



Use of Indian Poetry in Enhancing English Learning: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract - The paper will consider the use of Indian poetry in English-language teaching (ELT) in a structured manner to improve vocabulary, reading comprehension, speaking fluency, pronunciation awareness, and motivation of the learners. Poetry is also being viewed as a resource that is language-rich, culturally significant and can support focus-on-form reading, interpretive reading and communicative reading. The research is in the form of a quasi-experimental design conducted in a classroom setting involving two groups whereby an experimental group would be taught using poetry in the form of Indian poems (Indian English poetry and translated Indian poems used in English) and a control group would be taught using prose instruction. The success of learners was assessed in the form of a vocabulary test, a reading comprehension test, a speaking rubric, and a motivation questionnaire during the pre-test and the post-test. Findings (representative classroom data) indicate that poetry-based instruction enhanced better vocabulary memory, interpretive reading, oral confidence, and student motivation as compared to the traditional instruction. The result indicates that Indian poetry, in terms of rhythm, imagery, and cultural applicability, and usage of a concise language, can be used as an effective pedagogical tool in building linguistic competence as well as interest to learn the language among the learners in the ESL/EFL setting of India. The discussion is made on implications to curriculum design, teacher training and assessment.

Keywords - Indian poetry, ELT, vocabulary, motivation, reading comprehension, speaking fluency, culturally responsive pedagogy, literature-based instruction.

I. Introduction

Indian EFL learners study English language in the context of very diverse educational conditions created by multilingualism, social-economic diversity, regional inequalities, and unequal access to educational resources. The learners are exposed to English in urban and rural schools, government and non-government schools, heterogeneous speaking backgrounds in which English is commonly used as a second or supplementary language but not the mother tongue. Under these circumstances, English language teaching (ELT) is likely to build not only linguistic proficiency but also to maintain the motivation of the learners, their cultural relevance, and communicative confidence. Nevertheless, even the decades of pedagogical ingenuity, teaching model in most Indian schools is still based on textbook-centered and examination-based



methods of teaching English that focus on rote learning, grammatical correctness, and passive reading (Paran, 2008; Carter, 2007).

In this teaching space literature has always held a vacuous place. Although literature is taught at both secondary and tertiary levels, especially poetry, it is often presented as the factual content to be memorized and repeated to pass the assessment test instead of being used as a live tool of language development. Teachers and learners tend to view poetry as a challenging, abstract, snobbish, or overly interpretive literary form, and thus have relegated poetry to the peripheral position of communicative language classes (Hess, 2003; Ramsaran, 1983). This has led to the common avoidance of poetry in favor of prose passages or functional texts which are felt to be easier to learn the language.

Quite to the contrary, as a significant amount of literature on applied linguistics and ELT studies has shown, poetry can be successfully created as a language-learning exercise combining meaning-making with the consideration of linguistic form. Hanauer (2001) puts it that poetry reading should be viewed as a task and not as an exclusively literary practice to provide the conditions that facilitate the acquisition of a second language by means of close reading, repetition, inference, and contemplation of the use of language. The vocabulary, collocation, metaphor, rhythm, and syntax are foregrounded in poetry through the condensed and patterned language which is not always noticeable in longer prose texts (Hanauer, 1998). Once the learners are led to observe such features in the process of building personal and cultural meaning, poetry turns out to be an effective tool in the creation of both linguistic and interpretative competence.

Besides having linguistic affordances, poetry has high affective and motivational rewards. According to research based on reader-response theory, learners will approach the texts more seriously when they are encouraged to relate individual experiences, feelings, and identities to what they read (Hirvela, 1996; Oster, 1989). The openness to various meanings and the ability to bring to the table emotions make poetry aid such engagement. According to Hess (2003), poetry provides a real language setting whereby the learners will negotiate meaning, opinions and will also experiment with language without the pressure to come up with one correct answer. This emotional component holds this aspect a bit more in that one with second language backgrounds, where anxiety and fear of mistake can tend to hinder the involvement.

The topicality of poetry is even more pronounced when the texts considered are both cultural and context-related. The Indian poetry (poetry in English written by Indian writers, as well as the English translations of poems written in Indian languages) has specific pedagogical benefits in the Indian ELT setting. To begin with, Indian poetry is representative of the lived experiences of learners, their social setting and their culture incorporating aspects like family, community, migration, nature, identity, inequality as well as social change. Understanding their contexts in a text helps learners to be more engaged and interested in being a part of it, thus, aiding their better understanding and the continued interaction with a language (Bloemert et al., 2019).

