Original Paper

Teaching of Poetry to Saudi ESL Learners: Stylistics Approach

Jameel Ahmad[1*]

[1] Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics JCC, King Abdul Aziz University Saudi Arabia

[*] Jameel Ahmad, E-mail: ahmadj69@yahoo.com

Abstract

Poetry can offer a wide range of language learning opportunities to ESL learners if it's taught interactively and linguistically. Poetry is embellished with rhythm, beautiful diction and elevated grammatical features. These features can serve as a powerful stimulus to ESL students in learning grammar, vocabulary and integrated language skills. Some of the researchers pointed out that Poetry was taught in literature class but it was predominantly a teacher centered and nothing more than a dramatic monologue, so it failed to improve students' language skills and creative analysis. The present study aims to explore how stylistics approach can be used as a powerful teaching resource to enrich grammar, vocabulary and integrated language skills of Saudi ESL learners. Four statistical surveys were conducted such as to elicit the impression of teachers and the impression & performance of Saudi students at Saudi universities. Statements pertinent to different aspects of poetry were used for major data collection. The findings marked a significant difference between the performance of stylistics based learners and traditional based learners in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and integrated language skills. Unlike traditional method, the stylistics approach for teaching poetry was found very exciting, because it was learners centered and based on repertoire of interactive language exercises. As per the findings of the four surveys conducted in this study, the stylistics approach for teaching poetry in ESL classroom was perceived by both Saudi teachers and students as an enjoyable means to enrich and energize the learning environment of an ESL classroom.

Keywords

poetry, motivation, resource, language skills, literary expression, rhythmic tone

1. Introduction

The present study aims to explore how various tools of linguistic analysis can be used to teach poetry to ESL learners in order to improve their proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, accent, intonation and integrated language skills. The chunks of language used in poetry are full of emotional and linguistic melody. They can give readers not only a strong feel about language but can also serve as a rich linguistic tool to improve language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Poetry has musical effect, so it can provide motivational buzz to classroom activity. Learners can acquire correct

pronunciation, intonation and rhyming patterns by listening to poems either on YouTube or read by the competent and well trained teachers of English. Poetry can add vigor to the process of learning new thoughts and beautiful diction, because the poet deliberately chooses words and their sound effects while composing poetry such as *'The furrow followed free' and 'We were the first that ever burst into that silent sea'* are examples of careful choice of words and their profound effect on readers. These poetic words create a charm of their own. The learners can really enjoy the linguistic beauty of these sentences. In '*the double beat of thundering'* one can easily see why these words and these words only were chosen and arranged in that order. The poet communicates from heart to heart by figurative and poetic expression. '*Was there a second Troy for her to burn?*' is an example of the classic symbol of Troy being used for a particular effect. While teaching poetry teachers can make students realize the value of linguistic devices that a poet uses. Poetry can nurture in learners robust sensibility and strong feel about choice of words, syntactical formulation, rhetorical and aesthetic beauty of language. It makes learners learn beautiful similes, metaphors and paradox that express unique thoughts and emotions of a poet. So by reading poetry learners can rejoice in intrinsic beauty of poetic words, their sound, meanings and their profound poetic effect. They not only learn symbolic and literary language used in the poem but they also feel inspired to add the same literary and rhetorical flavor in their own writing. Most of the tried and tested activities such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar can also be effectively taught by introducing stylistics based instructional approach to poetry. Textual or stylistics based approach means close reading of the poem without any biographical and sociological details about the poet. The major focus is on the poem itself which means discussion on key individual words and beautiful structure prior to reading of poetry. Such a deep textual analysis propounded by Cleanth Brooks will open a fresh perspective on new ideas and language and sensitizes students to unusual and interesting lexical and syntactical components of poetic language. Stylistics approach for teaching poetry will encourage students to learn syntactic, semantic, rhythmic and lexical components.

1.1 Literature Review

Lots of profound researches done earlier consolidated the hypothesis of the present study. The researchers were of the view that meaningful learning of language skills would take place if poetry was chosen carefully and taught properly in ESL classroom. According to Maley and Duff (1989) "poetry offers a rich resource for language learning. A poem offers a readymade semantic field for learners to enter". Benton, M., & Fox, G. (1987) affirmed "the main objective of using poetry in language lessons is to find a means of involving the learners in using their language skills in an active and creative way and thus to contribute to the development of their communicative competence". Moore, (2002) was of the view that in-depth reading and close analysis of text in pairs or other small groupings, can make poetry an integral part of the EFL classroom. "As with other poetic forms, pattern poems can promote a number of positive learning functions" (Holmes & Moulton, 2001). According to Spillett, Andrea (2008) "an ELL teacher who blogs for Scholastic, describes a program in which students presented poems

