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THESIS / DISSERTATION SUBMISSION

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**Title:** Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry to Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners in the Motheo district

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**Submission Date:** November 2024

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of the **Master's** degree with specialisation in Subject Education in Languages in the Department of **Languages** in the Faculty of **Education** at the University of the Free State.

Supervisor:

Dr M Khosa



*Inspiring  
excellence,  
transforming  
lives through  
quality,  
impact, and  
care.*

## Declaration

I, **Mzwandile Trueman Buthelezi**, declare that the dissertation titled **Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry to Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners in the Motheo district**, submitted for the qualification master's in education at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education. All the references that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

*M T Buthelezi*

SIGNED

13 November 2024

DATE

## Abstract

Teaching poetry in the English First Additional Language (EFAL) classroom has been a core aspect of the English curriculum for decades in local and international contexts. This study sought to explore teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. It also sought to establish what makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL learners the way they do. In order to understand the teachers' experiences, the social constructivism and poetry teaching framework (POT) theories were used as the lens through which the current study was viewed. The study employed a qualitative approach within the interpretative paradigm. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were employed to sample two high schools in Motheo district, situated in the Free State province and three Grade 10 EFAL teachers. Classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with the teachers were used to collect data. Data collected was analysed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that teachers experience several challenges when teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners, which include among others, language barriers, shortage of poetry reading books, overcrowded classes, and the learners' lack of interest in studying poetry. These findings highlight the need for the teachers to be trained effectively in teaching poetry to EFAL learners with varying language proficiencies and also housed in classes which are overcrowded. It is also important to workshop teachers regarding how they should teach their learners to care for books used for reading in the classroom, as this could promote sustainability for the classroom reading materials. The findings in this study will contribute knowledge by encouraging educational authorities to support teachers in addressing the said challenges so that poetry teaching to the EFAL learners and across the grades can be interesting and stimulating.

**Key words:** Overcrowding; poetry; English First Additional Language, language barriers, cultural relevance

## Iqoqa

Ukufundisa izinkondlo ekilasini loLimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza (i-EFAL) kube yinto ewumgogodla wekharikhulamu yesiNgisi amashumi eminyaka ezimweni zasekhaya nezamazwe ngamazwe. Lolu cwaningo belufuna ukuhlola ulwazi lothisha lokufundisa izinkondlo kubafundi beBanga le-10 isiNgisi EFAL. Iphinde yafuna ukuthola ukuthi yini eyenza othisha bafundise abafundi be-EFAL izinkondlo ngendlela abenza ngayo. Ukuze kuqondwe amava othisha, ucwaningo lusebenzise ithiyori ka-Vygotsky ye-social constructivism theory kanye ne-poetry teaching framework (POT) ithiyori njengelensi okwabukwa ngayo ucwaningo lwamanje. Ucwaningo lusebenzise indlela yekhwalthi ngaphakathi kweparadigm yokutolika. Kusetshenziswe izindlela ezinenhloso nezilula zokusampula ukuze kwenziwe amasampula ezikole ezimbili zamabanga aphezulu esifundeni saseMotheo, esisesifundazweni saseFreyistata nothisha abathathu beBanga le-10 be-EFAL ezikoleni ezisampula. Ukubhekwa kwasekilasini kanye nezingxoxo ezingahlelekile nothisha zisetshenziswe ukuqoqa idatha. Idatha eqoqiwe yahlaziywa ngokwetimu. Okutholwe kulolu cwaningo kuveze ukuthi othisha babhekana nezinselelo eziningi lapho befundisa abafundi be-EFAL beBanga le-10 izinkondlo, ezihlanganisa izithiyo zolimi, ukushoda kwezincwadi zokufunda izinkondlo, ukuminyana kwamakilasi, ukuntula kwabafundi intshisekelo yokufunda izinkondlo njll. isidingo sokuthi othisha bathuthukiswe ngempumelelo ekufundiseni izinkondlo emakilasini e-EFAL aminyene futhi ahlalise abafundi abanekhono elihlukene lolimi. Kubalulekile futhi ukuthi othisha benze ama-workshop mayelana nokuthi kufanele babafundise kanjani abafundi babo ukunakekela izincwadi ezisetshenziselwa ukufunda ekilasini, njengoba lokhu kungakhuthaza ukusimama kwezinsiza zokufunda ekilasini. Okutholwe kulolu cwaningo kuzonikela ngolwazi mayelana nokugqamisa izinselelo othisha abahlangabezana nazo lapho befundisa abafundi be-EFAL izinkondlo. Lokhu kuzokhuthaza iziphathimandla zezemfundo ukuthi zibhekane nalezi zinselelo ezishiwo ukuze ukufundisa izinkondlo ekilasini le-EFAL kujabulise futhi kukhuthaze amabanga wonke.

