

Teaching Poetry: What is Taught and What Should be Taught? Case Study of Secondary Schools Offering Literature in English at the Advanced Level in Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

Teaching poetry as a literary genre has been a research topic of interest worldwide. However, the gap is observed in teaching poetry in secondary schools in Rwanda, where students are not given the quantity and quality of knowledge and skills they deserve. This descriptive study investigated poetry teaching practices and examined whether teachers are teaching what they should be teaching to equip students with critical thinking, analysis, and language skills. Adopting the descriptive research design and the mixed method approach, the study is built around three objectives: to explore how poetry is taught to students doing literature in English at the advanced level of secondary schools; to investigate the aspects of poetry that are often taught and those that are not; and to assess the challenges that teachers of literature in English face while teaching poetry. The study is guided by New Criticism Theory, Multimodality Approach, and Reader Response Theory. It used both quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from 22 teachers of literature in English selected purposefully from 16 schools that offer literature in English as a main subject at the Advanced Level. The study findings revealed that students are highly at risk as teachers of this subject exhibited poor competence in teaching and analysing poetry. Besides, some teachers don't give poetry a focus, and others don't teach it at all. The issue becomes more acute when one considers the general lack of adequate resources. The study recommends the University of Rwanda, the College of Education, REB, and their partners set policies for increasing teachers' competences in the field of literature in general and teaching poetry in particular. Individual teachers of literature in English should feel confident while handling poetry as a literary genre. If an issue arises, instead of simply leaving out the topic, let them consult their colleagues in the nearby schools for a common understanding.

Keywords: Advanced Level, Literature in English, Poetry, Poetry Analysis, Teaching and Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching literature requires the teacher to be self-determined (Syafiq et al., 2023). Among other literary genres, poetry is claimed to be the most sophisticated due to its nature. Poetry implies various techniques. Its language use and structure are unique compared to drama and prose. Different researchers (Josephine, 2015), (Sharma, 2019), and (Khan, 2020) specifically comment on teaching poetry as a literary genre and conclude that it plays a vital role for students.

Poets often need to convey complex emotions, thoughts, or images within a limited space. To evoke emotions and convey abstract concepts, poets often rely on vivid imagery and figurative language, requiring readers to engage in deeper and multiple interpretations, adding to its complexity. The depth of feelings and emotions conveyed in poetry can resonate on a personal level, requiring readers to engage with their own feelings and experiences (Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 2022). Besides, the constraints of form and structure in poetry can make it challenging to express ideas with precision and accuracy. Decoding the layers of meaning in metaphorical expressions and symbolic language can be challenging for readers, too.

In that way, poetry pays careful attention to rhythm, meter, and sound patterns. The musicality of language in poetry adds an extra layer of complexity, as readers must consider the auditory experience in addition to the semantic content. Unlike prose, which often follows a more straightforward narrative structure, poetry can take on a variety of forms, from traditional sonnets to free verse. The diverse structures and styles in poetry can make it challenging for readers to navigate and interpret (Strömner, 2013).

Poetry often reflects the cultural and historical context in which it is written. Understanding the references, allusions, and historical background can add complexity to the interpretation of a poem. The Reader Response Approach, which allows each individual reader to establish for himself or herself the meaning of a poem, could be useful in many classroom situations (Ningrum, 2018; Kunjanman & Aziz, 2021). Consequently, analyzing a poem requires the identification of these aspects as implied in the poem. A good number of teachers of literature in English struggle to understand them, yet they are asked to teach poetry and analyze it for the students.

Therefore, this study investigates how poetry is taught at the advanced level of secondary schools. It will also identify whether the intended poetry teaching outcomes are achieved and if what is taught is what should really be taught.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Poetry is one of the three literary genres to be taught at the advanced level of secondary schools in the country. Research (Strömner, 2013; Khan, 2020) contends that poetry is a holistic approach to education that covers linguistic, emotional, cultural, and analytical aspects. It enriches students' lives by fostering a deeper connection with language, emotions, and the human experience. It enriches learners' abilities in critical thinking, creativity, aesthetic appreciation, cultural understanding, communication, and personal reflection (Simmons, 2014).