124

from Chicken Soup with Rice by Maurice Sendak, to their parents". Rebecca Scudder, (2012) an ESL teacher recommended using poetry with "predictable language patterns, repeated words, phrases, lines, and identifiable rhymes" so that they are easier for students to read. McCarthy, Carol (2009) offered "a number of ideas for guiding students in their exploration of poetry from their own cultures". According to Hughes, (2007) "poetry offers wonderful opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, and listening practice for ELLs." Poetry also gives students a chance to expand vocabulary knowledge, to play with language, and to work with different rhythms". According to Vincent (1979) traditional method for teaching poetry was an impressionistic and teacher centered and never favors stylistics model of teaching poetry. Inyang, G. B. (2009) was also against traditional method of teaching poetry and endorsed stylistics based teaching method. According to him traditional teacher "dazzled the innocent students with his erudition on the sociology of the poem and figures of speech". According to Dagoli (2000) "traditional method does not promote learning skills because traditional method was a teacher-centered where learners learned by rote memory, concepts and principles". "An integrated and communicative teaching approach incorporating a set of text-based, student-centered activities which, as Collie and Slater (1987) suggest, add fresh momentum into the teaching of literature by stimulating students' desire to read and reflect their experiences." Samuel Taylor Coleridge's notion about poetry as something like 'the best words in the best order' substantiates the point that poetry can give a strong feel about language. The aforesaid views of researchers discarded traditional method of teaching poetry but substantiated the idea of introducing stylistics based approach for teaching poetry in ESL classroom.

While reviewing a number of surveys dealing with the use of poetry in EFL/ESL situations, some adverse impressions that students expressed towards learning poetry were also found. Hirvela and Boyle (1988) reported "only 6% of the Hong Kong Chinese students who were involved in the survey favored poetry more than other literary genres and 73% of them found poetry the most difficult and intimidating literary form". American structural linguist, Spack, (1985) argued that "literature should be excluded from the ESL curriculum because of its structural complexity, lack of conformity to standard grammatical rules and remote cultural perspectives". All these negative attitudes emerged out of teacher's own deeply wrought unhappiness with verse and their traditional teaching methodology such as lecturing and paraphrasing. Brumfit and Carter (1986), Duff and Maley (1989), Lazar (1993), Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) Concluded that the major reasons of students' failure in understanding and appreciating English poetry are either an inappropriate selection of texts or ineffective teaching methodology. Khatib (2011) also pointed out that 'poetry failed due to inappropriate selection of the texts and ineffective teaching methodology'. According to Arthur (1968) students show their aversion to literature because teachers ignore students' response and their private exchange with the literary text. He further pointed out that "if literature is to become a successful part of an ESL programme, ways must be found to make literature both useful and enjoyable". All the previous researchers illustrated the fact that traditional method of teaching poetry failed to produce

desired results. The teachers of traditional methods used to explain just the theme of the poem and the sociological information about the poet. The stylistics based and communicative based approaches had never been taken into account while teaching poetry. Traditional method never aimed to improve learners' vocabulary, grammar pronunciation and integrated language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

The research hypotheses formulated about the current research are as follows:

(1) Poetry if chosen carefully may be an immense source of motivation for ESL learners.

(2) Using poetry to teach English will increase learners' exciting learning experience.

(3) Teaching of poetry with linguistic devices and communicative approach will be extremely exciting for both teachers and the students.

(4) Carefully chosen poems may provide deep insight into literary expression.

(5) Learners' efforts to analyze poems will increase their creative talents.

(6) There will be a significant difference between the performance of traditional learners and Stylistics based learners in learning accent, grammar, vocabulary and integrated language skills.

2. Methods

Four surveys were conducted at Saudi universities and colleges to explore how far the stylistics approach would be effective in learning, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and integrated language skills. First and foremost a Shakespearean sonnet '***Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?***' was selected. Then a stylistics based model was built on repertoire of language exercises such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary.(Pls. refer to model in appendix). This model was introduced to 100 teachers who were teaching English literature and linguistics at different Saudi Colleges and universities. The model was explained to the teachers and the teachers were asked to use the same model in their ESL classes. Five statements about poetry were prepared to elicit the impression of the teachers after they experimented the given model in ESL classes .The teachers were asked to check ***Agree, Disagree, I can't say,*** against the above mentioned five statements.(Pls. refer to Fig.1)

The purpose of the second survey was to determine the relative effectiveness of traditional method (Group A) and stylistics based approach (Group B) for teaching poetry in learning pronunciation. 100 students (50 for each group) from Saudi universities and colleges were selected for this experiment. Under traditional method teachers just explained and paraphrased the background information and the theme of the poem. On the contrary, stylistics based model was used. This model incorporated observation, marking difference, drill practice and individual practice followed by evaluation. Through this model the teachers were first assigned to listen and observe how well the students were able to produce accurate accent, intonation and rhythm of the poem. Afterwards the students were asked to listen to the poem either on YouTube or read by the competent teacher of English, so that they could