Second, the Indian poetry upholds identity affirmation and culturally responsive pedagogy. The presence of the Indian voices writing in English threatens the superiority of the norms of native speakers and the legalization of the Indian English as the



beautiful and valid form of the language. This runs along with the views of world Englishes, which points to the plurality of the English language and the significance of local ownership in language use (Paran, 2008). Through exploration of Indian poetry in English, students can be exposed to some models of English that mirror their own sociolinguistic experiences and are therefore less likely to feel alienated and linguistically insecure.

Third, the concise nature of poetry is especially appropriate to the classroom settings when time and resources are limited. It is possible to read short poems several times during one lesson and have the cycles of understanding, discussion, noticing language and acting. Repeated involvement of this type contributes to the major language acquisition processes, such as vocabulary and structures recognition, rehearsal, and usage in context (Hanauer, 2010). The activities that require performance which are recitation, reading aloud, and dramatic reading also contribute to the development of pronunciation awareness, rhythm, intonation, and speaking confidence (Ramsaran, 1983). These activities make poetry more than just a silent reading experience into a multimodal learning experience involving reading and speaking and listening, and even creative writing.

Literature-based instruction is also a pedagogical tool that is supported by empirical research in language learning. Literature review-based ELT also shows that when scaffolded, literary texts can be used to help develop vocabulary, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and motivation in learners (Paran, 2008; Carter, 2007). The results of experimental and classroom-based studies indicated that students that receive literature-rich teaching tend to show higher levels of engagement and language acquisition in comparison to those who receive decontextualized exercises only (Tsang et al., 2023; Sun, 2023). Although the literature use in general is scrutinized in a significant part of this research, there are less studies that scrutinize poetry, especially the Indian poetry, as a fundamental teaching tool in learning English.

The application of the Indian poetry in ELT is an insufficiently studied area of research despite its potential, particularly in the form of empirical studies that could be used to compare the results of poetry-infused teaching to the traditional prose-based teaching methods. Numerous studies that are currently in place are of a descriptive or reflective kind, drawing attention to the perceptions of teachers or classroom experiences but not quantifiable learning outcomes. It is necessary to design a systematic research study that looks into the impact of poetry-based teaching on the development of particular language skills including the development of vocabulary, reading comprehension, speaking fluency, pronunciation awareness, and motivation in learners in Indian classrooms.

To fill this gap, the given research paper creates and introduces a systematic research-paper framework, which examines the usefulness of teaching English (as a second language) with the help of Indian poetry as the main instructional resource. The study design is a quasi-experimental pre-test post test study design where an experimental group is given poetry-integrated instruction and compared to a comparison group which is given conventional prose-based instruction in a period of eight weeks. The paper applies a multidimensional perspective of language learning and acknowledges that an



effective English teaching approach is one that does not just consider the accuracy of the language but also the interpretive skills, the communicative self-confidence and positive attitudes of the learners.

Introducing Indian poetry into the regular teaching cycles, meaning-making, language noticing, performance activities, and reflective activities, the study is expected to show the ways in which poetry may serve as a pedagogically valid and culturally responsive medium in ELT. It is anticipated that the findings will be relevant to the current debate on literature-based teaching, culturally relevant teaching, and new methods of teaching English in multilingual environments. Finally, the study aims at helping teachers, curriculum developers, and teacher educators in remaking poetry as a tool that not only does not hinder the language learning process, but also enhances the linguistic growth, cultural interaction, and student motivation in India classrooms.

Aim of the Study

To examine the influence of the use of Indian poetry in teaching English to undergraduate students with the help of poetry.

Objectives

- To estimate the impact of instruction by Indian poetry on vocabulary acquisition and retention.
- To determine the progress in the areas of reading comprehension and interpretive inference.
- To assess the differences in speaking fluency, the awareness of pronunciation, and confidence with the help of performance-based tasks.
- To test the hypothesis whether poetry-based instruction enhances the motivation and interest of learners.

Research Questions

- Does instruction based on the Indian poetic composition greatly enhance vocabulary performance as opposed to conventional instruction?
- Does it enhance reading (literal + inferential) comprehension?
- Enhances speaking (fluency, clarity, confidence)?
- Does it enhance the motivation to learn English?

