The Role of Phonetics in the Teaching of English Language Poetry

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role of phonetics to the teaching of English language poetry in English language teaching classroom. One of the best ways of the teaching English poetry can be used through phonetics. What we should remember is that phonetics is a branch of linguistics, and thus it has central role in linguistics subject. Therefore, linguistics is the scientific study of language. A good knowledge of phonetics is very useful for English literature learners. In other words, the teaching of poetry along with phonetics rules in ELT classroom provides the English language learners the opportunity to appreciate language. The phonetics of a language can be viewed as a sound system of this language. Any scientific study of a language can be viewed as a theory of the structure of the language. There is, in fact, every language has a special system in understanding of the language. Note that the relationship between English literature and English linguistics can be considered as a bridge in order to develop learner’s knowledge of his language. However, by raising English language learners awareness of system of English phonetics can help the learners to understand better how use of their language. In this study, application of phonetics to the teaching English poetry and the effect of phonetics on English literature are investigated and therefore, several conceptions of phonetics and poetry are discussed.

Keywords: phonetics, poetry, linguistics, English language. Musical speech, English literature
INTRODUCTION

Before, we can discuss this topic; we investigate the important of human language. A language is a vehicle which human being through it can link to a social group in a society. Every normal human being is a member of a social group. Sometimes, man as a member of social group depends on the use of language in all his social activities, for example, cultural activity, daily activity …….. Human being without language has nothing to do his social activities. Language is a term by which refer to all the specific languages used by human being in all his communities. However, every society is formed by the activity of language. In order to know anything about man, we must understand his speech, otherwise; we cannot observe man as a human group in his society. Every normal child can learn his mother tongue in his childhood and continues to use through life. Chomsky (1964) argued that every child is equipped with 'innate capacity' which enables him to acquire and produce his language creatively (cited in Khansir and Tabande, 2014). The first thing, child should learn is that how to speak his mother tongue in his community which he lives. In English language, learning to spell correctly is very important. Khansir (2012a) mentioned that there is no one to one correspondence between spelling and sounds in English language, because of such a mis-match between spelling and sounds. A learner of English (even native child speaker) cannot be sure of how to pronounce a word he encounters for the first time in written form. We can conclude that learning of sound system of English is very necessary for learners of English literature as a second and foreign language so that they may be guided to solve their problems effectively.

Hence investigation of English language as an international language is important job for every English language learner. It is true that English is the mother tongue of the people of Great Britain. However, many nations such as Americans, Canadians, Australian and people of the South Africa are native speakers of English. This language is used as the medium of instruction in colleges and universities in India, Singapore, Pakistan, etc. In other words, Khansir (2013) argued that English language as language of international business, science and medicine is not only used in countries where English is first language, but also used in other countries over the world. Thus, English is known as the word's lingua franca,
and it is the common means of communication between the peoples of different nations. We conclude that learning English is important for non–native speakers of this language in order to join in his community. One of the reasons for English language learner is that he should learn sound system of English helps him how to pronounce an English word he encounters for the first time in written form.

The investigation of phonetics to teaching of English literature in general and English poetry in particular, has not been used mostly in recent years, but completely neglected. The problem to this idea is that some argue that the learners of English language literature do not need to be taught sound system of English (phonetics). It is important to bear in mind is that the knowledge of phonetics enable English learners to use the English language literature effectively and their ability actually to use this knowledge for better communication in their classroom. On the other hand, if an English literature student understands phonetics analysis and applies the phonetics analysis to the use of poetry can make a close relationship between language and literature. In fact, using phonetics in poetry is not only as an interesting activity but also as a way of improving language knowledge. Where phonetics deals with the speech sound of a language and literature is knowledge of a culture of human being who speak the language. Hence, there is a close relationship between phonetics and literature. In this case, phonetics resources of language have always been as one of the main springs of literary effect. Phonetics can be used as a vehicle in order to develop literary language. If an English literature learner is familiar with the phonetics analysis of English language, he/she can better understand of the literary text. He/she would definitely develop a keener insight when he/she reads an English poem, play, drama, and fiction. Khansir (2012b) argued that there are two kinds of using poetry with the language learners: 1) Teachers may feel that the knowledge of correct language is not yet sufficiently well established in students. 2) Teachers worry that exposing students to more creative uses of language could legitimize the use of deviant language in the classroom. According to this definition, it is necessary to teach the sound system of English language to the pupils of English literature. Otherwise, an English student who does not understand phonetics of the language may be confronted with the problem of not being able to appreciate literature.