126

explore their own levels of performance in pronunciation. While performing drill the students were asked to read the poem first in chorus and then individually for ten minutes. After one weak a similar test was given to both the groups to evaluate the performance of each student of both groups. Each student of both groups was asked to read the poem aloud with good accentual and intonation patterns. This test was aimed just to explore the effectiveness of linguistic based approach in learning correct pronunciation and rhythm of the poem. (Pls. refer to fig2)

The third survey was aimed to investigate the performance of both the groups in learning grammar, vocabulary and speaking and writing skills. The stylistics based approach included vocabulary exercises based on matching words with meaning. It was aimed to sharpen students' ability to guess the meaning through context. Grammar exercise was based on the formation of comparative adjectives and formation of nouns. This grammar exercise was relevant to the understanding of the poem. The test of Speaking skill was based on Group Discussion about the theme, form, style, similes, metaphors and rhyming scheme of the poem. The students participated in the group discussion. This was a golden opportunity for the students to speak without hesitation and to improve their speaking skill. The test for writing skill was focused on writing small sentences concerning different aspects of the poem such as theme, figure of speech, similes, metaphors and rhythm of the poem. After one week similar stylistics based test was given to the students of both the groups. The time given was one hour and the correct answer to each item received one point. There was no penalty for false responses. The students of both groups were initially told that they would take part in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary and grammar activities.

The fourth survey was carried to explore what the students of stylistics based group really thought about different aspects of poetry. It was necessary to elicit students' attitude towards poetry after they experienced stylistics based model for teaching poetry. To find out whether the learners really enjoyed this stylistics based approach was the major thrust of this survey. This was the first time the students were exposed to English poetry with such an effective model in ESL classroom. In this survey the students were asked to check *Agree, Strongly agree and Disagree* against four statements on different aspects of poetry.

3. Result & Discussion

To introduce poetry in ESL classes at Saudi universities has always been considered as a taboo. It has never been tried and incorporated in ESL curriculum. But the findings of these surveys showed that students who were taught poetry with stylistics-technique achieved and retained better than students taught with traditional method. The old fashioned methodology for teaching poetry was lecture oriented. To explain the meaning of the poem and to explain background information about the poet were just the thrust of the focus in the past. But now the paradigm has changed. With the dawn of the applied linguistics, linguistic tools for teaching poetry were introduced and they were found very exciting for the learners. The result of each survey was found really interesting and worth noticing. Teaching of

127

poetry with linguistic and communicative devices was found very exciting and productive for Saudi learners. The overwhelming response of both teachers and students were really encouraging. The students and teachers both enjoyed stylistics and communicative based approaches for teaching poetry in ESL class.

Table 1. Teachers' Impression on Poetry

| Statements	Agree	Disagree	I can't say
(1) Poetry if chosen carefully may be an immense source of motivation for ESL learners.	90%	5%	5%
(2) Using poetry for teaching English will increase learners' exciting learning experience.	95 %	0 %	5 %
(3)Teaching of Poetry based on language activities will improve language skills.	90 %	5%	5%
(4) Carefully chosen poems may provide deep insight into literary expression.	80 %	5%	15 %
(5) Learners' efforts to analyze poems will increase their creative talents.	90 %	5 %	5%
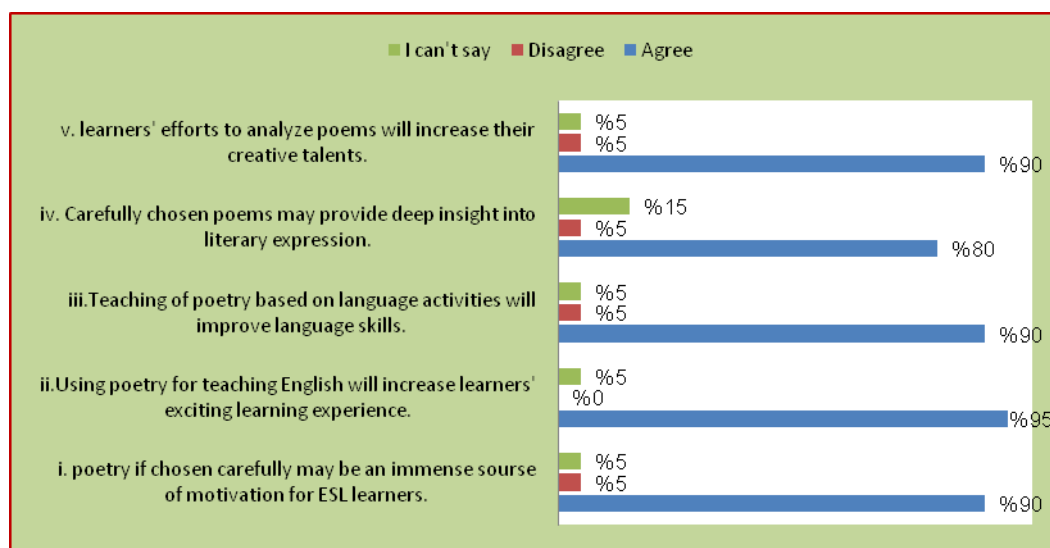
Figure 1. Teachers' impression about poetry

