

## A Creative Teaching of English Through Love Poetry of Pablo Neruda.

Dr. K. N. Sharmila<sup>1\*</sup>, J. Rayappan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Research Supervisor, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamil Nadu

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of English, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamil Nadu

### Abstract

This paper deals with an idea that how English language could be taught creatively through love poetry of Pablo Neruda especially with special reference to the usage of figures of speech by the poet in the select love poems and it makes a study how a teacher of English can bring the students focused in language learning in the classroom atmosphere by inspiring them through their ever interesting concept of Love. It tries to explore every possible way to arrest the attention of the students by making them to enjoy the aesthetic nuances of literature by introducing the figures of speeches applied in the love poetry of Pablo Neruda. It attempts to establish a new avenue that how language teaching as well as language learning can be done effectively with the help of the poetry. This paper focuses how the four language skills can be taught through various ways. Through this paper, students may be imparted with the knowledge of literary devices beautifully woven with poetry and it will make them to inculcate a deep desire for literature.

**Keywords:** Creative, Teaching, Language, Learning, Poetry, Love, Students, Nuances, Literature, Skills.

### Introduction:

Love is an essential driving force of the entire humanity; it binds hearts irrespective of race, colour, nationality, caste, community, gender and language; it plays a vital role in the making of global brotherhood; it is one of the universal themes under the sky. No poet's oeuvre is complete without writing love poetry. It enhances and enriches the career of the poets and the writers of the world into the various phases of their formative periods. As a leading literary legend, Pablo Neruda gave a larger space to Love in his writings. He celebrated, mourned, enjoyed, excelled, breathed and beautified the theme of Love in his poetry. His love poetry remains as romantic, aesthetic, pathetic and to some extent erotic. His poetry is standing the test of the time to be a universal witness as a consoling guide to the lovers across the countries. His language of poetry is so simple to understand but deep and rich in meaning. He exploited literary devices to the core and made use of different figures of speech in his poetry. This paper tries to explore a creative teaching of English through love poetry of Pablo Neruda by introducing a few pieces of inspiring lines by the poet. And this paper searches all the avenues to teach the four language skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The target group of this paper is the Under Graduate students who are studying at colleges.

### English Language Teaching and Pablo Neruda's Love Poetry.

To begin with a romantic lyric of Pablo Neruda, this piece of poetry possesses a metaphoric language that would arrest the attention of the students. In the following line "Love, what a long way, to arrive at a kiss." In the above mentioned line, Neruda places a metaphor to define what love is; he compares love with a long way; he attempts to give a new and different meaning to love. Kiss is a romantic part of love-making. In another piece of poetry, Neruda compares Love with a journey as in the following lines:

Oh, love is a journey with water and stars,  
with drowning air and storms of flour; love  
is a clash of lightnings,  
two bodies subdued by one honey.

In the same part of this above quoted piece of poem, Neruda goes for another comparison between love and a clash of lightnings. Previously he compared love with journey which gave a new dimension to love; journey is always a symbol of initiatives, zeal and seal of quest. A clash of lightnings expresses an idea of revelation and catches the wonders of the nature. Lightning throws light which is short lived. He compares his love with the coal in another line "my love was the coal waiting ready in the earth" that shows how his love was very precious and peculiar in its nature and worth to be a wealthy one.

In the next passage of poetry, he takes the forehead, the legs and the mouth of his lady love for another kind of comparison as "Oh, bread your forehead, your legs, your mouth / bread I devour, born with the morning light, / my love, beacon-flag of the bakeries: "by which he reveals his sensual appetite and the cravings and longings of his physical needs as a typical young man. He continues to unfold his inner and hidden desires in another part of a poem as follows:

My heart knows the doorways of your hair.  
When you lose your way through your own hair,  
do not forget me, remember that I love you. Don't

let me wander lost – without your hair-

Neruda never hesitates to take hold of his love. Once, one of the great thinkers of India, J Krishnamurti defined what is love in the book Krishnamurti's Notebook in his words :

To possess and to be possessed is considered a form of love. This urge to possess, a person or a piece of property, is not merely the demands of society and circumstances but springs from a far deeper source. It comes from the depths of loneliness in different ways, drink, organized religion, belief, some form of activity and so on. All these are escapes but it's still there(15).

