



# Appropriateness of poetics and poetics based activities in promoting students' reading skills in EFL classrooms: focusing on grade 12 English textbook for Ethiopia

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## Abstract

*This paper attempts to analyze the appropriateness of the poems and poem based exercises used for teaching reading in EFL classroom. The evaluation basically based on the extent to which the poems suit to the learners' real-life experiences, interest, literature awareness, and English language competency. Employing the techniques of mixed research approach, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. From the total 304 grade twelve students, 76 students and two grade twelve English language teachers were selected through SRS and Purposeful Sampling Technique respectively. Textbook analysis and semi-structured questionnaires are the tools which were used for collecting all the need data. First grade twelve students' English language textbook particularly the poem based teaching reading lessons were analyzed and then distributing semi-structured questionnaires to the participants of the study adequate data were collected. The results obtained from the textbook analysis and the questionnaires indicate that there is mismatch between the teaching of reading via the use of poems and the learners' literature awareness and English language competency.*

**Keywords:** Appropriateness, poem, reading, promoting the students' reading skills.

## Introduction

Teaching English language as foreign language requires lots of efforts to be done. Starting from the selections of contents of language textbook to the language instruction it requires due attentions. So, the utilizations of carefully designed language textbooks have great role in TEFL. For instance one scholar mentioned that, textbooks can serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom especially in ESL and EFL situations<sup>1</sup>. In addition to this the role of textbooks can be stated as textbooks provide the basis for the content of the lessons, the balance of skills taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in<sup>1</sup>. From the quotes one could deduce that the effectiveness of EFL instructions depends on the content validity of language textbooks. In this regard the selection of good-quality textbooks have to meet the EFL students' needs and appropriate for the attainment of the aims of the course.

One way of suiting the students' need in EFL classrooms is through the use of authentic materials. The use of various genres of literatures particularly reading and writing poetry in this regard is believed to help students to learn the target language in authentic ways. In this regard the results of various studies shows that, materials which lack humanistic elements disregard the fact that learners might have different feelings, intellects, interest, and attitudes. The use of literary texts in general, and poems in particular, would make learners to relate their experiences with that of what is expressed in the texts. This can

be enhanced through developing activities which focus both on the content of the texts and helping learners to connect it to their own lives<sup>2</sup>.

**Statement of the problem:** In Ethiopia students of grade twelve are at their final grade level of precollege education. After success completion of grade twelve education, they are expected to join university. As the medium of instruction at higher education institution is English language, students of grade twelve have been learning English language focusing on developing all language skills. In line with this ministry of education<sup>3</sup> stated that there is much more of a focus on reading and writing as these are the skills that students most need to develop if they want to study effectively. Along with several reading passages there are five poems on grade twelve English for Ethiopia. These poems are believed to develop specially the students' reading and writing skills.

There have been numbers of studies conducted to assess the role of poem in EFL classrooms. For instance, the effectiveness of reading poems on learners' reading motivation is made<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, from the research reports of language scholars, the use of poems is for motivation in that they raise certain dilemma and, therefore, emotional responses<sup>5</sup>. In line with this, the role of poems and poem based activities in EFL classrooms is also expressed that, as the use of poems and poem based activates expand learners' language awernwss<sup>6</sup>. Study also made to evaluate use of poems in EFL classrooms and the find of the study show that, poem based lessons help to develop learners'

interpretive abilities<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, one of the studies conducted in the similar topics shows that, poems and poem based lessons are effective to use in EFL classrooms for the reason that poems brevity and comprehensiveness give learners' enriched data for discussion in classroom<sup>8</sup>.

From the above, one of the reasons for using poem in EFL classrooms is for motivational purposes. Students like to read poem rather than prose as poem is written through the use of purposefully selected fewer words to express wider idea. From the analyses of poem students are believed to increase their language competency. After reading poem students are expected to work on various activities. These activities help students to become critical thinkers and to develop their interpretation skills.

For the effective instruction is to take place in EFL classrooms, the selections of language contents have to be given great attention. As language is learned in various social setting in EFL classrooms, the use of authentic materials is believed to help students to learn the target language in a natural way. Various researchers also claim that, poems as authentic materials can be used to develop especially the receptive skills of reading<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, comparing all types of genres of literature numbers of language scholars clearly indicate that, through its drama and emotional context, a good poem is suitable for a close reading with much good language practice<sup>10</sup>.

From the present researcher previous teaching experiences, grade twelve students feel difficulties in working on the reading poems. They are not interested to read and work on poem based activities. Thus the researcher predicted that the use of poems and the poem based activities, which stated in grade twelve English for Ethiopia, are inappropriate that students faced difficulties in working on reading poem and the following activities. So, this research was needed to analyze the appropriateness of poetries which are stated in grade twelve English textbook for Ethiopia and poetries based activities in promoting students reading skills.

**General objective:** The general objective of the study is analyzing appropriateness of the poems and poems based activities in improving the students' reading skill.

**Specific objectives:** i. Identify the relevance of reading poems in EFL classrooms, ii. Identify the types of poem based activities, iii. Identify the problems of reading poems based activities, iv. To assess the extent to which reading poems promote the students' reading skill.

**Research questions:** i. To what extent do the reading poems are relevant in EFL classrooms? ii. What are the types of poem based activities in EFL classrooms? iii. What are the problems of poem based activities? iv. To what extent do reading poems promote the students' reading skill?