The first survey in Figure 1 was conducted on teachers who were teaching English to graduate students at different Saudi colleges and universities. First the teachers were introduced to the stylistics based model for teaching poetry in ESL class. The teachers experimented this model in their ESL classes and later on gave their responses to different statements pertinent to the use of poetry in ESL classes. The

128

overwhelming majority of the teachers found this stylistics based model for teaching poetry very exciting and productive. In response to the first statement 90% teachers agreed that poetry if chosen carefully would be an immense source of motivation. They opined that poetry containing current theme with rich linguistic elements would really give pleasure and inspire learners. "This was a new idea to use stylistics approach for teaching poetry" said one of the teachers. "Poetry which was just explained to me by the teacher when I was a student 40 years ago was very boring" said another elderly teacher. One British teacher expressed that using linguistic tools for teaching poetry will equip learners with language skills. In response to the second statement 95% teachers were of the view that poetry would provide learners with exciting learning experience. In response to the third statement 90% teachers agreed that teaching of poetry based on language activities would improve language skills. The model for teaching poetry which was provided to the teachers was skills oriented. So the teachers while applying the same model in the classroom perceived that model as an important resource for teaching language skills. In response to the fourth statement 80% teachers strongly supported the idea that carefully chosen poems might provide deep insight into literary expression. In response to the fifth statement 90 % learners agreed that the learners' efforts to analyze the poem linguistically would increase their creative potential. Linguistic based method for teaching poetry was hailed as an important pedagogical tool in such a country like Saudi Arabia where poetry has never been tried and incorporated in ESL curriculum. The majority of the teachers agreed that stylistics approach for teaching poetry would not only improve language skills but it would inspire learners immensely.

The second survey was conducted to ascertain the performance of the students of both groups in accent, intonation and pronunciation. The aim was to evaluate learners' ability to read the poem with accurate accentual and intonation patterns.

Table 2. Traditional Approach (T-Approach) vs. Stylistics Approach (S-Approach) for Teaching Poetry

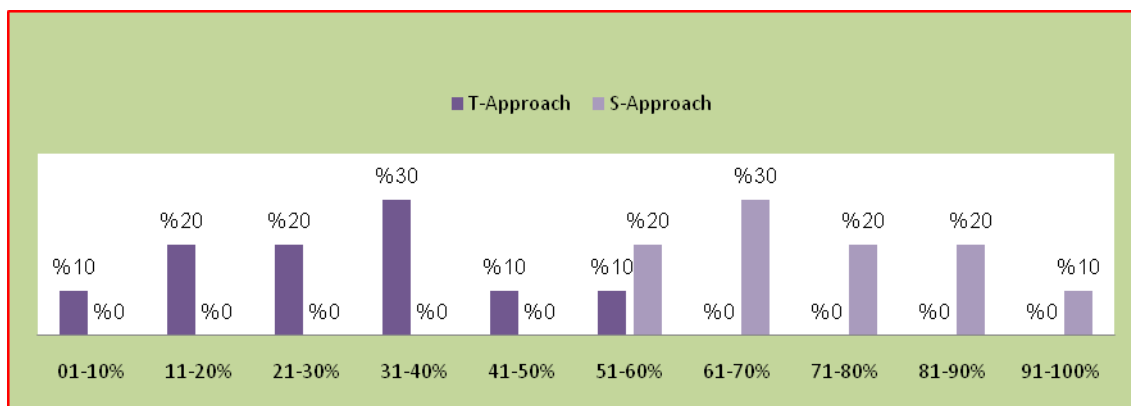| Percentage of Marks	Traditional Approach	Stylistics Approach
0 to 10	10%	0 %
11 to 20	20 %	0 %
21 to 30	20 %	0 %
31 to 40	30%	0 %
41 to 50	10 %	0 %
51 to 60	10 %	20 %
61 to 70	0%	30 %
71 to 80	0%	20 %
81 to 90	0 %	20 %
91 to 100	0 %	10 %