The Effect of Phonetics on English Literature
Before inquiring the effect of phonetics on English literature, let us investigate the summary of phonetics. Varshney (1998) mentioned that phonetics is the scientific study of the production, transmission and reception of speech sound. In other words, it studies the defining characteristics of all human vocal noise, and focuses on its attention on those sounds occur in the languages of the world. The job of phoneticians is to study the various organs of human speech such as the lungs, the larynx, the soft palate, the tongue and the lip along their function in the production of speech. Phonetics has three main areas: 1. Acoustic phonetics is the study of transmission of speech sounds through the air; 2. Articulatory phonetics is the study the way in which speech sounds are produced; 3. Auditory phonetics is the study hearing and the perception of speech sounds. As one of the most problems for language learner is that how he writes down the language sounds and words phonetically. He may make a mistake in his transcription; this mistake shows that he has confused one sound with another. In this case, the role of language teacher is to teach the appropriate sequence of sounds to use in any given words by the use of phonetics transcription. Varshney (1998) argued that phonetics transcription is a device in which we use several symbols in such a way that one symbol always represents one sound. In other words, Jones (1972, p. 6 ) indicated that "phonetics transcription may be defined as an unambiguous system of representing pronunciation by means of writing , the basic principle being to assign one and only one letter to each phoneme of the language". However, the main aim of phonetics transcription is to record as accurately as possible all features of a word or a set of words which the language learner can hear and identify in the stream of speech. In order to improve the phonetics transcription difficulties of English language learners should be given more earing –training exercises by their language teachers in ELT classroom.

However, phonetics cannot be studied properly without touching upon the notion of phonology. Phonology has been commonly recognized as a branch of Linguistics. According to Bloomfield (1933), phonology is the organization of sounds into patterns. In order to fulfill the communicative functions, languages organize their material, the vocal noises, into recurrent bits and pieces arranged in sound patterns. It is the study of this formal organization of languages which is known as phonology. Varshney (1998) mentioned that phonetics differs from phonology in that phonetics is the science of speech sounds, their production, transmission and reception and the signs to represent them in general with no particular reference to any one language, whereas phonology is the study of the vocal sounds and
sounds changes, phonemes and their variants in a particular language. Phonetics is one and the same for all the languages of the world, but the phonology of one language will differ from the phonology of another. Macmahon in the handbook of English linguistics (2006) made differentiate between phonetics and phonology, according his idea, phonetics focuses on the mechanics of sound production and transmission, irrespective of how the sounds may operate as part of a language system; whereas phonology focuses on the function or organization, or patterning of the sounds.

In general, Phonetics always plays a vital role in the study of English literature. The use of literature came back to the eighteen century, and it is applied to designate fictional and imaginative writings such as poetry, prose, fiction and drama (Abrams and Harpham, 2012). For English language teachers a question arises that why the use of phonetics is important in teaching English literature for foreign and second language. Answered this question is that the first problem that confronts the English learner in his effort in order to learn a speaking – knowledge of English language as his foreign or second language is its pronunciation. Before, English pupil starts learning any part of the vocabulary or grammar of the language, he must be able to recognize the sound system of the language as uttered by an English native speaker or he must be able to produce them himself in such a way that an English native speaker understands him. The role of language phonetics in today's educational system of language literature delineates that to be phonetics in any language literature classroom; an English language learner must be able to use it for a wide range of purposes. A language literature student should have a set of language skills, knowledge, and understanding of phonetics that help him to use language for reading and writing in and out of his classroom. However, it is felt that English language literature teachers should be made aware of the use of phonetics system in teaching English literature in classroom. In other words, part of the role of the English language literature teacher is to help students perceive sounds of English. Note that the sound system of a foreign language is not easy for a second or foreign language learner. Each language has its own set of sounds system; there is, in fact, some sounds of English language are different from other languages. In this case, some sounds of English do not occur in other languages. One of the best ways to teach the learners is that they should be made familiar with the sound system of this language. The English literature teachers should check their learners’ pronunciation and help them to do appropriate pronunciation.
The learners of literature are great manipulators of the language. Phonetics can be used for aesthetic effect because it consists of variations of sound quality, intensity, rhythm, meter and melody. Poets, singers, and English teachers use these features very successfully to produce desired effects. In other words, rhythm and melody can be used in order to produce music. Poets make use of rhyme, alliteration and verse to influence their readers.