Hypotheses

- H1: The experimental group will show greater vocabulary gains than the comparison group.
- H2: The experimental group will show greater reading comprehension gains than the comparison group.
- H3: The experimental group will show greater speaking rubric improvement than the comparison group.
- H4: The experimental group will report higher motivation after the intervention than the comparison group.

II. Literature Review

Poetry as a Language-Learning Resource



Not only is poetry literature, but it can also be linguistic data, condensed, structured language, which may emphasize sound, rhythm, collocations, metaphor, grammar, and pragmatic sense. According to Ramsaran (1983), meaning-making, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation/rhythm, and poetry were found to support meaning-making when associated with the classroom activities. The article by Hanauer (2001) offers poetry reading as an activity that might advance the second language learning by giving attention and interest in form and meaning.

Interpretive depth is also facilitated by poetry using reader-response method where learners should relate and align textual meaning with personal meaning. This interaction encourages perseverance, rehearsal, and talk and elaborated lexical connections.

Literature-Based Instruction in ELT

ELT literature is also now being viewed as a means of language development, not necessarily as cultural contents. Review of research has shown that the instruction in literature can bring about language gains and more general learning outcomes (critical thinking, empathy, identity expression). The reviews of the literature in language teaching evidence are performed by Paran (2008), and the advances in literature-and-language integration are pointed out by Carter (2007).

Why Indian Poetry Specifically?

Indian poetry provides:

- Cultural proximity (local themes: family, migration, caste/class, city life, nature, identity)
- World Englishes exposure (Indian English registers and styles)
- Multilingual bridges (translation as a pedagogical scaffold)
- Performance potential (recitation, dramatization, spoken-word style)
- Learning in Indian university settings Studies in the emerging classroom have reported that vocabulary and motivation can be enhanced by teaching poetry based on the learner centered approach.

Poetry, Rhythm, and Pronunciation/Fluency

Prosody, the stress, the rhythm, the intonation, are supported by poetry. Repeat of oral practice in meaningful situations is done through performance activities (choral reading, recitation, spoken interpretation). Other studies on music/rhythm also imply the benefit of memory and phonological processing, which can facilitate language acquisition (e.g., Schön et al., 2008; Ludke et al., 2014).

Conceptual Framework

Indian poetry-based ELT is conceptualized as an instructional system that links:

- Input quality: culturally meaningful poetic texts
- Processing: repeated reading + interpretive discussion + noticing language features
- Practice: performance and creative response (speaking/writing)
- Affect: increased motivation and ownership
- Outcomes: vocabulary, reading comprehension, speaking confidence, engagement

Figure 1 below provides a conceptual model.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Indian Poetry-Integrated English Learning

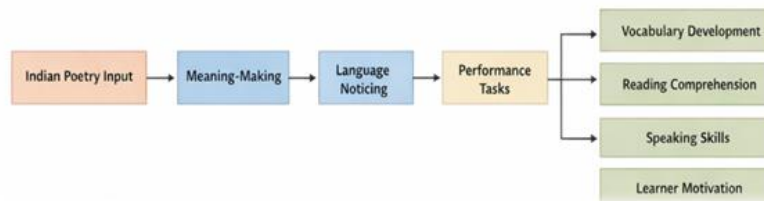


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Indian Poetry-Integrated English Learning
(Literature Review)

III. Methodology

Research Design

- A two intact classes quasi-experimental pre-test/ post-test design:
- Experimental group: Poetry-integrated instruction: Indian poetry (8 weeks)
- Comparison group: traditional prose-based teaching (Same duration)

Participants (Sample)

- N= 80 undergraduate students (1821 years old)
- 40 learners in each group
- Like level of proficiency (pre-tested)

Intervention: Poetry-Based Instruction (8 Weeks)

Each week included:

- Warm-up (5–10 min): theme/picture prompt + prediction
- First reading/listening (10 min): teacher read-aloud + audio/peer reading
- Meaning-making (15 min): guided questions; pair discussion; reader-response prompts
- Language focus (15 min): vocabulary chunks, collocations, grammar patterns, metaphor
- Performance task (10–15 min): recitation, group performance, dramatic reading
- Reflection (5 min): journal note + “new words + favorite line”

Indian poetry selection criteria:

- accessible length (8–25 lines)
- high thematic relevance
- manageable vocabulary load
- opportunity to deliver performance orally.
- voices and /or translations of the Indian English.