**Scope of the study:** The study attempts to explore the role of poems and poem based activities, which are stated in grade

twelve English textbook for Ethiopia, on enhancing the grade twelve students' reading skill. Thus, English language textbook was analyzed; and various data were collected from students of grade twelve and English language teachers.

**Significance of the study:** Concerning the integration of literatures in EFL classrooms there has been numbers of studies done so far both at international level and locally as well. For instance from various research reports the importance of literature in language teaching has been frequently discussed and the role of literature is highlighted when humanizing language curriculum is concerned<sup>4</sup>. From the research work of other researcher, one way of humanizing language curriculum is to use literary texts for to meet learners' perception diversity. Teaching literary texts in English classroom is believed to integrate the psychological and sociological realities into classroom<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, it is reported that, the use of literary texts in English learning situation bridges the gap between learners' intercultural experience and that of target situation. This is done through the use of various kinds of textural intervention<sup>12</sup>.

In Ethiopia various researchers made studies to evaluate various textbooks. From these researchers one researcher made his study on evaluating grade twelve English textbook from teachers' and students' perspectives<sup>13</sup>. Neither he nor other researchers carried out studies to evaluate the role of reading poems in improving students' reading skill so the present study filled the gap in this regard.

**Operational definitions of terms and phrases used in the study:** i. Appropriateness of the poems: in this paper appropriateness of the poems refers to the extent to which the five poems stated in the textbook fit to the students' language level. ii. Literature: Refers to all the creative writing particularly poem/poetry. iii. Poem/poetry/verse; these refer to the five poems used in the students textbook. iv. Poet: the writers of the five poems which stated in the textbook. v. Relevance of reading poems; the extent to which the poems used in the textbook are significant for teaching reading.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** The present study attempts to analyze the appropriateness of poems in improving the students' reading skill. To this ends, both the qualitative and quantitative data were gathered during the investigations. So, mixed research was employed for theses purpose. Mixed methods procedures employ aspects of both qualitative and quantitative procedures<sup>14</sup>.

**Population of the study:** The study was made in Oromia Regional State, Bunno Bedele Zone, in Bedele Preparatory school. This school was selected due to its proximity to the present researcher work place. The data which were collected from the school is believed to revile the extent to which reading

poems appropriate and could promote the students' reading skill.

**Sample Size and Sampling Technique:** Through the use of multi-stage sampling techniques, purposely grade twelve English language teachers were selected. In the same way purposely grade twelve English textbook was selected and evaluated. Following this, from all the population of Bedele preparatory school students, grade twelve students were selected purposely. This is due to the fact that, grade twelve students are at their final stage to join higher education institution. Grade twelve Students are expected to study very hard in order to score good results from entrance examination to join university. They are also expected to have good background of skills and knowledge for university education. One of the major skills which students should develop is reading skill. In line with this all the reading lessons should have potential to promote the students' reading skill. At the second stage, 25% of the total population 76 students were selected from 304 students following Snowball sampling technique. Totally 2 English language teacher and 76 students were the participants of the study.

**Instrumentals of the study:** To evaluate the appropriateness and effects of the poems on enhancing the students' reading skill, the researcher used various instruments to gather relevant and adequate data which are useful to reach on conclusion to the study. These tools are:

**Textbook analysis:** From various data collecting instruments, textbook analysis is the major source of data collection. Grade 12 English language syllabus and grade 12 English for Ethiopia and particularly reading poem lessons were analyzed by adapting the checklists used by Paradowski and Bottom<sup>15</sup> as in, Tadesse<sup>16</sup> and other researchers who made their study in the same research topic areas.

**Semi-structured Questionnaire:** Using semi-structured questionnaires data were collected from 2 grade twelve English language teachers and 76 of grade 12 students. The contents of the questionnaires mainly focused on identifying students' background and appropriateness of the poems for teaching reading, types of poem based activities and exercises, and problems related teaching reading through the use of poems.

**Procedure for data collection:** First of all, grade 12 English students' textbook and grade 12 English language syllabus were analyzed. Following the textbook and syllabus analyses, various data were collected from 76 grade 12 students and lastly 2 teachers were required to complete the questionnaires.

**Data analysis procedure:** The research first analyzed grade 12 English textbook and English language syllabus. While textbook and syllabus analyses, tables were used to record data. The collected data were analyzed and descriptions were made. Percentages and mean were used for the analyses of the data which were collected through the use of questionnaires.

Following these conclusions and recommendations were made based on the finding of the study.

## Results and discussion

This part of the assessment presents data which were collected through the use various tools. The collected data were interpreted and detail discussions were made. In order to decide the appropriateness of the poems and poems based activities in improving the students' reading skill, the researcher identified the types and problems of poem based activities. And finally, the extents to which the reading poems are appropriate to promote the students' reading skill were evaluated.

**Textbook analysis:** Using checklists, grade 12 English textbook particularly the reading sections were analyzed. The checklist was developed through the adaptation of checklists used by other researchers who did their studies around the same research topics.

**Teaching reading:** As it is stated in grade twelve English language syllabus, the grade twelve English textbook for Ethiopia contains 12 units in which each of these units divide into 16 periods. There are 6 periods of English in each week. There are two periods of revision after the end of each of the six periods and there is also one revision period for each of the semester. There are totally 204 periods allocated to complete all the contents of grade 12 English textbook.

