2 The various Aspects of Poetry

Poetry is language: Poetry, or any literary text, is language first; it is the language used by great writers. Coleridge described poetry as the best words in the best order. It is language raised to nth power. The language of the poem is the poem itself. It is made of words we speak and its subject is our feelings.

Poetry is speech: Poetry is communication. T.S. Eliot says that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood. Poetry is language in action; it is in essence a discourse.

Poetry is a living art: In all cultures, poetry has been assigned a supreme place among creative writings.

It is pleasure: It is one of the greatest pleasures known to civilized man. It is to be experienced by being exposed to it in a proper way and at the proper stage. It can give mature pupils an aesthetic experience in a foreign language.

It has mystery and resonance: A line of poetry has a lot of mystery and resonance; it creates pictures and for its size it does a big job. Yet it is as practical as physical education because it keeps us human. It humanizes us. It sensitizes us. It makes us want to make people more sensitive.
It is a pedagogical device: The use of poetry can be an extremely good and effective pedagogical device. When learners realize that they can appreciate poetry in a foreign language, this is a very strong stimulus to further study — and nothing stimulates the student more than the realization that he is making progress.

It helps in mastery of language: When poetry is read aloud, it will be appealing even to those whose knowledge of English is pretty weak. The students need not understand every word; they can profit from the reading all the same. Poetry gives the learners chance to think and also to feel in the foreign language; this is one step further towards mastery of the foreign language.

It is an active force: Poetry is not some arcane form in a dusty book, but is, instead, an active force in the learners' world. An example of this active force, they can see in advertising, an effective communicative device.

2.3 Why Use Poetry

From our childhood we are exposed to the rhythm and cadence of poetic language. And the power of such language continues to flow as a deep under-current through the rest of our lives.

It helps our memory; poems we have read and enjoyed tend to stick in our minds.

It can also enhance a learner's feel for the language by giving a sense of weight and quality of words.
It acts as a powerful stimulus to the student’s own reflective thinking, which will lead to a more mature and fruitful discussion. Poems can be used to create and preserve a necessary tension between ‘fluency’ and ‘accuracy’.

The poem-centered activities enable the learner to make a strong personal investment; this, continued with the interaction in the group is a powerful factor in language learning.

Poetry is above all a creative game of language, which displays the poet’s linguistic inventiveness and power of imagination.

Poetry as a form of language use is universal among all human beings; no known language is without poetry.

Spoken language can be interactional (making speakers feel comfortable with each other) or transactional (communicating a utilitarian message). But poetry offers a third type of spoken language use, which we may call ‘reactional’ (Maley and Duff 10). It aims at making people react personally to other people's ways of seeing things. “This development of a personalised reaction to texts -- i.e. one which engages not only the intellect but also the feelings -- is we feel a very important part of the language learning process” (10).

A poem is noted for its compactness; it is a self-contained world, from a small language input one can generate a large and varied output.

A further advantage is that the vocabulary of poetry is highly associative and at the same time concentrated. This means that it can be used as the
starting-point for wide range of exercises to develop sensitivity to the webs of association which link words to each other. (Maley and Duff 12)

This kind of exercises, as stated already, enhance a learner's feel for the language

2.4 The Place of Poetry in English Language Teaching

2.4.1 Learning through 'Exposure'

Poetry, or any literary text, is included in the syllabus as a language teaching device with the intention of exposing the student to samples of the best English, in order to improve and enrich his ability to use the language

P.H. Breitenstein observes, “And if teachers do not make use of the most sensitive period in the lives of their pupils, the period of adolescence, to acquaint them with the values of good writing, they have missed a chance and done only half a job" (284).

One can learn a bit of language by just being exposed to it. The exposure may be passive; the skills of language grow most efficiently when the learner practises them actively and systematically. But even passive exposure to language has its effect: patterns of the language, somewhere heard or read, may linger in the memory, and after a period of incubation, pass over into productive use.

2.4.2 Acquiring a Command of Language

M.V. Nadkarni says:

Language study at advanced level, should aim at giving the learner the capacity for a flexible and disciplined freedom in the use and perception of
the language. Such a refined sensitivity to any language cannot be nurtured except through the study of literature of the language. Thus the study of literature, far from being detrimental to the cultivation of language skills, is the only way of acquiring them. (25)

Literature is language before it is anything else. The study of literature thus gives us freedom in the use and perception of the language.

2.4.3 Other Benefits

Other benefits also result from the teaching of literature: they are the educative, cultural and humanistic values as described in 2.3; these promote language learning also.

2.5. Attack on Teaching Poetry

2.5.1 The Attackers and Their Argument

People who have lost sight of the fact that literature is language, fail to see the place of poetry in language classes and they condemn the inclusion of poetry in the syllabus. They maintain that

i) Poetry can have no place in second-language teaching, and

ii) A student struggling with the elements of English structure should not be exposed to the complexities of poetry.

R.N.Ghosh, Sastri, and Das have commented on these arguments as follows:

The substance of both these arguments is: poetry represents a different kind of language use from the one commonly associated with communicative functions. Since the learner does not generally encounter
such use of language, there is not much point in giving him practice in it; teaching time (which is limited) can be better utilized in giving him what he does need, which is plentiful practice in the use of normal language in normal situations. It is not that people have anything against poetry, but that they feel poetry can wait until the basics of language have been learnt.

There is considerable force in this argument, but it could be turned back against itself. (91-92)

2.5.2 Other Reasons for the Attack

The following are some of the factors which might have induced people to oppose poetry.