**Amagama angukhiye:** Ukuminyana; izinkondlo; IsiNgisi Ulimi Lokuqala Lokwengeza, isithiyo solimi, ukubaluleka kwamasiko

## Kakaretso

Ho ruta lithoko ka phaposing ea borutelo ea Puo ea Pele ea Sekhooa (EFAL) e bile ntlha ea mantlha ea kharikhulamo ea Senyesemane ka lilemo tse mashome maamong a lehae le a machabeng. Phuputso ena ea lipatlisiso e ne e batla ho hlaloba liphihlelo tsa matichere tsa ho ruta lithoko ho baithuti ba Kereiti ea 10 EFAL. E boetse e batla ho fumana hore na ke eng e etsang hore matichere a rute baithuti ba EFAL lithoko ka tsela eo ba e etsang. E le ho utloisisa liphihlelo tsa matichere, boithuto bo sebelisitse theory ea Vygotsky ea social constructivism theory le poetry teaching framework (POT) e le lense eo boithuto ba hajoale bo shebiloeng ka eona. Phuputso e sebelisitse mokhoa oa boleng ka har'a paradigm ea ho hlalosa. Ho ile ha sebelisoa mekhoha e nang le maikemisetso le e bonolo ea ho etsa sampole ho etsa sampole likolong tse peli tse phahameng seterekeng sa Motheo, se profinseng ea Foreisetata le tichere e meraro ea EFAL ea Kereiti ea 10 Likolong tse entsoeng sampole. Ho ile ha sebelisoa litebello tsa ka phaposing ea borutelo le lipuisano tse hlophisitsoeng hantle le matichere ho bokella lintlha. Lintlha tse bokelletsoeng li ile tsa hlaloloa ka mokhoa o hlophisitsoeng. Liphuputso tsa phuputso li senotse hore matichere a tobana le liqholotso tse ngata ha ba ruta baithuti ba EFAL Grade 10 lithoko, tse kenyeletsang litšitiso tsa puo, khaello ea libuka tsa ho bala lithoko, litlelase tse phetheselang, ho hloka thahasello ea baithuti ho ithuteng lithoko, joalo-joalo. tlhokahalo ea hore matichere a ntlafatsoe ka katleho ho ruteng lithoko litlelaseng tsa EFAL tse nang le tšubuhlellano le matlo a baithuti ba nang le tsebo e fapaneng ea puo. Ho bohlokoa hape hore matichere a lithupelo mabapi le mokhoa oa ho ruta barutoana ba bona ho hlokomela libuka tse sebelisoang ho bala ka phaposing ea borutelo, kaha sena se ka khothaletsa botsitso bakeng sa lisebelisoa tsa ho bala tsa phaposi. Liphuputso tsa phuputso ena li tla tlatsetsa tsebo mabapi le ho totobatsa mathata ao matichere a kopanang le 'ona ha a ruta baithuti ba EFAL lithoko. Sena se tla khothaletsa balaoli ba thuto ho sebetsana le liqholotso tse boletsoeng e le hore ho ruta lithoko ka phaposing ea borutelo ea EFAL e ka ba monate le ho hlasimolla limaraka kaofela.

**Mantsoe a bohlokoa:** Ho petetsane; lithoko; Sepedi Puo ya Tlatsetso ya Pele, mokoallo wa puo, kamano ya setso.

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## Dedication

I dedicate the completion of my master's degree to my amazing family of ISikhalisezwe high school; my late sister, Bongekile, and my children, Asimbonge, Zanothando and Kuhlekonke; for the endless love, support and understanding that I needed throughout my study. You guys completed my world. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my family:

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## **Definition of terms**

This section defines the main terms used in this study.