In each of 12 units of the textbook, lessons for all language skills are included. All units begin from section A, and it goes to B. The sections in all units deal with various the lesson topics. All language skills are presented and recycled in order to help students get opportunities to master each skill.

Nonetheless the textbook is divided into sections dealing with the four language skills and sub skills ... there is also much more of a focus on reading and writing as these are the skills that students [grade 12 students] most need to develop if they want to study effectively<sup>3</sup>. This is due to the fact that teaching reading is one of the language skills that language learners have to master. Secondly, grade 12 students are expected to read more as they are going to take university entrance examination. So, their success is said to be depend on the extents of their reading/studying.

In order to help student master reading skills, there are numbers reading exercises which are believed to enhance the students' reading skills. To this ends, there are 37 reading topics in the textbook for reading lessons. From these reading lessons, there are five poems which are used for teaching reading.

**The poems used for teaching reading:** Various language scholars discuss the role of literary works as means for multi-skill development in effective language teaching. For instance language scholars mentioned that literature can be used as tool for creating opportunities for discussions, controversy, and

critical thinking<sup>17</sup>. The multi-purposes of literature in language classrooms include two things; these are the study of literature, and the use of literature as a source for language learning<sup>18</sup>.

As it has been discussed in various parts of this paper, there are lots of reading lessons in grade 12 English textbook. For reading lessons there are 37 reading passages of which the 5 reading lessons are based on reading poems under various units of the textbook.

**The Relevance of the poems used for teaching reading:** In addition to the prose used in the textbook, the above outlined five poems are used for teaching of reading for grade 12 students. The contents of these poems are believed to have links to the students' lives. Thus, in grade 12 English language syllabus it is stated that, topics, texts, vocabulary and activities are directly linked to other school subjects and reflect the national focus on Science and Technology<sup>3</sup>. In Grade 12 reading and listening texts should almost entirely consist of authentic or semi-authentic materials.

In order to assess the relevance of the poems used for teaching reading, the researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the poems through the use of checklists were adopted from the works various scholars such as Paradowski and Bottom<sup>15</sup> as in, Tadesse<sup>16</sup>. These researchers made their studies around the same research topics. The checklist divided into four main sections and sub-sections. The first part of the checklist is concerned with assessing the objectives of the poems, the second and third part of the checklist is used to identify the types and problems of poem based activities, and the last part of the checklist is used to identify the extent to which reading poems promote the students' reading skills.

**Table-1:** The relevance of reading poems in EFL classrooms; A. Objective.

Objectives	Ex	Vg	G	P	Vp.	Np
Objectives of reading poems						
a. Clear objective						✓
b. SMART						✓
c. Goes with lesson topic						✓
d. Show gradual progress						✓
e. Include knowledge, skill and psychomotor domain						✓

Key: Ex=Excellent, Vg.=Very good, G=Good, P=Poor, Vp.=Very poor, Nd.=Not presented.

The Table-1, is used to identify the clarity objectives of the teaching reading through the use of poems. As one of the most important features of textbook evaluation, assessing the

appropriateness of learning objectives become the key point where the researchers have to give great attention to. In line with this, as it is indicated in Table-1, grade 12 English textbook particularly the objectives of teaching reading using poems were analyzed. From the analysis it was possible to identify that objectives are not stated for the teaching of reading via the use poems.

In a given lesson if the objectives are not clearly stated, first, it is difficult to decide what language items are to be emphasized while teaching reading through the use of poems. Secondly, as the outcomes of teaching reading through the use of poems are not known, teachers may face difficulties in helping their students during these lessons. Regarding the role of stating objectives during instruction, the works of various researchers indicate that, objectives are important to ensure that appropriate learning is achieved. Just as syllabus objectives specify the knowledge and skills students will acquire at the end of a course, lessons and units objectives describe the observable behaviors learners will display at the end of the unit<sup>19</sup>.

From the first part of textbook analysis, which is used to check the presence of clear and quality objectives, the poems based lessons fall in stating lessons objectives. In contrast to this, it is indicated that teaching materials need to address clearly stated objectives and when students know why suggested and what they are learning it makes the activities and tasks more purposeful and meaningful<sup>20</sup>. Stating lessons objectives are important as they provide learners a clear statement of where they are going and what they can expect to achieve as a result of learning the unit or sections<sup>1</sup>. To this ends, the poems based teaching reading lessons have to include objectives in order to help students know what they going to achieve by the end of reading poems.

**Table-2:** The relevance of reading poems in teaching reading; B Students' background.

Students' Background	Yes	No	Undecided
Students Back ground			
a. Students are provided with prerequisite poem reading skills		✓	
b. Students have interest of reading poems			✓

As it is indicated in the Table-2, the students' background about reading poem was assessed. During the textbook analysis it was difficult to identify the students' attitude toward reading poems. But the students' feeling about reading poems and related issues are discussed in the following sections of this report.

From the textbook analysis the researcher was able to see that students of grade 12 are not provided with prerequisite poem reading lessons. If students do not know the fundamentals

differences of poems and prose, student could face difficulties to work on poems based activities. This is due to the fact that the language and the word structures used in poems are varies from the ordinary language used in prose which students are familiar with.