Figure 2. Traditional Approach Vs Stylistitcs Approach for Teaching Poerty

The Figure 2 investigated the performances of both groups. The performance of the students of traditional approach was very poor. The majority of the students were unable to read the poem with proper accentual and intonation patterns. None of the students of traditional approach were 100% correct in pronunciation. The performance of only 10% students was 60% correct. The performance of just 30% students of this group went up to just 40%. So overall performance of the students of traditional approach was below the average. On the contrary the performance of the students of stylistics approach improved. In stylistics approach the improvement was possible after the students listened to their teachers when they were reading the poem aloud with correct accent, intonation and rhythm. At this point the teacher explained the accentual patterns of difficult words, intonation and rhythm of the poem. Traditional learners were given no opportunity to practice pronunciation, so they pronounced wrongly the following words:(1) winds /wɪnds/ (2) bʌds /bʌds/ (3) lease /li:z/ (4) brag /breg/ (5) breathe/bri:θ/ (6) breath / bri:θ / (7) May /maɪ/ (8) possession /peəzezʃ(ə)n/ (9) all /a:l/ (10) compare /ˈkəmpeə(r)/ (11) temperate /temˈp(ə)rət/ (12) short /ʃa:(r)t/ (13) haven /ˈhæv(ə)n/. Traditional learners didn't have any idea about how to pronounce a plural like **winds and buds.** They pronounce /s/ sound instead of **/z/.** As per rule /s/ is pronounced /z/ when it comes after voiced sound like /d/. On the contrary the learners of stylistics approach pronouncednearly all the aforesaid words correctly. Since they were given opportunity to listen to the teachers when they were reading the poem with correct pronunciation. They pronounce the words with proper stress and knew well how to pronounce a plural which ends with voiced sound. For example (1) winds/windz/ (2) buds/bʌdz/ (3) lease /li:s/ (4) brag /bræg/(5) breathe /bri:ð/ (6) breath /breθ/ (7) May /meɪ/ (8) possession /pəˈzeʃ(ə)n/ (9) all /ɔ:l/(10) compare /kəmˈpeə(r)/ (11) temperate /ˈtemp(ə)rət/ (12) short /ʃɔ:(r)t/ (13) heaven /ˈhev(ə)n/.

The students of Stylistics approach also practiced reading through drill patterns. As a result 10% students were found 100% correct while reading the poem correctly. 20% students obtained 90% of marks and another 20% students obtained 80% marks. 30% students of Stylistics approach obtained 70% marks. None of the students of this group obtained less than 50% marks .Whereas none of the students of traditional approach had obtained more than 60 % marks. Based on the performance of the

130

students of Stylistics Approach it can be deduced that Stylistics approach for teaching poetry was quite successful. Reading a text properly was a big challenge for Saudi students, because they started learning English at the later age. With Stylistics approach the students were asked to repeat the words chorally and individually. So through group drill exercise the students of S-approach were able to read the poem with more accuracy.

The third survey was designed to measure the efficiency of the students of both groups in grammar, vocabulary, speaking and writing.

Table 3.

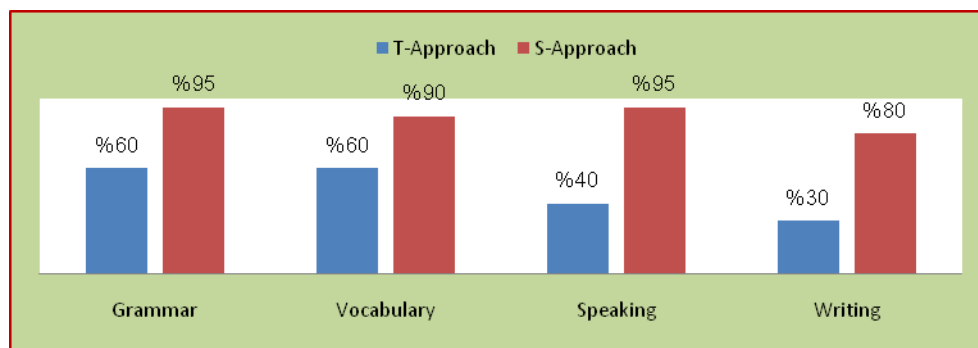|	Grammar	Vocabulary	Speaking	Writing
Traditional Approach	60%	60%	40%	30%
Stylistics Approach	95%	90%	95 %	80%