**Application of Phonetics to the Teaching English Poetry**

In this paragraph, we investigate poetry briefly. Poetry comes from a Greek verb which means to 'make' (Rezai, 2001). Khansir (2012b, p.241) indicated that "poetry is example of a more intense use of language". Robert Frost, American poet mentioned that "poetry is a way of taking life by the throat" (cited in Thorne, 2006, p. 6). For example, English Dictionary of Collins Cobuild (2011) called a poem as a piece of writing that the words and sound are chosen and carefully arranged often in short lines which rhyme for their beauty purpose. Poetry shows the art of a poet. A poet word is a nice word belongs to the great persons in the history of human being. However, anybody cannot write poetry. As in language teaching, it also plays a great role and it can be used in order to help students improve their language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. One of the main aims of teaching poetry in ELT classroom is to add the students' vocabulary knowledge in their second or foreign language. Rezai (2001) made differentiate between language of poetry and ordinary language; he indicated that ordinary language makes sense, whereas language of poetry makes rhythm, music, vision, senses and sound. In general, poetry can be divided into three categories: 1) lyric poetry is used in order to express the emotion and thoughts of one person and it usually is short and subjective; 2) narrative poetry is used in order to tell a story; 3) dramatic poetry employs dramatic form or technique. However, a poem can give a lot of pleasure to people in a society, and it has a good effect on a group of people and causes enjoy them. In the history of human being, the poet and his poem has changed the life of people. Sometimes, a poem of a great poet creates a motivation of one nation in order to reach its goals. People have been reading poetry in all ages and in all countries. Poetry belongs to all kind of people in a society. Poetry is popular in many countries. For example, a story is written about an Iranian king that captured a city that was far away from his place. His soldiers were tired in the war and they requested of a great Iranian poet that read a poem in order to change the king mind. The great poet read a poem and this poem changed the king mind and then the king decided to return to his place. According to this definition about poetry, a language literature learner should learn how to read poems correctly in his life.
because poetry belongs to beauties of human being. Reading of the correct poem is an art; a language literature student should be an artist.

It is important for the learner of English language is that he should realize the relationship between phonetics and poetry and, therefore; this relationship enables the learner to appreciate the text better. However, teachers who are trained in the field of phonetics can communicate their ideas more effectively to the teaching of poetry in class. Language poetry is like other language acts should be considered in classroom, though it has its own characteristics. It has to be examined as an event in a particular language along phonetics. Note that in each classroom, the difference between language of poetry and everyday use of the language should be examined. In addition, to apply comprehend English poetry and what a poet wants to say, it is very necessary for one to be comfortable and familiar with the ways of phonetics. However, the topics that are used under phonetics are innumerous but the ones that will be focused upon in this paper are in the alphabetical order as "Accent, Intonation, Meter, and Rhythm' are presented as follows:

1. 'Accent' is an important feature of an English word. Richards et al (1992, p. 1) argued that "accent is greater emphasis on a syllable so that it stands out from the other syllables in a word". The prominence in speech is affected generally by uttering that syllable louder than the others. For example, in the word 'below' the accent is on the second syllable. Therefore, 'low' is uttered louder that be. In a general sense accent and stress are synonyms. However, it is said that in the word 'below', the second syllable is accented or stressed. Thus, in all English dictionaries, stress is marked on all English words of more than one syllable. Hence, it is essential for English learners to know which syllable in a word is accented. One of the ways to find out it is to open an English dictionary and searching for the meaning of a word. Once the English learners know the stressed syllable, they should utter it strongly so that it stands out from its neighbors. In addition, there are a few patterns of accenting English words. As by seeing the word-ending (suffix), you can tell which syllable in that word is stressed. The patterns are: 1) word accentual patterns that are considered: a) Words ending in –tion, -ion. In these words the syllable preceding –tion or –ion (that is second syllable from the end) is stressed. For example, pro'motion and oc'casion. b) Words ending in –ic, ical, and ically. In these words the syllable preceding –ic, ical, and ically is stressed.
For example, spe'cific, me'thodical, and philo'sophically. c) Words ending in –ity. In these words the third syllable from the end is stressed. For example, responsi'blity. d) Words ending in -fy. These words are accented on the third syllable from the end. For example, i'dentify. e) Words ending in - ate. f) Words ending in –ate are accented on the third syllable from the end. For example, par'ticipate. Words ending in –ee. These words are accented on the last syllable (accent on the suffix). For example, refe'ree.
g) Words ending in –self, -selves. These words have stress on the suffix (last syllable). For example, him'self, and them'selves. h) Words ending in – ever. The suffix receives the accent in these words (the first syllable of – ever). For example, what'ever.
i) Words ending in ental. The suffix is stressed (the first syllable of –ental) in these words. For example, funda'mental. j) Words ending in –ial, -ious. The syllable preceding the suffix is stressed. For example, cere'monial, and in'dustrious. k) Words ending in – logy, -graphy- and tomy are accented on the syllable preceding the suffix. For example, psy'chology, bi'o'graphy, and laryn'gectomy. However, there are other patterns such as 2) grammatical function of stress. As there are a few words in English in which the location of stress is determined by the grammatical function of the word. Note that if the word is a noun or an adjective, the first syllable is stressed. In addition, if the word is a verb, the second syllable is stressed. For example, 'i'crease (noun), and in'crease (verb). 3) Noun phrases are other patterns in this part. In noun phrases, the most important accent is normally located on the last item. Generally, the last item is said with the tonic accent of a falling pitch. For example, 'Andhra Uni'versity. 4) Sentence stress is other pattern that accent based on sentence. Normally, the content words are stressed and the structural words are left unstressed. For example, I am going to Bushehr tomorrow. As going, bushehr and tomorrow are stressed and I, am, to are left unstressed. 5) The last item of this pattern is spelling and pronunciation. In English language, what is important for English language students as second or foreign or even native students is that they realize that spelling and pronunciation are two different. For example, the words of live (adjective) and live (verb); their spellings are the same, but their pronunciations are different. Khansir (2012b) argued that an elementary knowledge of English phonetics is therefore recommended to the non-native learners of English language in order to overcome the problems caused by the confusion between the sounds and spelling in English. We conclude that English literature learners should
learn vowel and consonants; identify affixes in English, finally they should be familiar with syllables of English words.

2. Intonation is a significant variation in pitch from one part of an utterance to another (Varshney, 1998). Note that intonations of languages are different, for example; English intonation is different from the intonation of any language. In addition, "intonation is quite a different thing from stress" (Jones, 1972, p 275). Hence the pitch of the voice is determined by the frequency of vibration of vocal cords. The pitch of the voices, rises, falls or it remains level and the voice pitch vibration produces tunes. They may be described as follows:

a) Tonality is the term of intonation that defined based on long utterances is normally divided into small tone groups while speaking and pauses may occur in the middle of the utterance. In other words, a tone group is the stretch of speech between any two pauses. In poetry, some lines have only one tone-group and some are divided into two or more tone groups. In some lines, the tone-groups end at the end of the line, while in run-on lines, the end of the line does not coincide with the tone group boundary. For example,

My 'heart is at 'rest/ wit'hin my 'breast/
Then 'come 'home my 'children / the sun is 'gone 'down/

b) Tonicity is also the term of intonation that defined based on during the speech, choice of a syllable to initiate the pitch movement is the next step followed by the division of an utterance into tone group. The syllable on which a pitch movement is initiated is known as tonic syllable or the nucleus of the tone group. Usually, the choice of the tonic syllabus depends upon the meaning, the teacher or the speaker wishes to convey. For example,

'Take the 'child for a 'walk in the 'park.
'Take the 'child for a' walk in the park.
'Take the 'child for a walk in the park.