Concerning the uniqueness of poetic language style with the other genre of literatures, researchers indicate that, the language of poetry differs from common linguistic usage due to poetry often employs words excluded from common usage, and because poetry has its own special grammar, and even the grammar is often invalid or incorrect<sup>21</sup>.

From the above discussions one can deduce that, for the effective integrations of literary works for language teaching students have to be provided with fundamental knowledge and skills which help them to work on poems based lessons. Knowing the poetic terms and poetic devices is believed to help students to understand, appreciate, and work on poem based activities. The present researcher argue that the grade 12 English language textbook writer had to incorporate lessons about the poetic devices before presenting reading poems and expecting students to work on poems based activities. For instance the first poem used in the textbook contains numbers of figurative speech which students have to know before working on poems.

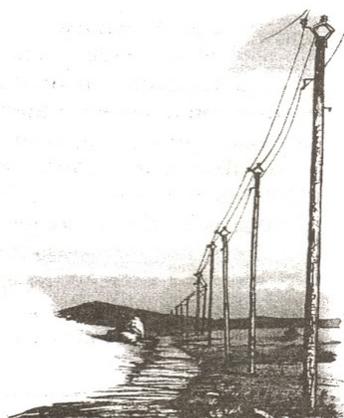
**Analysis on ‘Under a Telephone Pole’:** The poem entitled as ‘Under a Telephone Pole’ the first poem stated in the textbook for the teaching reading. This poem is found on page 49 of the students’ textbook.

**Poem-1: (Under a Telephone Pole): Source English For Ethiopia Students’ Textbook<sup>3</sup>.**

**Under a Telephone Pole**

I am a copper wire slung in the air,  
 Slim against the sun I  
 make not even a clear  
 line of shadow.  
 Night and day laughter I  
 keep-humming and  
 thrumming:  
 It is love and war and  
 money; it is the fighting  
 and the tears, the  
 Work and want,  
 Death and laughter of  
 men and women  
 passing through me,  
 Carrier of your speech.  
 In the rain and the wet  
 dripping, in the dawn and the shine  
 drying  
 A copper wire.

**By Cart Sandburg.**



In the above poem the poet Cart Sandburg writer of the above poem describes the landline telephone, the cables and the message they carry, which reflect the time at which the poem was written. One of the figurative speeches which is used in the poem is personification. From the beginning it looks as if the copper wire itself is speaking. All the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘Me’ mentioned in the poem refer to the copper wire. In order to help students understand and effectively work on the poem based activities, students need to have background knowledge about poetic devices.

**Table-3:** The relevance of reading poems in teaching reading; C. The appropriateness of the poem.

The appropriateness (focusing on Contents) of the poems	Yes	No	Undecided
a. The contents of poems are familiar to students			✓
b. The contents of the poems contain students’ real-life issues		✓	
c. The language used in the poems are at the level of the learners			✓

Table-3 is used to assess the appropriateness of the contents of the poems based teaching reading. As it is indicated in the table, during textbook analysis it became difficult to decide whether the contents of the poems are familiar to the students. Concerning the difficulty level of the language used in the poems detail discussion made under table 8 of this paper. As it is clearly stated in above Table-3, the theme or the issues stated mentioned in the poems, except one poem, all the remaining themes of the four poems contain issues which are far from the students’ present experiences, culture, and education level.

From the five poems which are stated in the textbook, the researcher finds that the poem entailed as ‘A Taxi Driver on His Death’ the poem if find on page 162 of the students’ textbook. The content of the poem is about the risk of a taxi driver.

**Poem-2: (A Taxi driver on his death): Source English for Ethiopia Students’ Textbook<sup>3</sup>.**

**A Taxi driver on his death**

When with the prophetic eye I peer into the future  
 I see that I shall perish upon this road  
 Deriving men that I don’t know.  
 This metallic monster that I now dictate.  
 This docile elaborate horse,  
 That in silence seem to simmer and strain,  
 Shall surely revolt some tempting day.  
 Thus shall I die; not that I care  
 For any man’s journey,  
 Nor for the proprietor’s gain,  
 Not yet for love of my own.  
 Not for these do I attempt the forbidden limits,  
 For these defy the traffic-man and the cold cell,  
 Risking everything for the little little more.

They shall say, I know, who pick up my bones,  
 “poor chap, another victim to the ruthless machine”  
 Concealing my blood under the metal.

By Timothy Wangusa

In this poem the speaker is the first person singular ‘I’. The speaker is a taxi driver who knows about the problems of cars accidents. The driver has a fearing that, as so many people lost their life by cars accidents, he/she is predicting that one day he/she will be dying by car accident. Furthermore the speaker mentions how car accidents occur and what will be happened (the damage). The theme of the poem is advice to drivers in order to take care while driving and obeying the traffic rules. So, indicating problems related to car accidents and presenting advice have great importance for students. As most of peoples lost their lives due to car accidents, working in order to enhance the students’ awareness about cars accidents is very important. In this regarded the above indicated poem is concerned to students’ related issues.

The number indicated in the table shows the numbers of quality of poems based activities in each column.

Table-4 is used to analyze the types and quality of poems based activities. As it is indicated in Table-4, from the five poems which are stated in the students’ textbook, there is no pre-

reading activities which could be used to arose interest of the students’ in order to read the poems. But it is only in one of the poem based reading lesson in which pre-reading activities are stated. Concerning during and after reading activities, the entire poem based reading lessons are well organized.