However, a good number of teachers of literature in English handle poetry in different awkward ways. When it comes to poem analysis, some teachers skip it, claiming that it is hard, and sometimes they don't understand the poem itself before analyzing it. Other teachers stick to superficial, limited elements and avoid entering into deep analysis. Others download some notes from Google and give them to the students. But sitting with the latter for a complete analysis is not credited. Those teachers would rather give more focus to the remaining literary genres, which are prose and drama, as the latter are considered easier than poetry.

Although studies were conducted on teaching literature, this area is not explored in Rwandan secondary schools, and little is known about teaching poetry in particular. This situation, therefore, triggers the researchers to explore deeply what is taught in poetry and how it is done. The study also dives into what should be taught and how it should be done.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate how poetry is taught to literature students at the Advanced Level of Secondary Schools, and throw a light to the general teaching of that literary genre. In light of the general objectives, the study specifically sought to:

- (i) Identify the aspects of poetry analysis commonly taught by the Literature in English teachers
- (ii) Explore the level at which teachers of Literature in English teach these aspects of poetry analysis
- (iii) Examine challenges do Literature in English teachers face in the teaching of poetry

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is guided by numerous theories of literature and poetry teaching and learning. They are summarised in the following section.

2.1.1 New Criticism Theory of Poetry Teaching

"New Criticism" is a literary theory of mid-20th Century by scholars like T.S Eliot and John Crowe Ransome in 1940s. It emphasises on close textual analysis to gain meaning from a poem without considering historical and biographical context of the text (Ritchane, 2021). New criticism advocates for natural qualities of the poem on its own, giving focus on the ambiguity, irony, and paradox as key elements of the poem. In that way, "close reading of the text is the only method which can guarantee an objective reading and an unbiased reading of a text" (Ritchane, 2021, p. 286). Proponents of this theory claim that a poem's language, form and structure give a self-contained way for exploring and motivating poetry students to engage deeply within the text. When analysing a poem, start by examining the text for its form. How is it structured? (Wheeler, 2023). In addition, this theory rejects external influences on interpretation, puts emphasis on close reading and examination of literary devices, and pays attention to every detail given in order to comprehend a work of poetry. Besides, it emphasizes on applying critical thinking and literary appreciation. Before the very work of analysis, a poem is given to the students to read and re-read in order to get familiar with it (Khan, 2020). After reading students go through the text to identify literary devices applied in the poem, looking at the structure and form. With the "New Criticism theory", the teacher is advised to look at the text solely without linking it to the poet's bibliography or any historical context. There is also the use of "persona" and

ignore the author bibliographical and historical background. Finally, “the end of a work of art should be one, and the author should be as detached from his work as possible” (Ritchane, 2021, p. 286).

2.1.2 Multimodality Approach to Poetry Teaching

With daily changing world and the development of technology, it is found unproductive to stick oneself to the traditional way of relying on printed text only, and think about achieving a successful and productive teaching. A “Multimodality Approach” to teaching poetry refers to the application of different modes in teaching poems to the students (Xerri, 2012). It is also defined as “the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined” (Constantinou, 2005). It is a way of using more than one way or mode to teaching poetry. According to Xerri (2012), a poetry teacher may apply different modes like visual print media, auditory elements and physical activities alongside traditional text analysis. This approach provides diverse learning styles, creating a more engaging, entertaining and inclusive learning environment. With “multimodal approach”, students benefit from a richer exploration of poetic elements, connecting emotionally and intellectually with the material (Olatunji & Onipede, 2020). It deepens critical thinking, promoting a deeper comprehension of the nuanced and expressive nature of poetry.