Neruda underwent a severe and serious sense of loneliness from his childhood as he lost his mother at his early age. This cruel loneliness experienced by Neruda kept on haunting him and pushed him in searching for a soul-mate who would fulfil his emptiness with love and compassion. As a lonely young man, he became a testimony to a line of J Krishnamurti mentioned above “ To possess and to be possessed “. Sometimes he becomes as a mother cat to carry his lady love in his mouth by scruff of her neck and sometimes, he ,as a kitten of a monkey clings its mother , grabs her strongly in his love poetry. He is at both extremes in celebrating his experiences in the art of love poetry.

Teaching of English language is a serious business which has different and difficult challenges to encounter, according to a usual and traditional point of view. Literature is produced with the help of language; language becomes a medium to understand literature ; why shouldn't a language be taught with the help of literature?. Poetry will definitely be a suitable vehicle to carry the responsibility of making language learning something interesting. Especially, the love poetry of Pablo Neruda will fulfil the requirements of the need to become an effective tool for English language teaching. Concentration of students is determined by the interest of the subject ; the interest of students depends upon the way of teaching Methods , Approaches and Techniques that are implemented by a language teacher . A teacher of English language can bring the attention of students very closer to a language learning by inspiring them with the help of poetry. The language teacher needs to create a thirst for literature among students ; the students must be introduced to the literary devices employed in literature as rightly justified the above discussed argument in the book Literature and Language Teaching in a couple of powerful words that suggest that “ Teachers need to make provision for sensitizing students or, to put it another way, developing in them the necessary literary competence to be sensitive to the kinds of styles, forms, conventions, symbolization etc”(18). It is said that literature is the content and language is the structure. As a matter of fact, the content is like a flesh which is so soft and given much significance in general ; the language as a structure is least to bother as it is made of bones in a skeleton. But, Without bones, there is no flesh. Bones of a skeleton are the strong pillars of a body. Similarly, there is no literature without language. The same concept of the aforesaid points were reflected and supported in the book Grammar by Frank Palmer who throws more light on the grey area of this concerned in his thought-provoking words :

It is to some degree true that the structuralists thought that there were no theoretical issues to be solved. They believed that language had a structure, rather as a body has a skeleton, and that it was their duty to discover it. But Chomsky's point was essential that the structure of language, if that term may be used, is far more abstract and cannot simply be discovered ; we need rather to discuss how you are to deal with the problems of language ,to evaluate rather than simply to discover(191).

Though students enjoy reading and listening to literature in and out of classroom atmosphere, they are very reluctant in language learning because of mechanical nature of language. That is why a teacher of language should follow a unique method of teaching with the help of poetry. For this purpose, the love poetry of Pablo Neruda will serve as a sincere servant to help students in the domain of language learning. A couple of fine pieces of his poetry will surely attract and arrest the attention of students is to be discussed in the rest of this paper. In one of his poetry , he compares the move of his lady love with a breeze in the below given words :

Your move through the mountains like a breeze,

Like a quick stream dropping under the snow:

your hair in its thickness throbs like the high

adornments of the sun, repeating them for me.

The description of the hair of his lady love is repeatedly found in Neruda's poetry which attests the intimacy of Neruda with his lovers. He unveils the closed glossary of his universal message to his readers. In an another part of a poem, he becomes like a child who seeks for its mother after the sleep ; he is unable to accept the absence of his lover in the lines to come :

Shut out the month's with your fragrance ;

close all the doors with your hair.