Regarding the contents poem based exercises, the course book author most of language skills and language items are included. In some of poems based activities students are required to read loudly the poems and listen while the other students read loudly the poem in turns. They also required to discuss and to write answers to the comprehension questions. However, exercise such as grammar, pronunciation, and etc. are not included under poems based teaching reading lessons.

As it is indicated in Table-4, even though the five poems stated in the students’ textbook contain poetic languages, emphasis is not given for the teaching of the poetic devices used in the poems. Nowhere in the textbook clear instruction is given about poetic and lots of exercises is given for the students’ on poetic devices. But during using poems for language teaching, one of the most important classroom activities has to be poetry analysis. In order to work on poem analysis, students have to be provided with instructions/lessons on poetic devices. In order to explain this it is good to consider the one of the poems and exercise that follows it.

**Table-4:** Appropriateness of the poems based activities: A. Types of the activities.

Types of poem based activities	The quality of the activities					
	Ex	Vg.	G	P	Vp	Np
A. Types of activities						
a. There are pre-reading activities		1				4
b. There are while-reading activities	5					
c. There are post-reading activities			5			
B. Poem based activities include all language skills						
a. The four language skills are included			5			
b. There are vocabulary and grammar exercises			5			
c. There are exercises for reading comprehensions			5			
C. Poem devices						
a. Simile					5	
b. Metaphors					5	
c. Personification					5	
d. Points of view					5	
e. Theme		5				
Total	1	2	4		4	1

Key: Ex=Excellent, Vg.=Very good, G=Good, P=Poor, Vp.=Very poor, Nd.=Not presented.

**Poem-3 (Building the Nation): Source English for Ethiopia students' textbook<sup>3</sup>.**

**Building the Nation**

Today I did my share  
In building the nation  
I drove a Permanent Secretary  
To an important urgent function  
In fact to a luncheon at Vic.

The menu reflected its importance  
Cold Bell beer with small talk.  
Then fried chicken with niceties  
Wine to fill the hollowness of the laughs  
Ice-cream to cover the stereotype jokes  
Coffee to keep the PS awake on return journey.

I drove the permanent secretary back.  
He yawned many times in the back of the car  
Then to keep awake, he suddenly asked  
Did you have any lunch, friend?  
I relied, secretly smiling at his belated concern  
That I had not, but was sliming!

Upon which he said with seriousness  
That amused more than annoyed me  
Mwancanchi, I too had none!  
I attended to matter of state.  
Highly delicate diplomatic duties, you know  
And friend, it goes against my grain  
Causes me stomach ulcers and wind.  
Ah, he continued, yawning again  
The pains we suffer in building the nation!

So the PS had ulcer too!  
My ulcers I think are equally painful  
Only they are caused by hunger  
Not sumptuous lunches!  
So two nation builders  
Arrived home this evening  
With terrible stomach pains  
The result of building the nation-  
Different ways.

**By Henry Barlow**



The poem is stated on page 82 of the students' textbook. After reading the above poem, students are required to discuss and answer the following questions with their partner. There are 9 questions following the poem but the last three questions are taken to show how students' previous literature skills and knowledge required to work poem based exercises. ...7. Henry Barlow, who wrote this poem, knew what he was writing about he was a senior civil servant himself. What do you think is his message in this poem? 8. What other the characteristic features of a poem that are present in this particular poem? 9. What other characteristics, which are found in many other poems, are not present in this particular poem? In order to answer these and other questions students must know poetic language and special characteristics features of poems.

**Teachers' and Students' Questionnaires:** Following the grade 12<sup>th</sup> English language textbook analysis, the researcher collected various data from the participants of the study using semi-structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to two grade 12<sup>th</sup> English language teachers and to 76 (which is 25% of the total population) students of Bedele preparatory school.

**Objectives (Teachers' and Students' Responses to the Questionnaires):** Both the grade 12<sup>th</sup> English language teachers and grade 12<sup>th</sup> students were required to express their feeling about the quality of the objectives stated in teaching reading through the use of poems. In this regard the data which were collected from teachers and students are stated as the following.

As it is stated in Table-6, the great majority of the total respondents (90.4%) believe that the objectives are not clearly stated in poems based teaching reading and even the stated objectives are not achievable. Both the highest percentage and the mean indicated in the table show that both the respondents students and teachers are not clear with the objectives stated in poem based teaching reading lessons.

The respondents also feel that it is difficult to accomplish poems based activities and achieve the set objectives.

Here the researcher argues that both students and teachers have to be provided with clearly stated objectives which can be attained by the end of each lesson. Teachers have to know what language items are to be emphasized and students also must know what specific language items they must master and demonstrate/able to use as result of a given instruction.

**Appropriateness of the poems (Teachers' and Students' Responses to the Questionnaires):** Decision about the appropriateness of the poems is made on the extent to which students are familiar with reading poems and have interest of reading poems. It was to assess how much the content of the poems focuses on the students' daily life experiences and it was also to evaluate the difficulty level of the language used in the poems.

The analysis about the appropriateness of the poems is not basically based on the quality of the poems used in the textbook for teaching reading. The researcher appreciates the art work of the poets and language used in the poems. In line with this it was to evaluate the appropriateness of these poems and poems based activities in relation to the students' background of working on literatures particularly poems. The difficulty level of a poem should approximate the level of competence of the learners<sup>22</sup>.