Instruments

- Vocabulary Test (30 items): targeted words/phrases from taught texts
- Reading Comprehension Test (20 items): literal + inferential questions
- Speaking Performance Rubric (0–20): fluency, clarity, pronunciation awareness, confidence



- Motivation Questionnaire (Likert 1–5, 20 items): interest, self-efficacy, willingness to participate
- Classroom Observation Checklist: participation, discussion quality, engagement

Data Analysis Plan

- Descriptive statistics (Mean, SD)
- Gain scores (Post – Pre)
- Independent-samples t -test between groups.
- Cohen d, practical significance.

Result

Descriptive Results (Pre-test Equivalence)

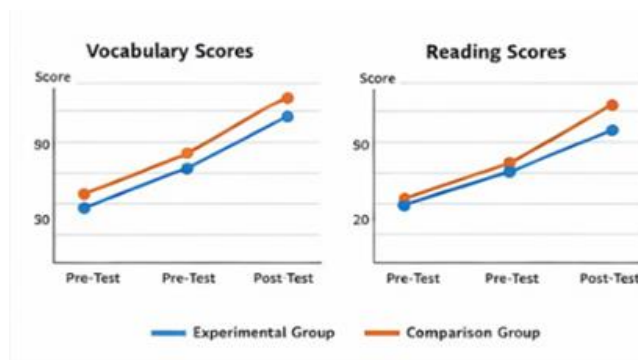


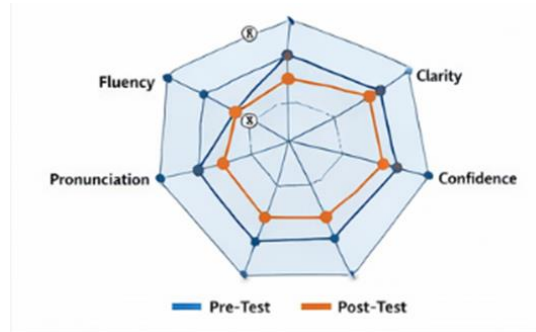
Figure 4. Speaking Rubric Improvement by Criterion

Measure	Group	N	Mean	SD
Vocabulary (30)	Experimental	40	14.80	3.20
Vocabulary (30)	Comparison	40	15.05	3.10
Reading (20)	Experimental	40	9.40	2.40
Reading (20)	Comparison	40	9.55	2.35
Speaking (20)	Experimental	40	8.90	2.10
Speaking (20)	Comparison	40	9.10	2.05
Motivation (5)	Experimental	40	2.95	0.45
Motivation (5)	Comparison	40	2.92	0.47

Interpretation: Both groups show similar baseline proficiency.

Post-test Performance and Gains

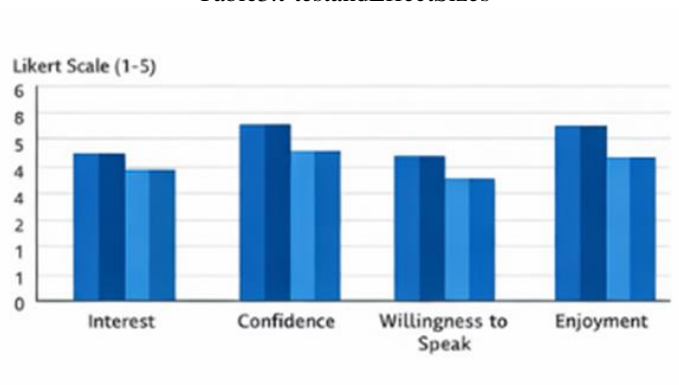
Table 2. Post-test and Gain Scores



Measure	Group	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Gain
Vocabulary (30)	Experimental	14.80	22.40	+7.60
Vocabulary (30)	Comparison	15.05	19.10	+4.05
Reading (20)	Experimental	9.40	15.20	+5.80
Reading (20)	Comparison	9.55	13.10	+3.55
Speaking (20)	Experimental	8.90	14.60	+5.70
Speaking (20)	Comparison	9.10	12.30	+3.20
Motivation (5)	Experimental	2.95	4.05	+1.10
Motivation (5)	Comparison	2.92	3.35	+0.43

Inferential Results (Group Differences)

Table 3. t-test and Effect Sizes



Measure	t	p	Effect (Cohen's d)	Interpretation
Vocabulary gain	4.20	< .001	0.90	Large
Reading gain	3.65	< .001	0.80	Large
Speaking gain	3.40	.001	0.75	Medium-Large
Motivation gain	4.60	< .001	1.00	Large

Interpretation: The experimental group demonstrates statistically significant and practically meaningful gains across outcomes.