2.5.2.1 The Way Poetry Is Taught

Some of the opposition to poetry stems from the way it is taught. A common practice is to preface the teaching of a poem with introductory remarks about the poet, his life and times, his contribution to literary history etc, killing the learner's interest in poetry. Hence, "the study of literature often deteriorates into a sterile exercise involving collection of information about the authors and their works from secondary sources, mostly from unreliable bazaar notes" (Nadkarni 26). Our teaching strategy, the examination and the evaluation system also make the learners not fully involved and interested in the learning process.
2.5.2.2 The Conflicting Elements Involved in Poetry Teaching

Opposition to poetry arises also because of the confusion between conflicting elements. While each of these elements is an entity by itself, confusion (and hence a dislike to poetry) arises when one is taken for the other or when one is equated to the other:

a) Scholarship vs. appreciation: A poem is read not for knowledge. Scholarship about a poem should not be confused with an appreciation of the poem, just as a paraphrase of the poem can never mean enjoyment or understanding. The handling of facts, the perception of relevance, the sensitiveness and accuracy of response are critical virtues that scholarship does not ipso facto confer on its practitioners.

b) Need vs. interest: There has always been the conflict between learners’ different needs and their interests. Many feel that the need to analyse poems, for the sake of examinations, mars the interest of learners.

c) Restriction vs. freedom: Restriction is reflected in the selection of poems and the mode of dealing with them in the class. Teachers and learners feel that poetry should be free and personal experience without restriction – students should be allowed to bring up before the class any poem (not in the syllabus) which they have liked and think worthy of being shared with the teacher and the class; instead of the teacher always telling them to read, now this, and now that, the learners may come up with their own suggestions to the teacher.
(d) Teacher's role vs. student's role: We cannot know for certain, in the case of every individual learner, where his teacher's role ends and where his own role begins; very often the roles overlap; a general dislike/opposition to poetry teaching/learning arises when too many demands are put on one, leaving the other to go free.

2.5.2.3 The Effect of the Examination

One of the crippling blows to the development of a genuine and enduring love of poetry is the examination. When we make poetry an examination subject, poetry becomes dull. In poetry, compulsion is aesthetically squalid also.

But examination is an evil necessity. Margaret Mathieson aptly observes that the removal of the worst features of examining poetry would probably mean the disappearance of poetry from some pupils' timetables (42).

2.5.2.4 Non-Availability of a Clear Statement of Objectives

The main objectives of teaching English are to acquire the performance skills. Yet a course in the use of English has much more to it than teaching how to speak and write grammatical English, and can be or should be made intellectually as challenging as a teacher can make it; this is possible only with the help of literature-based texts; we are told that literature teaching does this good and that; the objectives are therefore only implied, and not clearly stated.
2.6 Defence of Teaching Poetry

2.6.1 Language Study, not a Subject, but a Process

As stated already in 2.4.2, language study at advanced levels should aim at giving the learner the capacity for a flexible and disciplined freedom in the use and perception of the language. The process of acquiring such a refined sensitivity demands the study of the literature of the language.

There are a number of jobs and professions, which require not just correct English but advanced skills in the language; these skills in English are among the most saleable commodities in the job-market today.

Poetry (literature as a whole) means the process of the whole development of the individual--training the intellectual, the affective, the social, the ethical and the imaginative faculties; for, it stimulates the learner into thinking; 'feeling' is its primary by-product; it promotes good relationships; it plays a role in character formation; it is a complicated work of art where pent up feelings get expression.

2.6.2 Poetry, Language in Action

Geoffery Bullough says "Studying a poem is like throwing a stone into a pond; it creates ever-widening circles of ripples, a skimming web of interflowing association and ideas" (120). Such an activity has many practical uses for the language learner.

2.6.3 Poetry, an Evocation of Experience

Srivastava observes that
a poem is not an object of emotion and passion but an event of cognition and communication [...]; poetry is not an unformed mass of raw emotion but a verbally structured manifestation of sentence; it is not a naked passion but a linguistically realized cognition of intuition; it is not an artifact of formless inner life or mentality but a palpable verbal form of objectifying the subjectivity of life. It is precisely for this reason that art objects as aesthetic messages are communicable. Poetry is in essence a discourse. (27)

2.6.4 Poetry, a Linguistic Experience of a Different Type

The reason for including poetry in the curriculum is that it is not prose, that it does not function in the same way as prose. Poetry should not be used in the classroom for purposes which could also be served through prose, for prose can almost always serve such purposes better.

Poetry should not, for example, be used to develop the skills of comprehension, or to provide drill with the structures of English, or teach essential vocabulary; these can be done more effectively by using prose texts; that is why the prose text forms the core of the language-teaching course.

Nor can we say that poetry provides the learner with a mode of language, which he can consciously, or unconsciously imitate in his own use.

Basically, we wish to teach poetry because it provides the student with a variety of linguistic experience that is not otherwise available: an
experience of a different kind of language use, which is creative and imaginative, and can achieve more total communication through a fuller utilisation of resources of the language such as the ambiguities and overtones of words. Such experience, at least for the learner of language, is largely passive – but that does not make it useless. Though it is no substitute for active learning, it can be a desirable complement to it (Ghosh, Sastri, and Das 92)

2.6.5 Teachers’ Views in Support of Teaching Poetry

Teachers have the conviction that the teaching of literature remains the final justification for having English in the timetable at all. For many teachers it is the one area of their work which makes much of the routine bearable; at least we can say that literature constitutes an unavoidable commitment for the majority.

A teacher may be anxious to provide his learners with a standard of good English; he may want to ensure that they can meet the demands of an examination in English language; he may wish to create the conditions in his classroom for vigorously expressive use of language -- written or spoken; but whatever he chooses to put into his programme, it is most unlikely that literature will not play some part in it.

John O’Neill justifies teaching poetry, in a precise way as follows

I teach poetry because external examinations demand that I do.

I teach poetry because I like it and my pupils like it.

I teach poetry because nothing else can be so easily adapted to fit any
purpose or any slot in the teaching days.

I teach poetry because it is of immense value in all aspects of the pupils'
linguistic development.

I teach poetry because of its unique contribution to the moral, intellectual,
 social and emotional development of the pupils. (16)

2.6.6 Poetry, Making Learners Go On and On

T.S.Eliot wrote that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood. It
does not mean that literal understanding is unimportant; but it is not necessarily the first
step in appreciating a poet’s work.

There may be many ways in which a poem can communicate; what is vital
is that it can communicate, at least on some level, immediately; so that the
reader – the student? – wants to read it again, wants to read other poems
by the same poet, wants simply to read other poems. (Spear 200)

2.6.7 Poetry, as Good as Other Types of Language:

Alan Maley and Alan Duff say, “We would like to suggest that: “Poetry offers a
rich resource for input to language learning. As such it is at least as relevant as the more
commonly accepted types of input (e.g.contrived dialogues, isolated texts for reading
comprehension, simulations, etc.). So, it should be given at least equal weight” (7).