**Table-5:** Quality of the objectives.

No	Quality of the objectives	S.D.	Dis	Un	Ag	S.A.
1	Poem based lessons' objectives are clearly stated	7	61		10	
2	Poem based lessons' objectives are achievable	13	60	2	3	
Total		20	121	2	13	0
Percent ( %)		12.8	77.6	1.3	8.3	0
Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		10	60.5	1	6.5	0

Key: S.D=S. Disagree, D=Disagree, Un=Undecided, Ag=Agree, S.A=Strongly Agree.

**Table-6:** Appropriateness of the poems.

No	The students' back ground and appropriateness of the poems	Valid responses				
		S. D	Dis.	Un	Ag	S. A
3	Students are provided with prerequisite poem reading skills	10	61		7	
4	Students have interest of reading poems	8	50		20	
5	The contents of poems are familiar to students	12	58		8	
6	The contents of the poems contain students' real-life issues	6	65		7	
7	The language used in the poems are at the level of the learners	12	58		8	
Total		48	292		50	
Percent ( %)		12.3	74.8		12.8	
Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		9.6	58.4		10	

Key: S.D=S. Disagree, D=Disagree, Un=Undecided, Ag=Agree, S.A=Strongly Agree.

As it is shown in Table-7, totally 71 out of 78 respondents believe that students are not provided with prerequisite poem reading skills. Regarding the students attitude toward reading poems 58 respondents show that students have only less interest of reading poems. Similarly, the great majority of the respondents indicated that the contents of the reading poems are not familiar to students and the contents of the poems also don't contain topic related to the students' real-life issues. Furthermore, 70 respondents mentioned that language used in the poems is not the level of the students. Generally, from the highest mean and percentage indicated in the Table-7 (58 and 75% respectively) it is possible to deduce that the poems used in the textbook for teaching reading are not appropriate in terms of the language used in the poems, the contents of the poems and in relation to the students' background of working on literature. In order to strengthen this claim it sounds great to consider what other researchers say about the reason why we need to think about students' language level and students' daily life experiences. In literature works settings, role relationships are predetermined and social context is taken into consideration, so it can be used for increasing the awareness of the students about language use<sup>23</sup>.

**Types of poem based activities: (Teachers' and Students' Responses to the Questionnaires):** There have to be varieties of exercises and activities in teaching reading lessons in general. Similarly, during teaching reading through the use of poems, the three stages of teaching reading related activities and exercises have to be presented. In line with this the researcher used checklists to evaluate the types of exercises used during teaching reading through the use of poems. The checklists used contain various activities and exercise which have to be used in teaching reading especially through the use of poems. The respondents were required to indicate either the mentioned types of exercises exist or not. As results, the data which were gathered from the participants stated as the following.

As is indicated in Table-8, more than half of the respondents 51% of the total respondents indicated that almost all the identified activities and exercises presented under poem based teaching reading lessons. In contrast to this, 49% believe that some of teaching reading poem based activities and exercises are not included under poem based lessons. According to 71 respondents out of 78 total sample respondents, one of the most important stages of teaching reading skill, pre-reading activities are not incorporated in teaching reading through the use of poems. As clearly stated in the table, 45 of the respondents claim that all micro and macro language skills are not equally get emphasized in teaching reading via the use of poems. As 40 of the respondents, sufficient vocabulary and grammar exercises are not presented in poem based lessons. In addition to this, during textbook analysis the researcher was to identify that is no lesson on grammar under teaching reading using poems.

There are actually exercises for reading comprehensions which require the students to find out the themes of reading poems.

Nonetheless the presence of the exercises related to 'theme' of the poems, it appears to be difficult to students to carry out the required activities.

**Table-7:** Types of poems based activities.

No	Types of activities and exercises	Valid Responses	
		Yes	No
8	There are pre-reading activities	7	71
9	There are while-reading activities	48	30
10	There are post-reading activities	48	30
11	The four language skills are included	33	45
12	There are vocabulary and grammar exercises	38	40
13	There are exercises for reading comprehensions	43	35
14	Exercises related to Simile	44	34
15	Exercises related to Metaphors	46	32
16	Exercises related to Personification	42	36
17	Exercises related to Points of view	45	33
18	Exercises related to Theme	46	32
Total		440	418
Percent (%)		51	49
Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		40	38

Regarding the purposes of using literature particularly the use of poems in EFL classrooms studies indicate that there are two main pedagogical approaches of teaching poems. These are the stylistic and reader-response. The stylistic approach refers to analyzing poem atomistically in terms of lexicon, syntax, and the number of turns occurring between possible interlocutors in the discourse. The reader-response approach refers to teaching poetry holds the idea that poetry should be studied from the reader' perspective instead of the authors' materials<sup>24</sup>. In both approaches of teaching poems and poem based language teaching, the activities/exercises and activities related to poetic devices are investable part of the lessons.

**Problems related to poems based activities and exercises (Teachers' and Students' Responses to the Questionnaires):** After identifying the types of poems based activities and exercises, the researcher used checklists to identify Problems related to teaching reading through the use of poems and poems based activities and the extents to which reading poems are capable to promote the students' reading skill.