**Poetry** - Poetry is “conveying a message – a form of expression or speech by a poet to an audience” (Muleka, 2014:152). It is a type of discourse and communication that poets give to audiences either orally or in writing.

**Genre** - A genre means any form of a text that keeps in mind its audience and uses a certain structure and style of language. It may include poetry, short stories, drama and novels (Department of Basic Education, 2011:91).

**Further Education and Training (FET)** – A training phase that starts from Grade 10 and ends in Grade 12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

**First Additional Language** – The First Additional Language is known as “a second language that is taught to non-English speakers” (Mavhiza, 2019:4). In terms of the CAPS document (Department of Basic Education, 2011:8), this is “a level of language that accepts that learners are in no possession of the skills and knowledge of that language when starting school”.

**Learner** - According to the South African School Act, “a learner means a pupil or student at any school, further education and training institution or adult learning Centre that is receiving education or obliged to receive education” (South African Schools Act, 1996:4).

## List of Acronyms

|      |                                            |
|------|--------------------------------------------|
| CAPS | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement |
| DBE  | Department of Basic Education              |
| EFAL | English First Additional Language          |
| POT  | Poetry teaching framework                  |
| FET  | Further Education and Training             |
| LTSM | Learning and Teaching Support Material     |

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1. Introduction**

This study explores teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners. The present chapter is meant to discuss the background of the current study, present the research problem, and briefly outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study. This is followed by highlighting the research aim, objectives, and questions. Thereafter, the significance of the current study is explained. Lastly, the chapter briefly describes the methodology used to collect and analyse data and outlines the scope and delimitations of the study. It provides a chapter layout of the research report, which summarises the content of each chapter.

#### **1.1. Background to the study**

Poetry is a compelling literary genre in the teaching of English language at any level, whether in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3), Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6), Senior Phase (Grades 7-9), or Further Education and Training (Grades 10-12). Reading literature, in particular poetry, permits learners to "use language that is more refined, literary, figurative, symbolic, and deeply meaningful than much of what else can be read" (Department of Basic Education, 2011:18). Poetry helps learners to improve their linguistic skills, grammar, and vocabulary and also develops their inducement in reading and writing. However, research conducted locally (Mavhiza, 2019; Cooper, 2020; Makgabo & Nyembe, 2022) and internationally (Cooper, 2020; Mellgren, 2022; Moea & Mahao, 2023) on the experiences of teaching poetry has shown that learners struggle when it comes to learning poetry. On the other hand, Mtetwa (2021) revealed that teachers themselves might not have been adequately trained to teach English poetry.

Syed and Wahas (2020) assert that teaching English through poetry can expose students to the actual content and enhance their language proficiency. However, they

also noted that when teaching poetry in the English FAL classroom, teachers face the challenge of learners' proficiency level in the English language and the chosen poetry texts (ibid). Nyembe (2021) also explains that learners have unfavourable perceptions and attitudes toward learning poetry. These could be what makes teaching poetry to EFAL learners difficult. Hennessy et al. (2021) attest that poetry seems to be the most challenging form of literature, as teachers and learners struggle with its content.

As mentioned earlier, several studies on teaching poetry have been conducted nationally and internationally. For example, Young (2016) investigated the lived experiences of practicing high school English teachers teaching poetry in the United States of America through a qualitative research approach involving interviewing teachers as participants. Maake (2017) examined the methods of teaching poetry to EFAL secondary school learners in South Africa to establish whether they equipped learners to interpret and understand poems taught in the classroom. Hlabisa (2020) explored methods that English second language educators use to teach poetry in the South African context, while Motlhaka (2022) interviewed pre-service teachers who taught poetry in EFAL classrooms to explore the teaching of poetry through an online classroom presentation at a rural university in South Africa.