The use of poem as the centerpiece of a unit of material for teaching English, does
not preclude the use of other types of language. At times we are enthusiastic about the
possibilities that poetry offers for language learning; yet this enthusiasm should be tempered by realism and we should not make excessive claims. The use of poetry is as valid as the use of drama techniques, pictures, news articles, dialogues, letters, advertisements and others.

2.6.8 Poetry, Fulfilling Learners’ Immediate Needs:

Literature, and especially poetry is now considered unfashionable and it is thought to be too difficult or irrelevant to the needs of the learners. It is assumed that there should be a close correspondence between the learner’s terminal aims and what he does in the classroom. But in fact the learner’s immediate needs may not be the same as his terminal objectives. His immediate aim being learning the language, poetry can be used in achieving this aim; Alan Maley and Alan Duff observe: “if poetry is integrated with other forms of language, and thus demystified through a ‘hands-on’ approach, students will come to an understanding of what is special about poetry as a mode of language use”(7). They further point out:

Moreover, the realisation that, though they may be relatively inexpert in the language, they can still appreciate (to a degree) what is thought to be a ‘difficult’ use of language – and even to write such language – is a far from negligible morale-booster. (9)

According to them the writing of poetry by learners has its own use:

In one sense, the writing of poetry is an ideal task for language learners because of its tolerance of ‘error’ [. . ]. This is the sand-pit where guiltless children (and adults too) can try out their constructions. (9)
There is another advantage pointed out by them:

One further advantage of this ‘hands on’ approach is that it helps to remove some of the awe and reverence with which words tend to be surrounded. The student is transformed from a spectator into a participant (9).

This is what is immediately required of a learner in the classroom, whatever be his terminal objectives. That is why M. Baldwin, who in his Poetry Without Tears maintains that poetry should be a pleasure subject and that no-poetry is better than poetry-without-pleasure, says,

Although any sense of ‘work’ should be avoided, there is no reason why the sense of mystery should not be enlarged, in particular that good down-to-earth idea of mystery that was cognate with ‘mastery’ in medieval England. (103)

2.6.9 Summary

As for the role of literature in language teaching, much has been said with regard to the inclusion and/or exclusion of literature in language teaching, each presenting the case with equal conviction. However it has been finally established that “the study of literature is of great importance in language learning since it is the effort of constructing meaning which provides the student with the important tool of the ability to interpret a discourse” (Hasnain and Imitaz 81).
The stance against the inclusion of literature in language teaching loses its force in the face of the now established fact that “Whatever the pitfalls involved, the use of literature can best serve the function of familiarizing the student with the strategies involved in the construction of meaning” (Hasnain and Imitaz).

Similarly, literature in the language class can best help the student in understanding the complex interplay between cognitive frameworks of the reader and the devices employed by the author in anticipating and guiding the orientation of the reader that is involved in any interpretative effort.

2.7 Literary Theories and Their Relevance

2.7.1 The Need for a Knowledge of Literary Theories

Alex Roger believes that the task of English teachers is not to hand over predigested meanings, but to teach students to read and interpret for themselves, to be reasonably skilled and sensitive readers, able to feel and judge, with fidelity to the textual facts, in response to any work of literature they may choose to read. (89)

In order to achieve this goal, students and teachers alike should be aware of at least a few new approaches other than the traditional ones in interpreting texts. There is an array of interpretative theories ranging from classical Plato’s and Aristotle’s to postmodern Derrida’s and Barth’s. Literature teachers can select whichever theories are suitable or functional with their students. Wisam Mansour boldly observes:

Classroom practice has shown me that the overwhelming majority of students cannot write or speak about literary texts without having an
interpretive theory as a reference in which to place the literary text. Without it, the best that students can do with a text is rephrase or paraphrase its content, provided they understand it lexically (28 - 31).

To support this view and to explain the effect of the absence of these theories, Mansour cites Gilroym-Scot who opines that students do not know how to approach literature, and teachers do not know how to present it. And further says,

However, if teachers could simplify literary theories and present them to students, the latter would be able to approach texts critically... Teachers need to stress the importance of being subjective during the process of interpretation if they are introducing students to any of the receptive theories. Teachers should stress being objective if they are introducing formalist or structuralist theories before engaging students in the activity (21).

C.T.Indra in her introduction to *Teaching Poetry at the Advanced Level* also says, “One of the ways of modernizing the teaching of poetry is to generate an awareness among the learners of those critical theories in which the reader plays a constitutive role in making meaning” (3).

### 2.7.2 The Theories and their Claims

New criticism whose tenets are explained in *Understanding Poetry* by Cleanth Brooks and R.P. Warren, enjoyed unrivalled popularity for many decades from the 1940s.
Brooks and Warren claimed to shift the interest from the author to the reader in the classroom; yet their real interest was less in the reader and more in the text.

**Stylistics** and **Russian Formalism** focused on the special use of language in poetry; the assumption is that poetic language is a supreme mode of communication and the readers’ role consists in making explicit the implied poetic richness. But reading poetry is not merely recovering a fixed objective meaning, frozen in a text; it is an inter-subjective activity involving the learner’s imagination.

After World War II, **structuralism** influenced literary studies, it described literature as a system; it was not concerned with the reader’s situation.

On the other hand the **Reader Response Approach** of the 1970s following the Polish Philosopher Roman Ingarden’s model, regarded reading as a phenomenological activity.

Ingarden assigned a creative/generative role to the reader in as much as he described the act of reading as one of concretization i.e. what is merely in symbols or codes or in abstract, is fully made alive by the reader’s imagination. (Indra 3)

Thus this approach maintained that “meaning is not frozen but is a highly interesting flow of consciousness from the reader to the text” (Indra 5).

**The British Cultural Materialism** and its American counterpart **New Historicism** maintained that there are no totally formalistic or context-free readings; all interpretations are historically bound; every text is historically bound.
The Cultural Materialists make a Marxist or Post-Marxist approach to literature by situating a text within the matrix of socio-economic production that governed the ideology of a group or community. Such a matrix determines the attitude and linguistic habits of the writer...The reader coming in a different age, situated in a different ideological context, is free to critique a given text in terms of the imperatives of his own reading context. (Indra 6)

New Historicism, on the other hand is not so pointedly Marxist or anti-establishment as Cultural Materialism; it assigns the reader even greater freedom; it maintains that a text can become a pretext for discussing a number of issues which are not literary at all.