**Table-8:** Problems related to poems based activities and exercises.

No	Problems of reading poems based activities	S. D.	Dis.	Un	Ag	S. A	
19	The reading lessons and poem based activities are not well organized	7	33		25	13	
20	The reading poems and poem based exercises are not offered in easy progressions	8	10		39	21	
21	The exercises are not appropriate to enhance the students' reading skills	6	31		29	12	
22	The contents and the themes of the poems are not suitable to the students' grade level	2	21		36	19	
23	The contents of the poems are unfamiliar to the students	8	20		35	15	
24	The contents of reading poems do not suit to the learners' knowledge and culture	2	19		47	10	
25	Clear instructions are not given for each activity	8	41		22	7	
26	The activities are not presented in a logical manner	4	17		44	13	
27	All the language skills are not included	6	18		39	15	
28	Varieties of activities are not included	4	19		40	15	
29	The activities are not suitable for teaching reading	6	37		21	14	
30	The poems are no written in clear language which students can understand	3	16		42	17	
		Total	64	282	0	419	171
		Percent (%)	7	30		45	18
		Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	5.5	23.5		34.9	14.2

Key: S.D.=S. Disagree, D=Disagree, Un=Undecided, Ag=Agree, S.A=Strongly Agree.

The above Table-9 contains problems that might exist under poem based teaching reading. As it is stated in the table the highest ( $\bar{x}$ ) 49 (34.9 and 14.2) indicate that most of the indicted problems exist in poem based teaching reading lessons. As some of the respondents the exercises under teaching through the use of poems are not well organized. Thus, 60 respondents mentioned that the poem based exercises are not organized in ways start from easy and go to difficult manner. Regarding the suitability of the themes of the poems for teaching reading 23 of the respondents believe that the contents and themes of the poems are appropriate and suitable to their grade level. In contrast to this, more than half of the respondents mentioned that both the contents and themes of the poems are not appropriate to the students' grade level.

As it is stated in the Table-9, the majority of the respondents believe there are problems related to teaching reading via the use of poems and poems based activities. According to 57(which is 73%) respondents believe that poems based activities are not presented in logical manner. Nearly the same numbers of the respondents 69% emphasized that all language skills are not included under poem based teaching reading lessons. In addition to this, 71% of the respondents also clam that varieties such as pre-reading activities, grammar and various detail exercises on poetic devices are not incorporated

under poem based teaching reading through the use of poem. Furthermore the respondents indicated that the languages used in the poems are beyond the students' level.

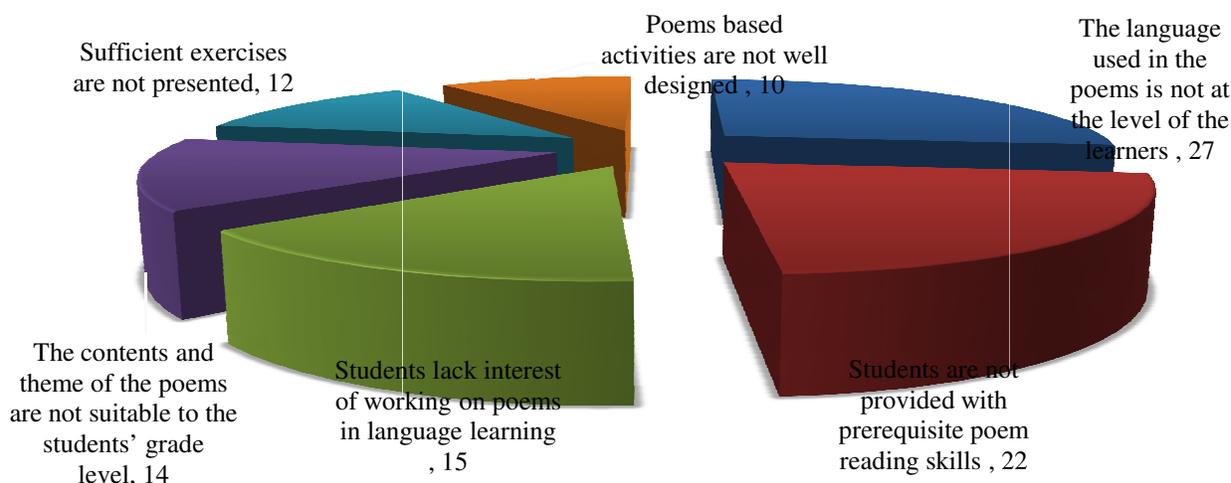
In contrast the limited types of activities and exercises presented in the textbook under teaching reading using poems, various researchers report the types and several advantages of using poems in language classrooms. In this regard it is stated that there are the basic uses of poetry can bring into effective English teaching<sup>25</sup>. Accordingly, poems bring emotions, rhyme and congenial expression in classroom. Poetry works for enhancement of language because it enriches vocabulary, sound, rhythm and stress and pronunciation and fluency.

**Prioritizing problems related to poems based activities and exercises:** To identify the major problems which are affecting the use of poems in teaching reading and in order to prioritize problems in using poems, the respondents were asked to rank the following problems 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> based on their learning / teaching experiences of teaching reading through using poems.

The Table-9 contains problems which could both students' and teachers face while teaching-learning process through the use of poems and poem based exercises. And also it shows the ranks of the stated problems based on the intensity of the problems.