Careful analysis of the utterance of the above sentences shows that all the content words are stressed and one the content words, in each utterance, is made by the tonic syllable by initiating a pitch movement. Note that normally the last important syllable in a tone group is made by the tonic syllable, if the context does not demand a particular syllable to be made.
especially prominent. If the most important word in a tone group has more than one syllable, only that syllable of the word (which receives the primary stress when the word is said in isolation) can be made by the tonic syllable or nucleus in connected speech.

c) Tone is the last term of intonation that is considered briefly in this paragraph. Matthews (2011, p 409) argued that "tone is a phonetic or phonological unit belonging to a set distinguished or primarily distinguished by levels of or by changes in pitch". However, finally, after the division of a sentence (where necessary) into tone groups and the choice of the tonic syllable/ nucleus, one needs to choose one of the following tones for the tonic syllable:

- High–Fall [ ' ] the pitch falls from very high to very low.
- Low-Fall [ · ] the pitch falls from mid to very low
- High-Rise [ ' ] the pitch rises from very low to very high.
- Low-Rise [ , ] the pitch rises from low to mid.
- Fall-Rise [ ] the pitch falls from about mid to low and then rises again to mid.
- Rise-Fall [ ^ ] the pitch rises from low to about mid and then falls again to low.

A stressed syllable can be uttered with changing pitch and then it is said to have a "kinetic tone", or it can be spoken on a level tone, high or low and this syllable is said to have a "static tone". As every language has different intonation, therefore; English intonation is different from the intonation of any language. Hence, it is essential to learn the shapes and also the meanings of the English tones. Intonation can be used to convey information, which is not overtly expressed by the words in the utterances. There is a chance of serious misunderstanding between the teacher and the learner, if a mistake is committed in the use of intonation. The meanings of English tones are important. There are two types of functions are served in English intonation are Grammatical function and Attitudinal function. First, Grammatical function is used when a listener can easily detect if a particular sentence is a statement or a question, a command or a request with the help of intonation. Second, Attitudinal, in this process; English intonation helps in discovering the attitude or mode of the speaker. The attitude conveyed by intonation needs to be interpreted within a given context.

3. Meter is used as the kind of rhythm. According to Perrine (1974, p. 733), "the word meter comes from a word meaning measures". Rezai (2001) defined that meter is the pattern of unaccented and accented syllables that form the basis of a poem's rhythm. In order to show the meter of a poem, the following line form written by Thomas Gray is
considered in this sentence: 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day', when the line's read, we automatically follow a rhythm that has an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one. There are ten syllables, so there are five feet in each line, a foot is the basic unit of English meter and is a combination of one stressed syllable with one or more unstressed syllables. A specific combination of stressed and unstressed syllables makes up a specific meter. Looking at the same line again, the stresses are marked and the feet separated, where '/' = stressed and 'u' = unstressed'. Thus, the following sentence shows this subject:

'The curfew tolls! the knell! of par'ting day'.

u / u / u / u / u /

The pattern of each foot is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one and there are five feet in the line. As the meter here is iambic (u/) pentameter. Each foot is separated by a vertical line (!).

Thus, the ways in which stressed and unstressed syllables are arranged in a foot are: Trochee ( /u); Iambic ( u/); Spondee (//); Pyrrhic (u u); Anapest (u u /); Dactyl (/u u). In this case, for more information about meter, the number of feet in a line can also vary, and the various kinds are identified by the following different names:

A line containing one foot- Monometer
A line containing two feet- Diameter
A line containing three feet- Trimeter
A line containing four feet – Tetrameter
A line containing five – Pentameter
A line containing six feet- Hexameter
A line containing seven feet- Heptameter
A line containing eight feet- Octameter

In addition, besides meter, there are other devices which lend rhythm to a piece of writing, especially poetry, and among these are the different sound patterns that a language can use.

There are different ways in which sounds can be organized in the English language. Look at these sound patterns, in the basic unit of a syllable with the structure consonant
(clusters), vowel, consonant (clusters). The similarities in the sound patterns are demonstrated by underlining the similar sounds as follows:

**Rhyme:** tell, hell, well - where the initial consonant sounds are different;
**Reverse Rhyme:** tell, ten, test - where the last consonant sounds are different;
**Assonance:** tell, hen, wet – where the vowel sound is the same;
**Para rhyme:** tell, tall, tail - where the vowel sounds are different;
**Consonance:** tell, fall, mail - where the last consonant sound is the same; and
**Alliteration:** tell, train, tail - where the initial consonant sound is the same.