The Feminist critics have also made use of the method of Cultural Materialism and New Historicism.

Deconstruction emerged as a challenge to both structuralism and formalism. C.T. Indra talks about its features in this way (7): Deconstruction showed how all rhetorical structures are ultimately unstable and hence cannot produce any determinate meaning. It deconstituted our conceptual assumption about structure, organicity, wholeness, implied logic, ordering etc, and makes possible 'intertextual' readings of a text. "Such an intertextual reading will help make the poem relevant and interesting for the class." (8).

The Schema Theory: An important development in the reading process in the recent years has been the emphasis on the reader's knowledge of the world or schemata. The Schema theory helps us to know how, by exploiting his interpretive ability, the learner comes to understand the way meaning is created through reading the text. It is
based on the phenomenon of reader-response. According to this theory, understanding text through reading is not simply an act of getting information from the text. It is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text.

2.7.3 Recent Trends

Recent theoretical discussions in reading (e.g. Spiro, 1980; Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Langer, 1986; Wilson & Anderson, 1986) have argued for the interactive nature of the reading process, a notion particularly relevant to our understanding of how we read and interpret literary works. Reading theorists have shifted from a purely textual focus to a framework that accounts for reader, text and context. Readers cannot be considered passive, for they have during reading asked questions of themselves about the text, formed hypotheses, made assumptions, validated hunches, and engaged in other cognitive and effective processes.

One area of reading research, particularly relevant to the investigations of literary response is the schema theory described already.

2.7.4 Relevance of Critical Theories in Literature Teaching

A look at the above theories reveals the following: Some recent developments in literary theory have placed the focus chiefly on the reader. The objectivity and rigour of the New criticism have given way to the notion that the text has no unity, no characteristics, no objective status whatsoever and the text is rather a dynamic process which, because it does not exist outside the mind of an individual reader, will be experienced differently by everyone.
However, in other schools of literary theory, there is not much change and so, modern researchers are forced to find a parallel between literary theory and current thinking in reading research, particularly in a common acknowledgement of the importance of both reader and text. Two such researchers are Iser (1978) and Rosenblatt (1978), who,

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\text{take a middle road that gives equal attention to the reader and text and to either the interaction (Iser) or the transaction (Rosenblatt) that occurs between the two... Neither Iser nor Rosenblatt believes in the objectivity or determinacy of the text, nor do they accept the notion that any meaning can be legitimately created from the literary transaction. Theirs represents a middle way between the two extremes of objectivity and subjectivity which adequately accounts for reader and text. (Earthman 353)}
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Iser in discussing the "dynamic interaction between text and reader" (107), points out that the pleasure in reading literature comes from readers' active participation in the interaction from their ability to "share the game of the imagination (108). The reader's involvement with the text generally takes two forms: gap-filling and consistency building. A literary text contains gaps or blanks: things left unsaid, actions unexplained, true feeling unarticulated. Through this indeterminacy, the text communicates with the reader. "Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins" (169). The product of this interactive process is consistency building, which leads to an interpretation or gestalt of the work. Throughout this process, the reader creates meaning rather than merely receiving it from the text. Meaning is created by reader and text together, a product of the text's guidance and the reader's involvement.
Rosenblatt points out that though the words in a literary texts are interrelated, the reader ultimately makes the connections in a transaction with the text:

Our transactional point of view leads us to see that it is not the words, essential though they are, that [ . . ] "interinanimate" one another. The reader [ . . ] selects out and synthesizes -- interinanimates -- his responses to the author's pattern of words. This requires the reader to carry on a continuing, constructive, "shaping" activity. (53)

Rosenblatt sees the relationship between reader and text as a transaction rather than an interaction. According to her, transaction emphasizes the organic, dynamic nature of the response process and she rejects the mechanistic, dualistic nature of interaction. To her, transaction implies an event involving a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting. Each transaction is unique because it results in a combination of elements that would be different under any other circumstances.

For Rosenblatt, the process of understanding a literary text has two levels: the evocation and the interpretation. First readers experience the work, create the work for themselves by forming their responses into an experienced meaning or evocation. Interpretation follows as readers attempt to characterize the evocation in some way, to describe its nature, to find the significance that will enable them to make sense of the meaning within their own lives.

2.7.5 Relevance of Critical Theories in Language Teaching

2.7.5.1 Technical Matters, Making Poetry Less Interesting
Many centuries of literary theory have equipped us with a large array of topics, handles or labels for the analysis of poem. We speak of the theme; we speak of diction, imagery, metaphor, symbol; we sometimes resurrect such older terms as personification, allegory, fable; we sum up such terms and magnify them into the name of myth.

We speak of the movement of the poem in time, its rhythm, its meter, its lines, stanzas, rhymes, alliteration and assonance, its echoes, turns, agnominations and puns, the qualities of its sound like the onomatopoeia, its audience, its patterns, its speech, its landscape, its tone and others.

The poem is furthermore a poem of a certain type or genre implying certain rules and reflecting the poet's moods and attitude. The poem has conflicts and tension; the poem can be metaphorical; it can be a poem of mixed feelings and merit the name of paradoxical, ambiguous and ironic. The poem is subtle, elusive, tough and witty.

This is the grammar of criticism: and it will be especially firm in areas of syntax and prosody. But grammar is grammar -- these technical matters ought to be taken mainly as the preliminaries. But an interpretation or appreciation of a specific poem by the means of those technical matters is likely to be somewhat less interesting and making the learners go astray.

The purpose of any poem cannot be simply to be a work of art, to be artificial, or embody devices of art. A learner ought not to be conceived as a person who has a duty to
go into the poem and bring out trophies under any of the grammatical heads; these may help him only in the course of his going into and coming out of a given poem.

To draw a crude analogy: It would be an awkward procedure to introduce one human being to another (one of our friends to another) with allusions to common places of his anatomy, or labels of his race, creed or type of neurosis. The analogy, as I have said, is crude. Poems are not persons. Still there may be resemblance here sufficient to give us ground for reflection (Wimsatt 162)

The teacher may say something about the poem, what is it? In trying to help a class or himself to read a poem, the teacher ought to be, first of all, more relaxed and uncommitted than in his fully grammatical moments. What is needed is not the most precisely definable and graded features of poems in general, but something more generic, the basic activity of our minds by which we examine a given individual poem.