2.1.3 Reader Response Theory of Poetry Teaching

“Reader Response” theory emerged 1930s and gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s (Woodruff, 2017). In the teaching of poetry, the “Reader Response” theory favours the significance of a learner’s interpretation and individual reactions (Kunjanman & Aziz, 2021). It declares that the meaning of the poetic text is not exclusively derived from the poet's intention, but is instead an interaction between the reader and the text and the reader's distinct experiences and emotions. As stated by Woodruff (2017), if a teacher is teaching poetry, a poem is given to the learners to read and gain the meaning from it. According to (Ningrum, 2018) and (Kunjanman & Aziz, 2021), the meaning is derived from the interaction between the reader and the text. By giving precedence to readers' responses, the foreground of this theory is to boost the educational process, encouraging critical thinking and deep recognition of the complex aspects of poetry and its significance through reading and self-interpretation. The issue will rise when learners - for example those of Literature in English in Rwanda - read a poem and are challenged in understanding its meaning due different reasons, such as complexity of the poem’s figurative language, poor vocabularies on the side of a learner, lack of experience, to mention but a few. Other scholars like (Kc, 2021) states that: “Reading brings a positive impact on the social and emotional learning of the students”. It is not only limited to that because learners gain various skills from poetry such as creativity, critical thinking, communication skills, aesthetic acknowledgment and so on (Josephine, 2015). However, teaching poetry in classroom seems to be a unique perspective by an individual teacher instead of being a systematic and structured lesson commonly delivered (Gönen, 2018). Knowing common ways or having structured and conventional ways of teaching would save some teachers of literature from skipping poetry topics, or teach it in a way which less interest learners in the lesson (Josephine, 2015). According to Spirovaska (2019) and Iskhak et al., (2020), even though this approach helps much in reading and interpretation of the text, especially by readers, students should be taught to analyse complex texts.

Besides being a source of leisure and entertainment, poetry enriches students with language skills, vocabularies, language and rules and structure. Different scholars like Strömner, (2013), Josephine, (2015), and Khan, (2020) stress on different benefits of teaching poetry to the students including but not limited to awaking students creativity, aesthetic appreciation, understanding culture and values, communication skills and others. Teaching students to do poetry analysis is one of the existing main ways to deliver these benefits to them (Khan, 2020).

2.2. Empirical review

This review emphasizes studies conducted on the relevance of poetry as one of the main literary genres to students. Reviewed studies highlight that poetry assist learners in their language learning in particular. According to Simecek et al. (2016) posit that poetry is an important tool which enables students to identify language features. In other words, studies reveal that poetry helps students develop language and literacy skills. It is confirmed that poetry is an important part of language (Roumbou, 2019) as that genre is rich in resources that language offers viz sounds, and more particularly its vocabulary. As for Blake et al. (2022), poetry is a powerful channel which can help students express complex cultural and linguistic experiences. It is therefore a tool to enhance their speaking, writing, and reading in public at different occasions. Suwastini et al. (2023a) stress it that the rhythmic and metaphorical aspects of poetry offer students opportunities to enhance their language. Indeed, the metaphorical language used in a poem can influence learners’ language use while rhythm paves way for students’ understanding of phonological components. Inherently, Aryawan et al. (2023) found out that poetry, besides other literary genres, is used to build learners

characters, by instilling positive values into students so that they become desired personalities in the environment around them. All in all, poetry exposes students to verses in a complex vocabulary. This enhances not only their writing fluency but also reading and speaking (Suwastini et al., 2024).

It is a teaching medium which serves to improve language aspects such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, confidence and fluency altogether (Suwastini et al., 2023c, Boldireff, 2022). Poetry is in on another hand a wide and complex subject which has controversial units that should be taught. However, the curriculum does not specify what really need to covered by teachers, and this causes ambiguity of practices where this lesson is not taught the same way. According to Sharma (2019), there are six aspects of a literary text analysis that should be followed training learners to do a literary text analysis. These are syntax, phonology, graphology, semantic, morphology, and lexical level of analysis. Although there are these aspects, teachers do not teach them in the same way and it jeopardise learners' take-home skills (Sigvardsson, 2016).