Only do not forget, if I wake up crying

It's only because in my dream I'm a lost child.

He employs the symbol of queen, wildfire in his comparisons. A copious use of symbols and images in the poetry of Neruda stands as a witness to stamp him as poetic genius as proclaimed by Gabriel Garcia Marquez as “ the greatest poet of twentieth century in any language “. Neruda takes pleasure in giving his lady love the status of queen by which he allows himself to have control over him in these lines “ when you were there with me I touched you, and my life stopped : / you stood before me, you took dominion like a queen :/like a wildfire in the forest, and the flame is your dominion “. Suffering from a painful sick of nostalgia, Neruda always is longing for roots of his native land that got a space even in

his love poetry. Being a Consul to different countries, his self- imposed loneliness and his strong affiliation to his mother and mother land is very apparent . This few lines of him takes notice of them “You come from the poor South, where my soul began : / in that high sky your mother is still washing clothes / with my mother. That’s why I chose you “ .Poets of any language as novice who write love poetry especially in their apprenticeship period of their formative years attempt to experiment poetry writing by giving much significance to the description of the physical features of their sweet hearts through which they find an outlet for the cravings of their sensual pleasures. Neruda, as an erotic lover, to the extreme, went in search for an asylum for his love sick by writing love poetry and here is an example of that kind :

Dearest, your shadow has the fragrance of plums;

your eyes set their roots in the South ;

Your heart is a clay toy shaped like a dove.

Your body is smooth as stones in the water ; your

kisses are the clusters of fruit, fresh with dew.

As I live by your side , I live with the earth.

In these lines mentioned before, Neruda makes an approach of dealing his love affairs in the light of natural elements. As an ardent lover of nature, it is the nature of Neruda to set his poetic verses with a blend of natural sources. He tries to give life even to the shadow of his lover and he personifies her with pretty examples of analogies. He philosophies his love experience to give a universal appeal to his poetry and tries to set his verses as metaphysical dogma beyond human comprehension as he shares in the following lines :

You must know that I do not love and that I love you,

because everything alive has its two sides ;

a word is one wing of the silence,

fire has its cold half.

I love you in order to begin to love you,

To start infinity again

and never to stop loving you :

that’s why I do not love you yet.

Giving philosophical approach to love poetry by Neruda would certainly bring the remembrance of Shakespeare, the grand master of love poetry automatically into the minds of readers. Shakespeare’s categorization of eccentrics in his play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* remains an interesting example to read and comprehend the critical mind of Neruda in the making of his love poetry in the light of Shakespeare that “ the lunatic, the lover and the poet, are of imagination all compact”. Neruda establishes his love poetry as Scriptures of religions to be chanted and to be ruminated by millions of readers all around the world. And this fine and final example in an another inspiring piece of his poetry will surely attract students into a spontaneous English language learning with these lines “ because in that moment you’ll have gone so far / I ‘ll wander mazily over all the earth, asking, / Will you come back? Will you leave me here, dying. Once again one can understand the fractured fissures of Neruda’s heart and its unrhythmic beats with torch of Shakespearean lines in the play *Hamlet* “ To be or not to be, that is the question “. As Christians wait for the second coming of Jesus Christ, Pablo Neruda keeps on waiting for the arrival of his lover in the everlasting lines of his love poetry. In the play *Twelfth Night* , Duke Orsino says that “ if music be the food of love, play on. Give of excess of it”. A teacher of English language teaching can alter those words into a different phrase that If poetry be the food of language learning of students, give them excess of it in order to make their learning atmosphere of students with full energy throughout their class hours.