**Table-9:** Ranking problems related to using poems in teaching reading.

Problems		Rank	Total
31	The language used in the poems is not at the level of the learners	1 <sup>st</sup>	21
32	Students are not provided with prerequisite poem reading skills	2 <sup>nd</sup>	17
33	Students lack interest of working on poems in language learning	3 <sup>rd</sup>	12
34	The contents and theme of the poems are not suitable to the students' grade level	4 <sup>th</sup>	11
35	Sufficient exercises are not presented	5 <sup>th</sup>	9
36	Poems based activities are not well designed	6 <sup>th</sup>	8
37	Other? Mention it		



**Figure-1:** The percents of the respondents for each rank.

As it is stated in the above chart, 27% of the respondents believe that the major problem observed in teaching reading using is related the difficulty of the language used in the poems. During textbook analysis the researcher was also able to see that specially the poem which is written by best African writer Chinua Achebe 'Vultures' (on page 188 of the students' textbook) is a poem which can be taken as the most difficult one to the students. Not only this poem but all the five poems presented in the textbook are written by foreigner writers. Thus the language used in the poems appears to be difficult to students who learn English as foreign language.

According to 22% of the respondents, second ranked problem related to students' literature awareness. The respondents indicated that students are not provided with precondition of reading poems and working on poem based exercises for effective language learning. As it is stated in the table students lack interest of working on poems in EFL classrooms and the contents and theme of the poems are not suitable to the students' grade level and this is indicated by 15% and 14% respectively.

In line with this various literatures claim that, the difficulty level of a poem approximates the level of competence of the learners<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore other researcher emphasized that, conceptual difficulty of a literary text is also a variable to be considered carefully for the effective utilization of poem for language teaching<sup>26</sup>.

From the total participants of the study, 12% of the respondents believe that sufficient language exercises are not presented. Nearly the same percents of the respondents, 10% of the participants feel that poems based activities are not well designed. As it is indicated in the table 10, the respondents were asked to mention if other problems exist in addition to the problems listed in the table. As results one teacher mentioned that there is no lesson on special characteristics features of a poem.

**Summary:** The purpose of the present study is to evaluate the appropriateness of the poems and poem based activities for the teaching reading in EFL classrooms. The evaluation is based on

grade 12<sup>th</sup> English for Ethiopia giving attention to the reading section of poems based lessons. The motive behind undertaking this study related to the challenges that the present research came across during teaching reading via the use of poems. The researcher was able to see that students feel difficulties during learning reading through the use of poems. So, the researcher thought that the poems used and the poem based may not be appropriate or not well organized that students face difficulties during learning reading using poems.

In order to rich on conclusion about the appropriateness of the poems and poem based activities, mixed research approach is engaged and both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. From the total population of 304 grade 12 students 25% (76) students and 2 grade 12 English totally 78 participants were selected through multi-stage sampling techniques.

During the investigation, first grade 12 English textbook and grade 12 English language syllabus were analyzed. Following textbook analysis, using semi-structured questionnaire various data were gathered. From these, the researcher was able to identify some problems which affect the teaching of reading through the use of poems.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research tools, discussions, and summary, the following conclusions are drawn: i. If one wants to learn language a given language, there is no better ways than be in a place where the target language is used. Having the exposure or living with the society who speak the language is natural way of language acquisition/learning. If not that way, teaching language require careful selection of various language materials and effective instructions. In this regard the use of careful selected literatures such as poems is one way of providing authentic materials for language classrooms. ii. One of the most problems which related to teaching reading using poems is lack of clearly stated objectives. All the five poems based teaching reading lessons do not have clearly stated objectivities which indicate what language skills or items to be achieved by the end of the lessons. iii. From the textbook analysis and from the data collected form students and teachers, the researcher was able to see that students of grade 12 are not provided with all the needed prerequisite knowledge and skills which enable them to work on poem based lessons. iv. The results of the study indicated that under each of poem based teaching reading lessons, pre-reading activity is not incorporated. Except pre-reading activity there are while reading and post reading activities under the entire poem based teaching reading lessons. v. The present study also prove that in teaching reading through the use poems, there is no exercise for teaching grammar and pronunciation yet there are several exercises related to vocabulary and reading comprehensions. vi. The languages used in the poems are not at the level of the students' and also the contents of the poems are unfamiliar to students. As results students face difficult to read, understand the poems and

carryout the poem based activities. vi. The result obtained from the analyses of the students' textbook, language syllabus and from the data which were collected from the participants, some of the poems are not appropriate for teaching reading due to the difficulty level of the language used in the poems, students' literature awareness, and due to various exercises which students face difficult to accomplish.

**Recommendation:** Based on the conclusions made above and in order get students are motivated, interested and enjoy reading poems and improve their reading skills, the following recommendations are made.: i. Assessment has to be made to identify the students' English language proficiency and the course textbook writer should reconsider students' English language competency and integrate poems that students read and understand. ii. In teaching reading through the use of poems clear objectives should be stated so that both the students and teachers know what language items have to be master by the end of each lesson. iii. There should be instructions on the unique features of poems before teaching reading through the use of poems. So that students are provided with basic knowledge and skills which enable them to analyze poems. iv. In teaching reading through the use of poems, all language skills should be integrated and students have to be provided with opportunity of learning the target language making exercises on all language skills within a lesson. v. Teacher should find and use poems which suite to learners' background in terms of language, culture, and interest for teaching reading through the use poems.

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