Contariwise, research reveals that teaching poetry is challenging because it is considered difficult and peripheral especially to teachers of English as a second language (Boldireff et al., 2022). Indeed, many teachers struggle when they are teaching poetry because of little experience or lack of necessary knowledge of what to teach and how to do it. According to Sigvardsson (2016, 2019), many secondary teachers face difficulties when they are teaching poetry because of lack of experience or subject content knowledge. It is found that some of those teachers have difficulties to choose appropriate poems, hence learning is negatively affected.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research is a descriptive study that adopts both qualitative and the quantitative methods. The data was interpreted in light of Creswell, (2014) which uses mixed methods and simple tables addressing the respondents' view on teaching poetry. The data collected from teachers was triangulated with the theories and existing literature.

3.3 Population

It is defined as the total of all units of analysis (Ahmad et al., 2023). The targeted population for this study is 200 Literature in English teachers from schools which have 'Advanced level' and have combinations of Literature in English as a main subject.

3.4 Sampling and Data Collection

On the other hand, a sample is a group which is selected from a larger group of population for the purpose of the study with a view for making generalization about population as a whole (Thacker, 2020). According to Ahmad et al., (2023), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method by which the decision concerning the participants to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialisation of knowledge of the research topic or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. The data was collected from the sample of 22 teachers of Literature in English in Advanced Level representing 16 schools that were selected purposively. Questionnaire and interview are tools that were administered to teachers to gather the data on how they teach poetry, what they teach in and the barriers they face in teaching poetry.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate

Data were collected from 22 teachers selected from 16 secondary schools where Literature in English is taught as a core subject in advanced level. The response rate is 100% in that all the sample provided information for both questionnaire administered and interview conducted. Such a higher response rate reveals participants' interest in the study, hence effectiveness of data gathered.

Table 1

Response Rate

Sample	Research instrument	Responses	Rate (%)
22 teachers	Questionnaire	22	100
5 teachers	Interview	5	100

4.2 Findings from Quantitative Data

Quantitative analysis used simple descriptive statistical tables to categorise each question on teaching poetry.

As can be seen in Table 2 below, the question is designed to identify Literature in English teachers' qualification in line with literature and poetry. The results show that 12 teachers out of 22 (54.6 %) are qualified in Literature in English from University 9 teachers out of 22 (40.9 %) did not study Literature in English at the University level, but studied other English language options, which gives them a notion to Literature; and 1 teacher out of 22 studied History and Geography at the University, but he teaches Literature in English in Senior Four and Senior Five.

Table 2*Teachers' Qualification for Teaching Literature*

Number of respondents (N=22)	Qualification	Percentage	Comments
12	Yes	54.6	Studied Literature at University
9	No	40.9	Studies other language options
1	No	4.5	Studied History and Geography

Table 3 illustrates question two which is designed to investigate how confident are the teachers of Literature in English while teaching poetry. 11 teachers out of 22 (50 %) responded that they confidently teach poetry, 7 teachers out of 22 (31.8 %) feel neutral when they are teaching poetry; while 4 teachers out of 22 (18.1 %) do not feel confident when they are teaching poetry.

Table 3*Teachers' Confidence in Teaching Poetry*

Number of Respondents(N=22)	Response	Percentage
11	Feel confident	50.0
7	Neutral	31.9
4	Not confident	18.1

In another context, and according to Sharma (2019), there are six levels which should be undergone while teaching poetry. In that line, Table 4 below investigate what Literature in English teachers teach in poetry and what they do not teach. They show how Literature in English teachers deal with those levels of analysis.

In poetry, phonological level of analysis looks on how a poet uses sound aspect and their patterns in a poem. Table 4 indicates a number of teachers of Literature who teaches sound patterns while doing literary analysis in classroom. The average of 62.3% of the participants reported to teach phonological aspects of poetry.