### ***A Road Map to Reach the Destination.***

Francis Bacon , in his essay *Of Studies*, he says that “ Reading makes a full man, Conference makes a ready man, Writing makes an exact man”. As this paper intended to make use of poetry as an effective tool for the purpose of language teaching, a teacher of English language can build his student community very strong in the four language skills to become a great orator, a voracious reader, a literary writer and above all, a keen listener. The following recommendations as measurements can be taken by an English language teacher with special reference to the four language skills as follows :

#### ***Listening :***

A teacher of English language teaching can make the students enjoy the rhyme scheme employed in the poems that he teaches and he can guide the students to identify the rhyme patterns through listening. The listening skills of the students can be improved by the reading aloud of the teacher and by bringing the attention of the students very closer to learning with the help of poetry.

#### ***Speaking :***

The students may be asked to recite poems from memory and they may be taught to deliver the lines of poems with proper pronunciation in every single word. They may be guided to develop the habit of referring to the exact pronunciation of particular words that are unfamiliar to them. They may be instructed to make use of their favorite lines in their day today conversations and speech competitions.

### **Reading :**

Word Power is the bank balance of a language learner which gives a strong support in his gradual growth in acquiring the language skills. In reading poetry , the students may come across so many words that are unknown to them which gives them an opportunity to learn new words with meaning. A teacher can make the students to be rich in vocabulary learning through reading skill. Apart from language learning, the students may be introduced to the unique world of reading for pleasure through which they may become eminent scholars.

### **Writing :**

In the book *The Poetry of Pablo Neruda* , Rene de Costa made a mention of one of the quotes of Neruda that “ the hardest task of a writer is to write simple”. He did the hardest task and wrote his verses in simple language. Following the spirit of Walt Whitman and Wordsworth in writing, Neruda wrote his poetry in the language of the people. The students can easily dismantle any line of Neruda into a systematic sentence pattern in English with the guidance of teachers. By the technique of Guided Writing, a teacher can induce his students to write their own poems after reading the poetry of Pablo Neruda. Being a mechanical skill, Writing skill may be taught to the students to become aware of the grammatical elements of a language and they may be trained to write error free sentences.

### **Conclusion :**

Teaching of English language is an art for which a teacher must be gifted with the virtue of perseverance due to the mechanical skills involved in it. He must patiently be with students and become a student’s friendly personally to deal and discuss the subject matter in English language teaching. Play way method is the best method to learn a language ; Creative approach will surely help the teacher to use poetry as an effective tool in teaching English language and Imitation is an unique technique in language learning. In *Endymion*, as Keats says that “a thing of beauty is joy for ever” , a teacher of English language can make use of poetry as an effective tool as poetry gives joy to students. Once Walter Scott said that “When the Elizabethan poets played with words, the Metaphysical poets played with thoughts”. Now it is the need of the hour and the demand of the situation for an English language teacher to play with poetry into the game of English language teaching together with students.

### **Works Cited**

1. Neruda, Pablo. *Hundred Love Sonnets*. Trans. Stephen Tapscott. Dublin: Students Universe. 2020.
2. - - - . *Twenty Love Poems And A Song of Despair*. Trans. W. S. Merwin . Dublin, Students Universe. 2020.
3. Palmer, Frank. *Grammar*. Middlesex: Penguin Press. 1971.
4. Krishnamurti, Jiddu. *Krishnamurti’s Notebook*. USA: Krishnamurti Publication of America. 2004.
5. Brumfit C.J. , Carter R.A. *Literature and Language Teaching*. London: Oxford University Press. 1982.
6. Metaphysical Poets and John Donne. Web.[www.profaeem.com](http://www.profaeem.com). Dec.8 , 2013.
7. Keats, John. *Endymion*. London: Benediction Classics. 2012.
8. Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. London: Naple Press. 2012.
9. - - - . *Hamlet*. UK: Bloomsbury Publishing House. 2017.
10. - - - . *Twelfth Night* . India : Fingerprints Publishing House. 2019.
11. Costa, de Rene. *The Poetry of Pablo Neruda*. Massachusetts : Harvard University Press.1979.
12. Bacon, Francis. *The Essays or Counsels , Civil and Moral*. London : Clarendon Press. 2000.