Although a lot of work has been done on the teaching of poetry, and the fact that this genre is taught at the secondary school level as per the South African National Curriculum, there is still a need to understand further how teachers implement the curriculum regarding the teaching of poetry to the EFAL learners. Hence, the present study will close the gap by exploring the teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. Thus, it is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute knowledge in terms of helping teachers navigate various ways of teaching poetry in their classrooms.

## **1.2. Research problem**

Despite the importance of teaching poetry in terms of reinforcing students' grammatical and lexical knowledge as well as promoting their creative writing skills (Motlhaka, 2022), research (e.g., Hennessy et al., 2021; Diehl, 2021; Fithriani, 2021) shows that poetry seems to be a problematic part of literature as teachers and learners



continue to struggle with its content. Nonetheless, although several studies have been conducted on teaching poetry in the EFAL classroom, there is still a need to explore how teachers implement the teaching of poetry in line with what is stipulated in the curriculum. The current study could close the gap by examining the teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. Understanding the teachers' experiences is essential for improving poetry teaching to the EFAL secondary school learners. Also, given that the researcher is an English FAL teacher who teaches poetry to learners in Grades 10 to 12, he, too, could benefit from exploring how and why other teachers are doing things the way they do in their classrooms when teaching poetry to their EFAL learners.

### **1.3. Research aim, objectives, and questions**

#### **Research aim**

- To explore teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in Motheo district.

#### **Objectives**

- To investigate the teaching of poetry in the Grade 10 EFAL classroom in Motheo district.
- To establish what makes teachers to teach EFAL poetry the way they do.
- To recommend effective strategies teachers can use to teach poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners.

#### **Main research question**

- What are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in Motheo district?

#### **Sub-questions**

- How do Grade 10 teachers teach poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in Motheo district?
- What makes teachers to teach EFAL poetry the way they do?
- Which strategies can be effective for teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners?

## **1.4. Location of the study**

The study was conducted in two high schools of Motheo district in Free State. Motheo is a diverse district with rural, urban and suburban schools, providing a mixture of educational contexts. Schools at the Further Education and Training (FET) level in this district use English as the language of instruction across various subjects, and learners are taught this language at its first additional level. Hence, the current study focused on high school teachers teaching poetry in the Grade 10 EFAL classroom. The two targeted schools in this study are classified under quintile 3 because they are under-resourced and, hence, charge no school fees, as per section 39(7) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

## **1.5. Theories underpinning the current study**

This study is anchored by two theoretical frameworks: the *Poetry Teaching Framework* and *Social Constructivism*.

### **1.5.1. Poetry-Teaching Framework**

The Poetry-Teaching (POT) Framework is used in this study to promote the four language strands (speaking, writing, listening, and reading). This framework comprises the following six steps: tune-in, basic comprehension, detailed analysis, cultivation, bridge, and reflection, which assist in enhancing the idea of implementing poetry in language teaching. The six steps of the POT Framework interpret teachers' experiences in teaching poetry to Grade 10 learners. They also assist in fostering an understanding of how teachers do things the way they do in the classroom during poetry lessons. This theoretical lens also helps provide recommendations on how teachers can teach poetry to EFAL learners. Another reason for choosing the POT Framework is that it allows for opportunities to accommodate the teaching of complex poems for advanced EFAL learners and simple poems for lower-level learners (Gönen, 2018). This is an excellent way of encouraging teachers to cater for diversity when choosing poems for their EFAL learners.

### **1.5.2. Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism is a learning theory coined by Lev Vygotsky in 1968. The theory emphasises that “language and culture provide opportunities for humans to experience, communicate, and understand reality” (Akpan et al., 2020:18). Social Constructivism states that learners gain knowledge by collaborating with others. The social constructivist viewpoint holds that learners produce better understanding when they work with their peers. This theory also emphasises that students collaborate with their teachers, fellow students, and peers to create knowledge. Social Constructivism is a subsection of cognitive constructivism that stresses the collaborative nature of learning with other learners or under a facilitator’s supervision (Akpan et al., 2020). The framework is suitable for the current study to guide the researcher in exploring teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. Social Constructivism was also used in this study to highlight strategies teachers can use for teaching poetry in the Grade 10 classroom.