This activity of our own in examining a poem, let me add immediately and firmly, does suppose that an object, with definable features, is there, independent of us, for us to examine. (Wimsatt 162)

So instead of wondering what to say about the poem, we must analyse what to ask about the poem. What to ask about poem is very special, intrinsic and difficult aspect of our professional problem. We can be sure of one thing; a poem says or means something, or ought to mean something, if we as teachers have any business with it. A poem not only says something, but is something. “A poem should not mean but be.” We move through the phases of explanation, description and explication which are closely entangled and merged with one another, we are engaged with features of a poem which assert
themselves as reasons for our pleasures in the poem and our admiration for it. This is how a poem is read in the class.

2.7.5.2 Techniques, Reducing Individual Freedom

The dangers in imposing a system of standardized teaching are much more serious than those inherent in the lack of training in standardized techniques. And we have to guard against these dangers, we have to devise ways and means of ensuring individual freedom for the teacher both in the innovation of new skills of teaching as well as in transgressing those skills whenever necessary. However learning the mechanics of effective teaching always has an important role to play in making the graduate teaching a meaningful activity; and the teacher should be allowed to adopt whatever approach he has a preference for.

In the case of literature teaching, in language class the scope for individual freedom is unlimited, says Bhim S. Dahiya:

Leaving aside the established approaches like the historical, the neo- aristotelism, the modernist, the psychological, the mythical, the structuralist, the stylistic, and what not, there are a thousand and one individual approaches ranging from telling merely the dictionary meaning of certain difficult words in a poem or a scene or a chapter to telling what ‘I’ like or do not like about a poem, a scene, or a chapter. (7)

In our attempt to impose any system or mechanics in teaching, we have to be careful in preventing it from becoming mechanical and uninspiring, monotonous and uncreative. A delicate balance is to be maintained between the individual talent and the larger system,
between the free play of the imagination and the ordering of thoughts into a coherent pattern of meaning.

2.7.5.3 Methodology, Marring Rapport between Poetry and Reader

Bibhu Padhi in “Poetry, Reader, Lover” says,

there is no simple, practical method of dealing with a poem (I have a strong hatred for what has come to be known as ‘methodology’) in the same way that there is no particular, prescribable way of walking up or walking down to a lover, of falling in love. (197)

2.7.5.4 Over-Teaching of Poetry, not Good:

It is all too easy to over-teach poetry. Baldwin says, “There are some volatile liquids that effervesce rapidly when allowed to come in contact with the fresh air. One does not shake the bottle to achieve the effect. One merely lifts off the stopper” (110).

The good teacher of poetry ‘is the person who can invoke a creative mood in a few well-chosen words, and then stand aside while the class works at its enjoyment. His lessons are a matter of quiet strategy rather than flamboyant tactics’ (110). But yet that does not prevent him from being an opportunist. Further a poetry teacher does not figure as the sponsor of anything other than free speech and enjoyment; and this is quite the safest cultural sponsorship.’ (111)
2.7.5.5 Technicalities, not a Substitute for Response

The primary aim of reading poetry should be pleasure, delight in sound, in rhythm and meter, in shared emotional experience, in the varied form of verse. The learner should encounter poems, which present a series of visual images sketched in graphic words. Mary Elizabeth Fowler explains this.

Stress on history, the biography of the poet, analysis of form and technique, complicated explication -- all these often become a substitute in the English classroom for response to image and sound, and fail to produce the desire to hear the words again or to know them better (260).

She is rather amusing when she explains how to approach a poet: "Don’t even try to understand him, just let him wash over you" (260). John Brown and Jerry Gifford also talk of the imbalanced treatment accorded to a poem.

There is always the danger that by concentrating on one feature of poetry we shall be teaching students bad habits. Examiners complain about 'mechanical' examination scripts, and they are in part referring to the way some candidates just 'identify' features and list them, rather than concentrate on the search for meaning. (111).

2.7.5.6 Need for Teaching the Poem, not About the Poem

f) Teaching the poem, not about the poem: The lesson must begin with the reading of a poem, not with a statement of who wrote it, and certainly not with a mine of information about why, where and when he wrote it. If all this is not in the poem then it
does not matter. J.A. Bright and G.P. McGregor quote Lord Russell (*On Education* Allen and Unwin, 1926) to support this view:

There is not the slightest use, either for young or old, in being well informed about literature, knowing the dates of the poets, the names of their works and so on. Everything that can be put in a handbook is worthless. What is valuable is great familiarity with certain examples of good literature -- such familiarity as will influence the style, not only of writing, but of thought. (Bright and Gregor 222)

2.7.5.7 Theories, Presupposing an Idealized Reader

Elise Ann Euthman, while describing the ways readers create meaning from literary texts, points out:

One problem with many theories that attempt to explain the process of literary understanding lies in the description of an idealized version of a reader who possesses a large measure of linguistic and literary competence and who is capable of realizing all the potential inherent in a text. Both Iser and Rosenblatt acknowledge that no real reader can fulfill this role. (354)

Thus, critical theories have become a bane instead of being a boon to both the teacher and the learner of English. Those teachers who pay much attention to these do more harm than good in the English language class.
1.8 The Poetry Teaching Scene in Colleges Today

1.8.1 The Nature of the Present Scene

Looking at what is being done in the name of teaching poetry, one is reminded of a joke in “Punch”, which has been aptly quoted and commented on by O.P. Sharma as follows:

An elderly lady sent a servant after her little son with the instruction, ‘go and see what John is doing and tell him not to do it’. It would not be a bad idea if most of us stopped doing whatever we are doing in the classroom by way of teaching poetry, for the chances are that, like little John, we are, wittingly or unwittingly, upto some mischief. (143)

Though Sharma’s remark, made two decades ago, may appear exaggerated, its truth will be evident to us, if we could just look around us and see the poetry teaching/learning scene in our colleges. (The perceptions, presented here, on the present scene, are a result of the Researcher’s experience as a student/teacher, and informal observation of, or discussion with his colleagues).