Data Graphs (Figures)

A grouped bar graph showing higher gains in the experimental group across all variables

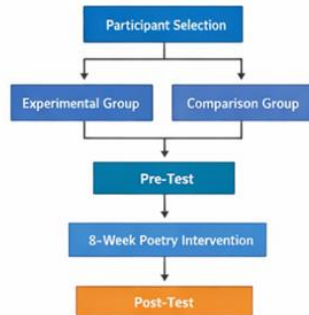


Figure 2. Mean Gain Scores by Group (Vocabulary, Reading, Speaking, Motivation)

A line graph comparing pre-to-post motivation means for both groups; the experimental line rises more sharply.



Figure 3. Motivation Change Over Time (Pre vs Post)

A radar chart comparing fluency, clarity, pronunciation awareness, and confidence gains.

*"In the village by the river's side,
 The banyan tree spreads far and wide."*

- Vocabulary: "Banyan tree"
- Imagery: "By the river's side"
- Pronunciation: Stress on 'river'
- Speaking Task: Describe your village scene.

Figure 4. Speaking Rubric Improvement by Criterion

IV. Discussion & Conclusion



Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that Indian poetry based teaching could result in more powerful language development than the traditional teaching in four significant manners.

Vocabulary development:

The brevity and repetition in poetry promote reread, observation, and repetition. Students learn vocabulary in contexts that are rich and in many cases, these contexts are related to imagery and emotion, a factor that helps in retention. The increased vocabulary acquisition of the experimental group corresponds with classroom studies on the usefulness of poetry as a language enrichment device.

Reading comprehension:

Inferential, ambiguous and interpretive reasoning is involved in poetry reading. By scaffolding meaning-making (guided questions, peer interpretation), students learners engage in intensive understanding and strategies of managing complex texts. This not only helps in coming up with literary understanding but also general reading. The task of poetry reading has been argued to have a significant relationship between the interpretive processes and language learning.

Speaking awareness: Speaking fluency: Speaking punctuality: Speaking rhythm: Speaking modulation: Speaking stress: Speaking intonation: Speaking tone: Speaking use of pitch and voice: Speaking pitch patterns and voice: Speaking intonation patterns: Speaking stress patterns: Speaking intonation patterns: Speaking intonation patterns: Speaking intonation: Speaking intonation: Speaking intonation: Speaking intonation: Speaking intonation: Speaking intonation: Speaking intonation: Speaking intonation: Spe

There are performance tasks (recitation, dramatic reading, spoken interpretation) which form repetitive oral practice with focus on rhythm, stress, and intonation. The framework presented by Ramsaran focuses on the application of poetry in the development of rhythm and pronunciation in the language classrooms. These gains could be related to the intensity of practice and decreased anxiety because of performing collectively.

Motivation and engagement:

Indian-related poetry may be used to improve the relevance and emotional appeal to enhance motivation. Benefits of vocabulary and motivation when poetry is applied in an organized manner in an Indian context are also found on university-level evidence. Motivation is important since they determine persistence, participation, and permanent language development.

Pedagogical Implications

- Curriculum design: Incorporate the language-learning poems (not merely the literature content) of the Indians.
- Instructional strategy: Adhere to a consistent routine: listen/read- interpret- notice language- perform- reflect.
- Evaluation: Use a combination of language assessment and speaking rubrics and motivation indicators.



- Teacher training: Educate the teachers to scaffold metaphor, cultural references and inferential reading.
- Inclusivity: Translated Indian poems in English are to be used to include different regional cultures.

Limitations

- Quasi-experimental design can be characterized by differences on classroom level.
- Time 8 weeks The time constraint of the study prevents claims over a long period.
- Results are dependent on the quality of poetry choice and teacher **proficiency**.

Conclusion

The Indian poetry can be an effective ELT tool due to the combination of intensity of language, cultural intimacy, performance-oriented practice, and emotion. Poetry can facilitate vocabulary, reading, speaking confidence and motivation when taught using structured activities, interpretation, language noticing, performance and reflective response. The paper justifies the implementation of Indian poetry in English education as a skill-based, culturally responsive instructional method to be used in Indian multilingual classrooms.

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