### **1.6. Significance of the study**

The present study, in terms of exploring the teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to EFAL learners in Grade 10, is significant in several ways. Firstly, it will help teachers teaching poetry across different grades in high schools improve their teaching of poetry to EFAL learners. Based on the research findings, this study will provide recommendations to help teachers identify effective strategies to help EFAL learners develop interests in learning poetry. The findings will also be significant in informing the Department of Education about the support teachers require to teach poetry to EFAL learners effectively. The current study may also benefit language teachers by helping them understand their challenges and acquire knowledge relevant to teaching poetry to EFAL learners.

Moreover, this study addresses the fundamental question of teachers’ experiences in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. It is expected that through the teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners, other teachers teaching the same subject will develop strategies and knowledge necessary to effectively teach

poetry in their EFAL classrooms, bearing in mind that learners are not gifted the same. Shortage of reading materials, flagged as one of the findings in the current study, can help guide policy changes regarding the provisioning of resources in public secondary schools.

## **1.7. Research methodology**

A qualitative research approach involving a phenomenological research design was employed in addressing the main research question: *What are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners?* A case study research design is relevant for addressing the research question because it permits the researcher to accurately describe teachers' lived experiences of teaching EFAL to Grade 10 learners and capture how they teach it in their classrooms.

The qualitative research approach was used in the present study to collect and analyse data. This approach was useful for collecting data through observing poetry teaching lessons in the Grade 10 classroom and interviewing Grade 10 teachers. Schools in this study were sampled conveniently, and Grade 10 teachers were sampled purposefully. Data in this study were analysed by using thematic analysis because it is significant in terms of examining the participants' experiences and their perspectives (Nowell et al., 2017). For this type of analysis, the researcher used the six-phase framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2012), which is quite helpful. The following six processes served as a guide for the analysis in this study: familiarity with the data collected, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing of themes, defining themes, and, finally, writing up. Further details for this section are provided in Chapter 3.

### **1.7.1. Ethical considerations**

Before collecting data from participants, the researcher applied for ethical approval from the University of Free State research ethics committee and permission to conduct the study in schools from the Provincial Education Department of the Free State. Participants were given written consent to sign before agreeing to participate voluntarily in the study. Although learners were not participants in this study, their

involvement during classroom observations warranted permission from their parents. Verbal consent was sought from the learners before observations could be conducted. However, participation in the study on the teachers' side was voluntary.

### **1.7.2. Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the findings in the present research was ensured by using the four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). More details in this section will be given in Chapter 3.

## **1.8. Scope and delimitation of the study**

This study is limited to schools in the Motheo district in the Free State province, which include urban high schools. Grade 10 teachers who teach poetry to EFAL learners are the main target for this study based on investigating their experiences and strategies in teaching poetry in EFAL classrooms. Interview and classroom observations supported by a qualitative approach were used in this study to understand the teachers' experiences and challenges in teaching poetry to EFAL learners.

This study is delimited by excluding other subjects or Grade 10 teachers teaching poetry to EFAL learners. Moreover, the focus of this study is limited to poetry teaching to EFAL learners – it does not extend to learners learning other components of the English curriculum, such as grammar, novels, drama, etc. The study only includes schools in Motheo district in the Free State province; other schools in other districts and provinces are excluded. While teachers' experiences are the main focus of this study, learners who are the recipients of the teaching of poetry content are not involved in this study.

## **1.9. Chapter outline**

The present report is divided into five chapters:

### **Chapter 2**

This chapter discusses two theories that underpin the study. It also reviews the literature related to the current research topic.

### **Chapter 3**

This methodology chapter describes and explains the research design and methodology used to collect and analyse the data in the study, as well as the data collection instruments used.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter presents and analyses data gathered through observations and interviews. It also interprets the findings from the data collected through semi-structured interviews and observations.

### **Chapter 5**

This is the final chapter of the study; it provides a summary of key findings for the research and conclusions concerning the findings based on the objectives of the study. Recommendations about the findings are also highlighted in this chapter, and suggestions for further research are provided.