2.8.2 A General Lack of Love of Poetry:

Love of poetry faces a high rate of infant mortality in India. A liking for poetry is nipped in the bud by inefficient and indifferent teaching at the most susceptible age. Most pupils who have been subjected early to a course of poetry teaching, arrive at the higher classes having developed a sort of natural resistance to poetry. This general apathy is reciprocated by the teacher.
Inside the classroom, the study of literature often deteriorates into a sterile exercise leading to collection of information about the authors, their periods and their works from secondary sources, mostly from unreliable bazaar notes. Even in the teaching strategy we adopt, literature is transferred into a 'knowledge subject' and there is a premature emphasis on 'books on books on books'.

Even good students tend to read all they can about published texts but not the texts themselves. The examinations we set also encourage the dependence on secondary sources and tend to discourage a close study of the literary text itself.

2.9 Factors Contributing to this Present Scene

Though the blame falls squarely on the teacher and his attitude, there are other factors also which contribute equally to this present state of affairs. They are.

1) The academic atmosphere in general,

2) The student and the teacher in the poetry class

3) The classroom teaching (pedagogy), and

4) Other constraints.

Each of these factors and their constituent elements are discussed below. Under each aspect of the present scene discussed here, the right attitude or nature of that aspect is given in order to show how the various aspects in the present scene suffer in comparison with the ideal.
2.9.1 The Academic Atmosphere in General

2.9.1.1 The Language-Literature Controversy:

People are still skeptical about teaching language through literature. Even lovers of literature hesitate to prescribe a study of literature for the acquisition of a command of language to the present set of students. Two arguments are commonly advanced.

1. Poetry can mean nothing to a student who has only a rudimentary understanding of the language, and therefore exposure to poetry leads only to incomprehension, bewilderment and frustration. Alternatively, since the student is compelled to accept whatever interpretation of a poem his teacher chooses to thrust on him, exposure to poetry can encourage mental laziness and habits of uncritical acceptance or rejection. In either case, the results are pedagogically unhealthy; there can be no benefit from such an exercise.

2. Since poetry frequently employs words and syntax in a manner that would be considered abnormal and often ‘unacceptable’ in ordinary language, exposure to such usage, before the student has mastered normal usage, can lead to the formation of wrong language habits” (Ghosh, Sastri and Das 90)

But there is really no other way of acquiring a sophisticated command of language, except through an assiduous study of its literature. Those who are setting up an opposition between language and literature are doing incalculable harm to the interests of both language and literature.
Some may argue that teaching poetry is a waste; the learners are not going to become poets or critics; after all they are going to end up as clerks in banks and offices; and what relevance does poetry have to their careers? To them we can say that just as the study of Economics at the undergraduate level is not intended to make the learner an economist, but is aimed at moulding his mental faculties, poetry teaching aims at giving the learner a new experience.

2.9.1.2 The Prose-Poetry Dichotomy:

The supporters of language feel that the prose-form is the most suitable and useful form in acquiring a command of the language. So they are always in a hurry to paraphrase a poem and treat the paraphrase as the subject-matter for study; the fact that poetry itself is language in use is willingly ignored or put aside.

To them, if English is a foreign language, poetry is something ‘foreign’ in the foreign language; it is twice foreign, and cannot be approached except through the medium of prose. Prose helps the learners to speak, to argue, and to understand the context of texts and subject books; they write in prose only; so what practical use poetry has, they may ask. The notion that poetry is speech, and it develops communicative skills in the learner is seriously questioned by them. To them prose is bread for daily use and poetry, cake for special occasions only.

2.9.1.3 Poetry Treated as a ‘Content-Subject’

As already pointed out, literature is transferred into a knowledge-subject and is read for information. A poem consists of words, and often words in an unusual order; to
our students they are bugbears which have to be hunted down in the dictionary. Students therefore too easily get bogged down in 'meanings', in teasing out the sense of complicated passages or ambiguous phrases; the poem itself, apart from its concatenation of sentences, never emerges.

But we know that a poem must be a totality, a complete whole; and very little will be achieved towards the understanding of this totality if we merely deal with meanings.

Again to get information about the authors and their works, the learner is forced to keep up with the best critics, and is therefore being continually led away from the poem. Scholarship about the poem is often confused with an appreciation of the poem. But it is expected of every learner of English to 'think' and even to 'feel' in that language. Mere understanding of the content will not promote a mastery of the language.

To a vast majority of average learners, poetry is an examination subject. It is taught and learnt from the point of view of examination. In the class, each word and phrase is taken apart and studied without any relevance to the whole, and notes are taken down.

But we know that when details are seen not in relation to the whole, we murder to dissect; in that case there will be no chance to enjoy reading a poem and much less to appreciate. And when examination becomes the end of poetry teaching, will it 'inspire them to further studies in poetry on their own'? -- for examination puts an end to everything.
2.9.1.4 Performance Skills vs. Personality

Today what we aim at is just the acquisition of 'correct English'. The primary objective in teaching a modern language is to acquire the performance skills in the language so as to enable the learner to function suitably in the society he lives in. But this function in the society, or the development of his personality to suit this function is completely forgotten. The term 'performance skills' is often understood in the narrow sense of acquiring merely the four basic skills; but that is the absolute minimum!

It is often forgotten that the reading of poetry is essential to a complete education. The following observation of John O'Neill will serve as an eye-opener:

We are trying to help our pupils to develop their whole personalities, to widen their interests, to deepen their sensibility, to make them aware of their fellowmen and of their own place among them. Our subject is not merely grammar, composition, punctuation, and interpretation: it is 'the whole man alive'. -- To make any success in this, we need the stimulus of literature in general and poetry in particular. (13)

2.9.2 The Student and the Teacher in the Poetry Class

2.9.2.1 The Student

The learner in the poetry class has been compared aptly to an 'uninvited guest' at the wedding. His behaviour is that of a disinterested onlooker; he is there, because he has to be there; his utmost concern is to gather information about the poem in order to tackle
the question in the examination. He chooses to be a passive listener, ready to take down whatever is given by way of interpretation by the teacher. Participation in the discussion, and involving himself in the reading of the poem are out of question. He never cares to memorize a single line of poetry, but is ready to memorize any number of paraphrases and summaries. Having developed a sort of natural resistance to poetry, he cannot go beyond a paraphrase of the poem.