Table 4*Phonological Level of Analysis*

Aspect of poetry	No. of respondents who teach each	%
Consonance	19	86.3
Alliteration	18	81.8
Assonance	19	86.3
Rhyme	16	72.7
Rhythm	6	27.2
Onomatopoeia	13	59
Meter	5	22.7
Average	13.7	62.3%

Table 5 indicates how the participants aspire to teach graphological aspects of poetry. According to the scholars like Dick (2018) and Evaristo (2023), graphological analysis in a literary work refer to the analysis of how a poem is written grammatically and the deviation used in writing. The table above shows that the average of only 41.3% of the participants reported to teach these graphological aspects of poetry analysis. Those who give attention to these aspects might ignore them willingly, lack of knowledge or other challenges that will be discussed in the other section.

Table 5*Graphological Level of Analysis*

Aspect of poetry	No. of respondents who teach each	%
Lines	12	54.5
Nature of lines	2	9
Stanzas	22	100
Length of lines and stanzas	19	86.3
Rhyme	14	63.6
Margins	-	-
The title design	2	9
The epigraph	3	13.6
Capitalization	6	27.2
Punctuation	7	31.8
Parenthesis	13	59
Average	9	41.3%

Morphological analysis refers to evaluation of new word formation in a literary work. It also goes with the relationship between the form and meaning in a word (Booij, 2019). Table 6 shows that only 11.3% of the participants teach these morphological aspects in a poetry analysis. These findings are alarming in terms of the quality and quantity of knowledge and skills that learners receive.

Table 6*Morphological Level of Analysis*

Aspect of poetry	No. of respondents who teach each	%
Compounding	2	9
Blending	-	-
Clipping	-	-
Backformation	1	4.5
Acronym	2	9
Coinage	2	9
Borrowing	5	22.7
Deviation	8	36.3
Average	2.5	11.3%

Table 7 highlights how teachers of Literature in English teach and engage learners into lexical analysis when they are teaching poetry. The average 22.7% only bring learners into this analysis and the majority of 77.3% of the participants do not equip their learners with these knowledge and skills.

Table 7*Lexical Level of Analysis*

Aspect of poetry	No. of respondents who teach each	%
Formal and informal word	13	59
Slang	3	13.6
Archaic words	3	86.4
Cliché	2	9
Jargons	4	18.1
Average:	5	22.7%

Syntactic level of analysis focuses of the sentence structure. Table 8 draws attention to the numbers of teachers who consider syntactic aspects of poetry analysis and train learners to practice it. Only 20% of the participants teach syntactic aspects while other reported that they do not know that these aspects are included in literary text analysis.

Table 8
Syntactic Level of Analysis

Aspect of poetry	No. of teachers who teach each	%
Internal structure of a sentence	-	-
Parallelism	2	9
Use of conjunction, anaphora, ellipsis	3	13.6
Invented words order, omission of words	9	40.9
Active and passive voice	8	36.3
Average	4.4	20%

This study found that the majority of the teacher focus on the meaning of the text '*Semantic*' when they are teaching literary text analysis. As it can be seen in Table 9, the majority of 77.2% teaches all aspects of semantic, which is different from other aspects of poetry analysis.

In a summary, the following items show how each level of analysis is taught:

Phonological aspects of poetry analysis are taught by an average of 13.7 teachers (62.3 %) against 37.7 % who do not teach them. Graphological aspects are taught by an average of 2.5 teachers (41.3 %), against 58.7 % who do not teach them. Morphological aspects are taught by an average of 2.5 teachers (11.3 %), against 88.7 % who do not teach them. Lexical aspects are taught by an average of 5 teachers (22.7 %), against 77.3 % who do not teach them. Syntactic aspects are taught by an average of 4.4 teachers (20 %), against 80 % who do not teach them. Lastly, Semantic aspects of poetry analysis are taught by an average of 17 teachers (77.2 %), against 22.8 % who do not teach them.