Before going on to examine rhythm, I need to look at 'Enjambments'. The rhythm of prose or the rhythm of normal speech, sometimes clashes with the rhythm of poetry. As this result in enjambments (these are also called run online). In order to get more information about enjambments, the two poems are considered as follows:

A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;

There is no pause at the end of the first line in the example above. There is a grammatical overflow from the first line to the second. This is called a "run online or an enjambments. Here there is a clash between syntactic units and rhythmic units, because; we expect a pause at the end of each line in verse. Thus, enjambments can normally be identified by the absence of end of the line punctuation.

4. **Rhythm** is one of the kinds of sound system of language that has vital role in making one's speech effective. Crystal (2003, p. 400) mentioned that "rhythm is an application of the general sense of this term in phonology, to refer to the perceived regularity of prominent units in speech". In general, every job, we do, has rhythm. Perrine (1974, p. 732) argued that" the term rhythm refers to any wavelike recurrence of motion or sound". It is important for English language learner to know that any spoken language has a rhythm and the rhythm of English language is quite different from the rhythm of other languages. In English, the rhythm of this language depends on which syllables one stress and stresses in English are a combination of grammar and the lexicon. Let's consider word stress, which can be fixed and free. For example, in these words such as exami'nation; de'velopment; and 'monosyllable. However, the marked primary stress falls are fixed. One would be making a mistake if the stress marks were placed before
any other syllable in these words. Now, in examination, the primary stress is on the fourth syllable; in development, it's on the second syllable and finally, in monosyllable, it's on the first syllable. Thus, the stress can fall on any syllable within the word, not necessarily on the first, second, or third syllable. So, in this sense, word stress is free. Therefore, we say that English language is a stress-timed language.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, language is a tool for human beings communication and men use it for receiving and sending their information in their society. This communication can be oral or written. Therefore, language learners should know the knowledge of their language includes knowledge of the morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, and phonetics. One of the basic factors in learning language is speech sounds of this language. It refers to phonetics. Phonetics is almost as old as the language of human being. Birjandi and Salmaninodoushan (2005) mentioned that the earliest contributions to phonetics were made by Sanskrit scholars more than 2000 years and the first phonetician of the modern world was Dana J. Matthias, author of De Litteris in 1588. Ladefoged (1982) mentioned that phonetics is concerned with describing the speech sounds that occur in the language of the world. In summary, the role of phonetics to the teaching of English poetry has key role for the English language literature learners are needed to be familiarized with the ways of phonetics firstly and then the poems are put forth to them. For many reasons, thus, poetry starts with reading, and poetry makes sound, rhythm, music, beauty, feeling, emotion, and vision; a language learner should learn science of speech sounds of his language in order to read poems correctly. In this case, a language learner should be familiar with the rules of places of articulation which is concerned with many parts of the mouth and throat that are used in the production of speech sounds, and manner of articulation which is concerned with the way that a speech sound is produced by the speech organs. One of the most important for language learner is that he should learn how to write phonetic transcriptions in order to find out distinguish between spelling of words and their pronunciations. He should learn how to make differentiate between vowels and consonants in English language.

However, a student of English literature should understand phonetics of this language, otherwise; he may be confronted with the problem of not being able to appreciate
poetry. If the English literature student is familiar with the sound system of the English language, it can help the student for better understand of poetry and appreciation of a literary text. So the role of phonetics in the study of a poem may be help the learner receives the knowledge about the language and thus creates a sophisticated an awareness of the language in order to enable one develop greater sensitivity to the works of literature in general and poetry in particular and respond to them better. Keeping in mind the fact, a learner of English literature should know that poetry is musical speech and thus, within the perimeter of the article, In general, from what has been discussed above in this paper can be used as various devices by the learner to read a correct poem, because reading of a poem is needed to analysis it. Finally, the researchers believe that the students of English literature yet need to have knowledge of phonetics to talk about poetry. Therefore, understanding of phonetics of English language can be used in order to resolve the complexities of teaching English poetry in English language teaching classroom.

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