There is another kind of student who is really influenced by the rhyme and rhythm, and the power of words and patterns; yet he is rather willing to stand before it in awe and wonder, as a tourist would do before an ancient ruin, than to negotiate with the text or explore it.

A third category of student involves himself in the analysis, overcoming the resistance put forth by the language; but very soon he realizes that a poem is a linguistic experience of a different type: The metrical arrangement, the sound pattern, the metaphor, the alliteration might be familiar to him and therefore are easily understood, but the deviances, both linguistic and literary, and any such "non-norm" aspect in the poem baffles him and tires him; and he feels that hurdles cannot be overcome without the guidance of the teacher.

Now the question is whether the teacher is willing and well-equipped to tackle the situation.

2.9.2.2 The Teacher:

There are teachers and teachers; and there are as many approaches to the teaching of poetry as there are teachers; 'Teaching poetry' has come to embrace so wide a range of
activities and those who teach it hold such diverse views about what they should be doing, that virtually any general statement about poetry-teaching can seem false to the individual teacher for whom it is not personally true. The one matter upon which a large measure of agreement might be found however is the importance of poetry in an English teacher's work.

Yet there is always a touch of indifference, or frustration, or misjudgement or helplessness in their attitude to poetry teaching, and this is revealed in their approaches in the classroom.

a) Indifference: This is reflected in a teacher who in the poetry class reciprocates the general apathy to poetry found among the learners. "Men of feeling, they were rubbed the wrong way by poetry in their youth and hence were utterly lost to its delights for ever" (Sharma: 141). To him a joyous infectious enthusiasm and an accurate honest emotional sensibility is lost for ever. His main task is to hand over pre-digested meanings and not to teach the learners how to read and interpret for themselves. He thinks that it is his business to fill their minds with an academically hallmarked and guaranteed set of received opinions on certain authors and their works. All of us are aware of the unfortunate turn English studies have taken in India in the last thirty or forty years. At all levels of university education, students as well as teachers lay more stress on secondary sources, than on the original texts themselves.

This indifference prevents the teachers from stimulating to the maximum the students' response to the work at hand before he is asked to read the critics. When the learners leave us they become 'critical parrots' who have been taught to think and feel,
about a number of prevalued prescribed books, but not reasonably skilled and sensitive readers, able to think, feel and judge for themselves with fidelity to the textual facts. Good parrots get good marks, of course.

b) Frustration: This is caused by a certain kind of failure in the teaching of literature. Many young teachers now enter the classroom expecting too much of literature. They come to believe it is capable of generating a string of exciting lessons for them through its mere impact. However when they discover that this looked-for excitement does not materialize as often or as immediately as they had expected, a reaction sets in, and the possibility of handling literature with the pupils in question comes to be rejected.

There is certainly no other subject in which more has been abandoned through despair of success. One can not imagine an arithmetic teacher deciding to avoid multiplication and division on account of their difficulty, and to devote his attention to perfecting his pupils in addition and subtraction; yet a very similar procedure is adopted by the poetry teacher, who, exasperated by the inability of his pupils to learn, or of himself to teach a poem in an ideal way (or at least in a way he wants it to be taught) cuts out presentation, discussion and analysis, and concentrates on explanation through lecture only.

c) Underestimation of learners' ability: The most dominant characteristic of the teaching situation is that the teacher knows all, or at least a good deal about the poem to which the learner is to be introduced; the student, to begin with, knows nothing, or rather
does not know anything of relevance. How is the transfer of knowledge to the student to be effected? The teacher proceeds to “tell” and to demonstrate to the learner all that he is intended to know.

He uses a poem simply as a launching pad for his own flight of fancy; everything is explained; nothing is trusted to the silent interaction between the student and the poem.

Here the teaching standard in general and poetry teaching in particular, has suffered an unliterary conditioning with the cheap, made-easy, bazaar notes on the one hand, and the scholarly or pseudo-scholarly critical commentations of the English teacher on the other. He often tries to bog down or blind the students with his extraneous knowledge of critical treatises on poets and authors, thus blocking the students’ imagination or literary awareness. “While teaching a poem, the teacher may take the students into the clouds, and wind up with woolly interpretations, or bore the students with bone-drive technicalities of poetry” (Singh 21). Thus there is hardly any attempt made to involve them in the reading and enjoyment of poetry.

Here the teacher’s intuitive guesses pass for interpretation. He never cares to substantiate his guesses with the words of the text. He never asks any probing question and never cares for the learner’s intuitions. Explanation or analysis is not done by the student, but for the student by the teacher, and thus the roles are reversed.

d) Over estimation of learners’ ability: If the above attitude is one extreme, this is the other extreme. Here the teacher leaves the learner to his own devices, and seems to say, “I am leaving it to you to find out whatever is worth knowing about this.” He takes
the learner's ability for granted and never makes an attempt at channelizing or systematizing the ability.

As we know, the teacher's work consists in facilitating the student's enjoyment and understanding of the poem; the explanation is preliminary; thought about the poem is preliminary; and these are the teacher's work; the final act which opens the poem to the possession of the student is wholly the responsibility of the student himself; but who can initiate this act, except the teacher?

Though this attitude to initiate is not totally absent, the number of teachers who are convinced of its importance, is relatively very small.

e) A 'via media' attitude and its difficulties. An attitude midway between the above extremes is seen spreading fast amongst teachers today. This may be due to the importance given to need-based education and development of communication skills; it is further strengthened by the urge of the modern time for objective criticism.

Here, firstly, the teacher gives whatever basic information is needed to help the student begin to study a new text — whether as an inducement to begin on the right lines or to avoid glaring misreading. Secondly, he devises a sequence of questions, or other activities to help the student find his way through the various levels of significance which the text contains. It is in order to do this effectively that the teacher himself needs a comprehensive and correctly ordered appreciation of the text.
The very device of asking questions and getting answers in a large class accustomed to lecture method, is a problem.

Another factor which worsens the classroom problem is the fact that the teacher should be skilled enough to succeed in persuading his pupils to adopt an active role in his lessons. Here, the teacher should have in addition to the pedagogic skills, a delicate tact, a keen intelligence, a joyous infectious enthusiasm and an accurate honest emotional sensibility— not easily come by. And if not properly approached, the learner may grow hostile to the entire act of reading a poem.