In short, data revealed from all the teachers involved in this study as sampled from 16 selected secondary schools, only 39% confirmed that they teach poetry. These data imply that there are gaps that needs be filled so that the literature curriculum at secondary can be implemented as recommended.

Table 9
Semantic Level of Analysis

Aspect of poetry	No of participants who teach each	%
Allegory	19	86.3
Apostrophe	20	90.9
Climax	16	72.7
Conceit	7	31.8
Euphemism	18	81.8
Hyperbole	22	100
Imagery	21	95.4
Irony	22	100
Metaphor	22	100
Metonym	19	86.3
Oxymoron	16	72.7
Paradox	14	63.6
Personification	22	100
Pun	18	81.8
Satire	21	95.4
Simile	22	100
Symbolism	21	95.4
Synecdoche	17	77.2
Proverbs	14	63.6
Idioms	11	50
Colloquial	13	59
Average	17	77.2%

4.2 Findings from Qualitative Data

After presenting the findings describing how Literature in English teachers deal with poetry in their everyday work, the study investigates the reasons behind the failure of some teachers to teach poetry confidently and efficiently.

In interview, different teachers indicated critical perceptions towards the teaching of poetry. For ethical purpose, teachers were labeled TLA, TLB, TLC, TLD and LTE. They reported that poetry is a complex and a challenging literary genre as it requires advanced skills in doing analysis.

It is disappointing. Sometimes, students read a poem multiple times but still they fail to connect the meaning of words in a verse in order to come up with the meaning of the poem. So am I. Therefore, I choose to continue with simple topics. (TLA, February 2024)

Besides, there are some aspects of poetry which are said to be difficult to analyse because teachers have little knowledge about them. So, they fear to be challenged by their students.

The findings show also that 70 % of teachers are not confident to teach the 'Meter' and the 'Rhythm', while 60 % cannot teach confidently some 'Lexical aspects' such as slangs, cliché, formal and informal words, etc. Lastly, as the students unanimously affirmed, "the Syntactic aspects are hardly recognised in the poem".

4.2.1 Challenges in the Teaching of Poetry

The data from the interview with teachers show the way teachers explicitly point fingers on the level of their competence in teaching and analysing poetry.

I cannot tell lies. I teach poetry because it is a job and I cannot refuse it. But if I am asked to choose, poetry units can be given to somebody else because on myself, I am not feeling able. It is a complicated lesson and I did not get enough training about it. I sometimes find myself jumping some poetry units, especially Meter and Rhythm. I cannot teach things which I don't know. (TLB, February 2024)

Teachers also highlighted that lack of appropriate training challenges them, and keeps them with limited knowledge and competences in line with poetry teaching. To explain this challenge, one teacher said:

Training is always important in improving individuals' competence and knowledge. If we were given trainings in poetry teaching, we would be doing better than what we do today." (TLC, February 2024)

Another challenge faced by the Literature in English teachers is related to the availability of teaching materials and other resources. Different respondents showed that their school libraries are poor in terms of Literature in English books, and they pointed out that it is big challenge to teaching poetry:

I have been teaching here for four years and a half. We have never received books of Literature in English like novels, plays and poetry. Besides that, our school has no electricity power. Most of the time our personal devices like Smartphones and laptops that can be used to download poems from online are off. So, I sometimes decide to leave it untaught due lack of resources. (TLD, February 2024)

There is also a gap caused by the nature of Curriculum and the Syllabus. In the teachers' interview, they showed that the Curriculum does not describe and inform teachers what they should teach the students.

The curriculum is not clear in terms of teaching to analyze literary works. I focus to what is planned in the National Curriculum. So, we normally don't teach units which are not planned in syllabuses. (TLD, February 2024)

According to the teachers' response, the curriculum of Literature in English does not guide teachers in teaching and analysing literary text, particularly poetry.