Figure 3. Traditional Appproach Vs Stylistics Approach

Figure 3 illustrated the relative performance of both groups. The Stylistics approach motivated the students to analyze the poem with linguistic tools. This was a holistic approach which helped learners learn vocabulary, grammar and integrated language skills. They actively participated in learning language skills through language activities. The performance of the students of Stylistics model was found remarkably better than those of traditional approach. 95 % students of Stylistics approach made correct responses in grammar. Not only in grammar but in vocabulary 90% students made correct responses. In speaking skill the performance of S-approach was found outstanding. 90 % students of this group communicated their answer properly. In writing skill also 90% students of Stylistics approach were able to produce grammatically correct sentences. Whereas the score of the students of traditional group was found abysmally bad. Their performance wasn't satisfactory. Only 60% students of traditional approach made correct responses in grammar and vocabulary. The performance of only 40% students of T-Approach was found satisfactory in speaking and only 30% in writing skill. A significant difference was found between the performances of both groups. This survey was also an eye

131

opener. The performance of students of T-approach in speaking and writing skills was poor but the students of S-approach significantly improved. Traditional approach for teaching poetry didn't encourage students to build up the habit for speaking and writing skills. Saudi students started learning English at the later stage. They found speaking and writing very difficult. So traditional approach for teaching poetry didn't break much ice. But the application of Stylistics approach for teaching poetry was found better in improving learners' accent, vocabulary, grammar and integrated language skills.

The interpretation of any poem depends on reader's own perception. It's possible that the poem means different to different people. But one thing really seems true that poetry gives food for new thoughts. It's difficult to find what exactly happened to poet's mind but it isn't impossible to explore the possible meaning of poem through linguistic analysis. When the sonnet *"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* Was introduced to the students, they read it and posed many thematic and conceptual questions. For example :(i) Why does the poet compare his friend with summer's day? (ii) How does the poet make his friend eternal? (iii) Does the poet glorify his own verse? (iv) What grammatical and lexical devices the poet has used in his poem to convey his message strongly?

These questions encouraged ESL learners to make deeper stylistics analysis of the poem. On the basis of this analysis the students came to know that the poet had used interrogative form as one of the rhetorical devices such as "*Shall I compare thee to a summer's* **day?** in the first line. The poet appreciated moderate trait of his friend and wanted to convey that summer's day might be excessively hot or humid but his friend is consistently balanced. Students appreciated such a nice poetic diction that expressed a unique style of appreciating beauty. Four meanings of the word *'lease'* were derived from dictionary, such as (i) A contract by which property is conveyed to a person for a specified period, usually for rent. (ii) The instrument by which such property is conveyed. (iii) Duration or the period of time for which it is conveyed. (iv) A prospect of renewed health, happiness, etc. a new lease of life.

The students considered '*duration or the period of time* 'the most befitting meaning of the word *'lease'*. Such lexical analysis was enjoyed by the whole class. The poet further says that for every beautiful person or thing, there is a certain time at which it loses its beauty but his friend's beauty will be eternal in his verse. The ESL learners found the last two lines the most beautiful expression that glorifies both the poet's love and his verse.

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,

So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

The poet expressed hope that his verses will last until the end of humanity – "*so long as men can breathe.*" When Shakespeare penned these lines, it might have seemed quite arrogant to presume such endurance for a poem. Yet now, as we read this poem about four hundred years since its origin, it seems unthinkable that this poem would be lost. The poet used simple words in the last two lines but the way he glorifies his love and his verse is really superb.

The fourth survey was aimed to elicit the impression of the students about stylistics approach for teaching poetry. It was necessary to find out what the students really thought about this approach for

132

teaching poetry. This stylistics approach was totally learners centered. The students underwent intensive reading, guessing and active learning process.