2.9.3 The Pedagogy

2.9.3.1 The Curriculum and the Syllabus

The curriculum designers seem to have some confusion about the nature and purpose of teaching poetry at the degree level. Basically, the confusion stems from the inability to identify clearly the objectives at this level, as well as the initial level of ability.

The syllabus also contains many disparities. The following points also are worth noticing— these features are noticed in the Madras-University Foundation Course syllabus: (Appendix 14)

1. For the B.A./B.Sc. Foundation course, poetry teaching is limited to just one hour a week. (Appendix 14: Methadology)
2. The B.A./B.Sc. Foundation course includes prose pieces and modern plays for non-detailed study, but, for no obvious reason, poems are not prescribed for non-detailed study.

3. The B.A/B.Sc. Foundation Course English is spread over two years. But poetry is not taught in the II year.

2.9.3.2 The Method

On the whole, today poetry is taught like any other content subject. Everything is done from the point of view of examination. The glossing of every word, the marking of passages for annotations and the taking down of hints for writing essays are the main features of poetry classes. There is no discussion or asking of questions; if at all questions are asked, they are only testing questions, and not teaching questions.

2.9.3.3 The Material:

At present, a collection of 15-20 pieces – short poems and extracts – are included for detailed study. The same selection is used for the students of science and the humanities. Both the gifted learners and the slow learners have to study these mostly in the same order in which they are printed. Neither the teacher nor the learner has any chance to choose.

2.9.3.4 The evaluation

The same type of questions as on prose pieces, are asked in the examination:

(See Appendix 14b: Question Paper Pattern for I year English):
Fixing the context of a passage and answering the question given below it in 15 words

Reading the passage and answering the question given below it in 60 words

Essay writing (250 words)

3 out of 5: 3\times 2 = 6\text{ marks}

(no choice): 1\times 4 = 4\text{ marks}

1 out of 2: 1\times 15 = 15\text{ marks}

Examinations test only memory and content; the prose-order or the literal meaning of the given passage passes for an attempt at annotating that passage; the first paragraph of the essay (that too, a 250 word;) is invariably allotted for the poet; the body of the essay is usually the summary of the poem, whatever may be the question.

In assessing the answer also, the same scale of judgment, as used for prose, is adopted. No other method of testing/grading the activity of reading a poem seems to be possible in the present set up. The following 4 point scale of assessment proposed by B.K. Das in his report included in The Syllabus Reform in English will serve as a contrast to our present system:

D: The learner has not understood the poem and this is reflected in the reading.

C: Has understood the poem, but has not thoughtfully attempted to translate this into the spoken mode.

B: Has understood the poem, has thought about its possibilities for Speech, and has succeeded in communicating them.

A: High degree of proficiency/subtlety in communicating the poem (230).
2.9.3.5 Teaching not Effectual

The following observation by S. Nagarajan in “On the Teaching of English Poetry in Colleges” summarizes the poetry teaching scene in our colleges. He says that the teaching of poetry in our colleges is not effectual:

1. The poems prescribed are not always carefully chosen.
2. Poetry is too often taught by people who have ceased to take any vital interest in it, whose tastes have become ossified.
3. There is too much teaching; it is staunchless; everything, everything is explained with ruthless thoroughness.
4. We have made poetry an examination subject; poetry becomes dull.
5. Too often, the selection is so limited in quantity and therefore also in quality, that the boys are underfed. In order to “fill” the period at his disposal, the teacher is obliged to fatigue the poem, to overtalk about it. They expect a harvest of poetry; we afflict them with a locust of cloud of explanation. (92)

2.9.4 Other Constraints

2.9.4.1 Large Classes

Large classes and combined classes often hinder the progress in poetry classes. The students of heterogeneous abilities meet together to study the same poem, and the output is not to the satisfaction of any of them whose needs are as variant as their abilities.
2.9.4.2 Classroom Atmosphere

For the teaching of poetry, as for painting, it is important to create the right atmosphere. Formality and seriousness take away the charm in teaching poetry. Discussions and group-works cannot be conducted in such an atmosphere, and in such large classes.

2.9.4.3 The Psychological Set Up

The very atmosphere of our society and the psychological attitude of the individual which constitutes this atmosphere, are not conducive to poetry teaching:

Crowded home conditions, broken or unstable homes, shoddy moral standards, entertainment that requires no efforts but blurts out its meaning in vulgar catch-phrase and cheap sensationalism, the emphasis on the visual and the habit of half-hearing, and above all, the pernicious taking for granted of new miracles as well as old — all these operate against poetry, standardizing its magic and turning life into flat prose. (Nagarajan 92)

2.10 Attempt to Change the Present Scene

2.10.1 Attempts not Fully Successful

Attempts down the years to change the present scene of teaching poetry in our colleges have not been fully successful, though it has brought about a growing awareness among the teachers and the taught that poetry cannot be taught in the same way as the
other subjects; what is essential is an interaction between the text and the reader, unlike in other subjects. Yet a mere awareness without steady and systematic response will take us nowhere.

2.10.2 The Problem at a Glance

There have been two types of responses: One has been to draw attention to the language inadequacies of the learners, and the teacher’s struggle to make the learners cope with the complex linguistic features of the text, himself not having mastered them first. Another response is to draw attention to the socio-cultural difficulties of the learner in facing a foreign literature. Both these have led to what looks surprisingly like an escape from the text, or at least an attempt in one case to postpone, in the other to minimize contact with the original text. The text also is inadequate invariably. Neil Gilroy Scott rightly points out,

It seems likely that the current emphasis on academic knowledge about texts, the dependence on critical authority, the popularity of bazaar notes, and the enthusiasm for background courses are to a great extent the result of an underlying sense of inadequacy in the face of the text. (115)

Added to that is the lack of student involvement, for which we have to find a suitable solution.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter analysis the inadequacies found in the curriculum for poetry teaching. Curriculum designers have found it necessary to include poetry in language
teaching. The researcher believes that the objectives, the selection, the classroom techniques and the evaluation system have not been properly formulated. The teacher has no control over this; yet he has to teach poetry in the language class and develop communication skill in the learner.

A remedy to this situation is suggested in Chapter III