4.3 Discussions

This study addressed three questions.

To begin with, it addressed how poetry is generally taught to the students of Literature in English. The findings from this study showed that the teachers do not comfortably and confidently teach that literary genre. This can be seen where 50% of them feel confident when they are teaching poetry. Besides, the teachers demonstrated various attitudes towards teaching poetry, where some of them showed that they cannot choose to teach poetry if they are given free choices. This is in the line with what Josephine, (2015), found in her study where teachers complain about teaching poetry, especial those who teach Literature in English while it is not their specialisation. However, as it

was found, this gap is partly caused by the teachers' qualifications for teaching Literature in English: only 54 % teachers of Literature in English are qualified. It is also caused by the general shortage of teaching materials.

In addition, the study identified the aspects of poetry commonly taught by the Literature in English teachers and which ones are left out. It discovered that the aspects of poetry which are taught by many teachers are from the Semantic level of analysis which is taught by 77.2 % of the teachers who participated in this study.

The other aspects of poetry are taught in the following ways: those related to the Morphological level of analysis are taught by 11.3 % of the teachers of Literature in English, those related to the Syntactic level of analysis by 20 %, those related to the Lexical level of analysis by 22.7 %, and those related to the Graphological level of analysis by 41.3% of teachers. This contradicts a bit to what Sharma (2019), suggests to be taught and focused on while conducting a literary text analysis. This is a gap which eventually affects learners' knowledge and skill because they don't get a full package of what they are supposed to be given.

The teachers showed that this gap is caused by the general lack of proper skills and competence in the subject. They revealed that when they find a challenging topic, they jump it to the next topic which is easier to them. However, this gap is also instilled by the nature of Curriculum as it does not describe and inform teachers what they should teach the students.

Consequently, the findings from this study show that the students of poetry are at loss because teachers are not helping them to get the required skills while Suwastini et al. (2024) found out that effective teaching of poetry promotes language awareness. If a student from one of 16 schools is taught 39 % of what he is supposed to be taught, the remaining proportion of 61 % is a very big amount of knowledge and competences to lose. Findings agree with Scholars like Yalçın et al. (2017) and Maffea (2020) who say that learners are always the victims of the situation, when the content has not been covered, learners will hardly acquire the skills with no source.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This study explored how poetry is taught to students who study literature in English. The focus was put on aspects of poetry that teachers like to teach and those they do not teach. The challenges that teachers of literature in English face while teaching poetry were also examined. In agreement with Raees (2024), the study findings have several implications for teachers of literature: poetry is a medium for language and value enhancement. The findings from this study showed that the students are provided with limited, powerful knowledge and skills that hinder their ability to engage in high levels of critical thinking and related practices, and this is estimated to continue affecting them even in their future. From the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the participants, it was observed that the teachers teach differently in regards to the levels of graphology, syntax, semantics, morphology, etc. Besides, there are no common syllabi that teachers of literature in English follow in the teaching of poetry.

Lastly, the quantity and quality of education offered to Literature in English students at the Advanced level can be questionable. Teachers do not teach what they are supposed to teach due to lack of competence, lack of knowledge, etc. They also face different barriers that hinder them from offering both quantity and quality knowledge and skills in that literary genre. While the findings from this study cannot be generalized to all schools and to all teachers of literature in English in Rwanda, the situation may be critically similar.

5.2 Recommendations

In light of the findings, the study recommends the University of Rwanda, College of Education, set up modules on poetry analysis in order to equip teachers of literature in English with quality skills and knowledge in the field. In addition, it calls upon NESAC and their partners to set up service trainings for teachers in order to keep them updated. NESAC is also called upon to set poetry as a separate lesson. Finally, teachers of literature in English should keep learning through available online classes in order to get the desired skills and to collaborate in order to share experience, knowledge, and skills. Moreover, the teachers should not fear the teaching of poetry analysis. They should overcome their shyness and timidity. When needs arise, consult poetry study materials.

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