Table 4. Impression of Students on Poetry

Statements	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree
i. Poetry with musical tone creates excitements for learning.	5%	90%	5 %
ii. Teaching poetry with linguistic inputs encourages learners to learn vocabulary and grammar besides the theme of the poem.	10%	85%	05%
iii. Open discussion on theme, form, style, similes, and metaphors was found very useful to improve speaking skill.	5%	90%	5 %
iv. The task for writing small sentence was found interesting.	0 %	95%	5%
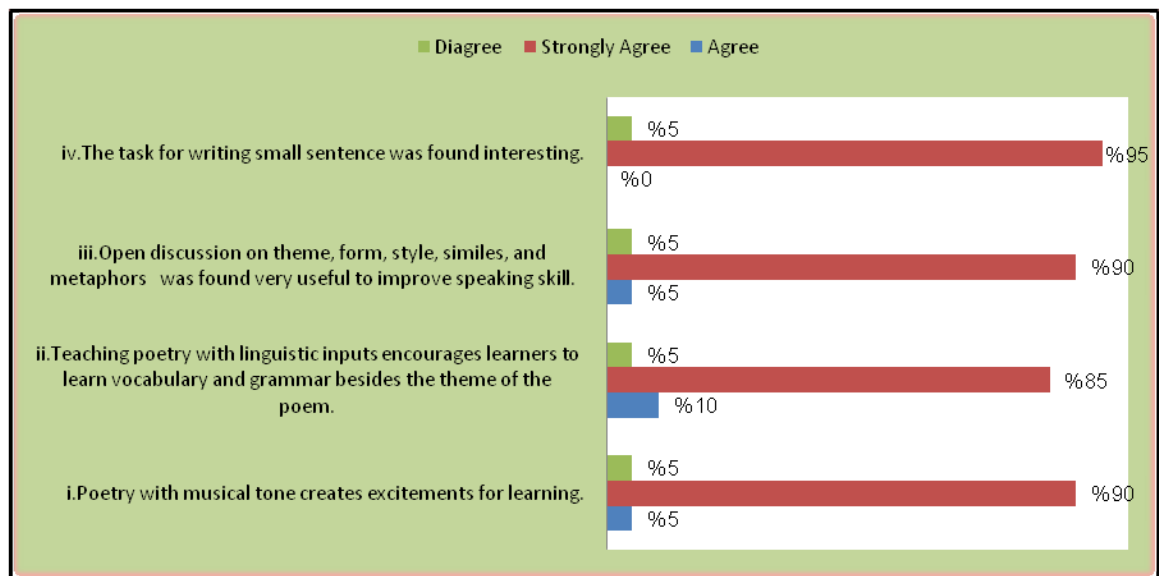
Figure 4. Impression of students on poetry

The result of Figure 4 was found very interesting and encouraging. The overwhelming majority of the students strongly agreed that poetry could be used for teaching integrated language skills. In response to the first statement 90 % students agreed that poetry with musical tone creates enough excitement for learning. In response to the second statement, 85% students strongly supported the idea that teaching of poetry with linguistic inputs would encourage learners to learn not only the theme of the poem but vocabulary and grammar as well. In response to the third statement 90 % students strongly supported open discussion on various intrinsic beauty of the poem. 95 % students found writing small sentences on theme, form, style, similes and metaphors very exciting and productive.

4. Conclusion

The four surveys conducted in this study revealed that the stylistics approach for teaching poetry which was based on a wide variety of linguistic activities was found very useful for both teachers and students of Saudi universities. This model unlike paraphrasing poem was learners centered. Learners were encouraged to analyze the poem linguistically such as grammatical features, lexical features, phonological features, and graphological features .This model created enough motivation and opportunity for learners to delve deep in learning process. To promote learners centered instruction, such a thought provoking, enjoyable and meaningful language activities were planned. The surveys proved that stylistics approach for teaching poetry will be an important resource for teaching integrated language skills. Students developed a favorable response to poetry by practicing linguistic exercises on grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and speaking activities. 95 % students strongly supported stylistics model for teaching poetry in ESL classes, because this was found learners centered and skills oriented. The learners became active participants expressing their own views, writing small sentences and doing language exercises. This new approach to teaching poetry yielded significantly better results in motivating the students to read the poem meticulously and improve language skills. The performance of 90% students of Stylistics approach was found better and satisfactory in grammar, vocabulary, speaking and writing skills. In fact they were given ample chance to improve their skills. Whereas the score of the students of traditional group needs special attention. Their performance wasn't satisfactory. Only 60% students of traditional approach made correct responses in grammar and vocabulary. The performance of only 40% students of T-Approach was found satisfactory in speaking and only 30% in writing skill. T-Approach was teacher centered and it was found very boring and hence abysmally failed due to lack of language activities, wrong selection of poem and ineffective teaching methodology. On the contrary, teachers of English who used Stylistics approach in ESL classes were found convinced and satisfied with stylistics approach. Around 95% teachers strongly supported the use of Stylistics approach in ESL classes. They agreed that teaching of poetry based on language activities would improve language skills. They applied the same model in the classroom and perceived that model as an important resource for teaching language skills. 80% teachers strongly supported the idea that carefully chosen poems might provide deep insight into literary expression. Based on the findings of four surveys conducted in this study it can be deduced that poetry can be used as a great tool to improve language skills if language based activities are incorporated and teaching of poetry turns into learners centered.

The present study has certain limitation with regard to the statistical surveys. The surveys of this study were conducted only on teachers and graduate students of Saudi universities. There is a need to conduct such surveys on primary, secondary and higher secondary students. This may lead to some more profound results which may be useful for researchers and curriculum designers to rethink and incorporate poetry in ESL classes.

References

Arthur, B. (1968). Reading literature and learning a second language. *Language Learning, 18*(3-4), 199-210.

Benton, M., & Fox, G. (1987). What Happens When We Read Poems. In V. J. Lee (Ed.), *English Literature in Schools*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Brumfit, C. J., & Carter, R. A. (1986). *Literature and Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the Language Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

Dagoli, A. J. (2000). The effect of teaching methods on students' achievement in geometry. *Journal of Educational Studies, 4*, 81.

Duff, A., & Maley, A. (1989). *The Inward Ear*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hirvela, A. & Boyle, J. (1988). Literature courses and student attitudes. *ELT Journal, 42*(3).

Holmes, V. L., & Moulton, M. R. (2001). Writing Simple Poems: Pattern Poetry for Language Acquisition. In *Cambridge handbook for Language teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

Hughes, J. (2007). Poetry: A powerful medium for literacy and technology development (What Works? Research into Practice. Research Monograph #7). Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Hughes.pdf

Inyang, G. B. (2009). Linguistic – Stylistic Technique and the Effective Teaching and Learning of Poetry in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools. *African Research Review, An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Ethiopia, 3*(2).

Khatib, M. (2011). A New Approach to Teaching English Poetry to EFL Students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 2*(1), 164-169.

Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and Language Teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maley, A., & Duff, A. (1989). *The Inward Ear.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, C. (2009). Poetry in translation. *Lesson Plan published by the Academy of American Poets.* Retrieved from http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/17106

Moore, J. N. (2002). Practicing Poetry: Teaching To Learn and Learning To Teach. *English Journal, 91*(3), 44-50.

Parkinson, B., & Thomas, H. R. (2000). *Teaching Literature in a Second Language.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Rebecca, S. (2012). *Utilizing poetry as an ESL teaching tool and resource.* Retrieved from http://www.brighthub.com/education/languages/articles/7143.aspx

Spack, R. (1985). Literature, Reading, Writing and ESL: Bridging the Gaps. *TESOL Quarterly, 19*(4).

Spillette, A. (2008). *Celebrate Poetry Month with Your English Language Learners.* Retrieved from http://communityto.scholastic.com/scholastic/blog/article?blog.id=ELL_strategies&message.id=54

Vincent, T. (1979). The teaching of modern African poetry. In E. Ubahakwe (Ed.), *The teaching of English studies.* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Appendix

Stylistics Approach for teaching poetry

Shakespearean Sonnet

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;

Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou growest;

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Stylistics Approach for Teaching Poetry

(Section -A) Listening Skill:

1. **Observation:** Teacher should ask students to read the poem aloud and listen to what and how they read.

2. **To mark difference:** Students should listen to the poem either on YouTube or read by the teacher with good accent, intonation and rhythm and mark the difference.

3. **Drill Practice:** Students should read the poem in chorus (drill).

4. **Individual Practice:** Each student should practice reading for ten minutes with low or medium loud tone.

5. **Evaluation: Teacher** should ask each student to read the poem aloud with good accentual and intonation patterns and mark **Good , better, best .** such as

Name of Student: ----------------------------- ----------Class---------------

good ---------------- better-------------------- Best-------------------

(Section B) Vocabulary: Match the words with their meanings.

Words		Meaning in English	
(1)	compare	a.	duration or period of time
(2)	temperate	b.	the appearance of the skin on someone's face
(3)	lease	c.	Becomes less in quantity
(4)	complexion	d.	To say something in a proud way
(5)	decline	e.	Which never changes
(6)	untrimmed	f.	self-controlled, balanced , moderate
(7)	brag	g.	Which is not cut
(8)	eternal	h.	To consider how things or people are similar or different.

(Section C) Grammar Focus. A: Match the words with their meanings.

Change the following Words into nouns	
9. Compare	
10. breathe	
11. fair	
12. Golden	
13. Eternal	
14. Grow	
15. short	
16. windy	

Grammar Focus. B: Use Comparative degree of the adjectives in the brackets.

(17) The poet's friend is -------------------------------- than summer's day. (moderate)

(18) Summer's days are -------------------------------- than those of his friend. (short)

(19) The poet glorifies his sonnet saying that this sonnet is ----------------------than death. (might)

(20) The sun is --------------------- in summer than in winter. (hot)

(21) The gold complexion of sun is ----------------------- in evening than in the afternoon.(blurred)

(Section-D) Speaking skill: Group Discussion: Students will ask questions to each other about the theme, form, style, similes, metaphors and rhyming scheme of the poem.

(Section-E) Writing Skill: The students will be asked to write small sentences on the following subjects:

Subject Matter: What is the poem about?

What is the main idea of the poem? Is there more than one idea?

Question about the form of the poem.

What form has the poem been written in? Is there a definite rhyme scheme? What is the rhythmic structure?

Question about the style of the poem.

What does the poet's choice of words tell you about the meaning? Write Important Words & Phrases. Such as: Figures of Speech and Sounds of Words:

Personal Impression:

Do you like the poem?

Why do you like the poem?