## **1.10. Conclusion**

This chapter is an introduction to the research that was conducted in an attempt to understand the experiences of teachers in the teaching of poetry to Grade 10 English first additional language learners in Motheo district. The chapter provided the background of the study, problem statement, aim, research objectives, research questions, and succinctly described the research methodology. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework that underpins this study, and a detailed review of literature on the teaching of poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners is discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature on teaching poetry in secondary schools, particularly in the context of Grade 10 EFAL classrooms. The chapter first discusses the framework underpinning the study, focusing on the POT and Social Constructivism Theories. Additionally, the chapter reviews literature by highlighting what poetry entails and the purpose of teaching poetry. This is followed by discussing the teaching of poetry according to the South African National Curriculum. The summary of previous studies is reviewed in terms of highlighting the challenges and experiences of teaching poetry to EFAL learners.

#### **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

In order to explore and discover teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners, it is important to approach this study through a theoretical lens because such lenses are the foundation of research studies. The theoretical framework is a theory that guides the researcher in deciding on the research topic, research questions, literature review, research methodology, data analysis, and interpretation (Wagner et al., 2012). The theoretical framework is used to "establish or situate one's research, which is to show the origin of the research" (Maree & Westhuizen, 2007:38). This study is guided by the POT and Social Constructivism theories.

##### **2.2.1. Poetry Teaching Framework**

The POT framework enhances the idea of implementing poetry in language teaching. POT is also supported by meaningful literacy practices and it emphasises using literary works to reflect life experiences (Hanauer, 2012). This study uses this framework to promote the four language strands (speaking, writing, listening, and reading). In the current study, the researcher observed poetry teaching in the Grade 10 EFAL

classroom and interviewed teachers concerning their experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. As such, the six steps of the POT Framework, viz. *tune-in*, *basic comprehension*, *detailed analysis*, *cultivation*, *bridge*, and *reflection* (shown in Table 2.1), helped to understand how teachers are expected to teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. This theoretical lens also assisted in providing recommendations on how teachers can teach poetry to EFAL learners. Another reason for choosing the POT Framework is that it allows for opportunities to accommodate the teaching of complex poems for advanced EFAL learners and simple poems for lower-level learners (Gönen, 2018). This is another excellent way of encouraging EFAL teachers across the schools to cater for diversity when choosing poems for their EFAL learners. Table 1 below shows the steps and activities described in terms of implementing the POT Framework when teaching poetry. The activities make the teaching of poetry more accessible and enjoyable for the learners and for teachers who teach this particular genre.



**Table 2.1. Steps and Framework for the POT (Gönen, 2018: 31032)**

| Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Possible activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tune-in:</b> The aim of this step is to activate schema to lead learners into the poem and give them necessary background information. To do this, various visual and auditory materials can be used to create a relaxing atmosphere. A familiar key concept or topic relevant to the poem can activate learners' prior experiences.                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elicit main concept/theme through brainstorming or by designing a semantic map with key words</li> <li>- Present necessary background information related to the poet or the period via various sources (flashcards, slides, animations, online channels)</li> <li>- Talk about an anecdote or use background music that can be associated with the mood of the poem</li> <li>- Teach difficult key words and concepts important for understanding the poem</li> <li>- Design jigsaw activity by giving each student a stanza within small groups</li> <li>- Present or revise a grammar point evident in the poem by paying attention to how it is used in the poem</li> <li>- Talk about how linguistic forms are presented within lines by extracting samples from the poem</li> </ul> |
| <b>Basic Comprehension:</b> It's critical that pupils grasp the poem's overall meaning in this level. Poetry evokes emotions within the constraints of stanzas, therefore it's important to help students recognize the essential concept. To grasp the essence of the poetry, a variety of comprehension exercises might be created. Glossaries containing essential language might be included with the poems to facilitate basic comprehension.                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask comprehension questions in different formats (e.g multiple choices, yes/no, why-) or fill in the table/chart for the gist</li> <li>- Read aloud when appropriate to ease basic comprehension</li> <li>- Talk about what the poet tries to tell and how s/he tells it in a limited space via lines</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Detailed Analysis:</b> This stage involves a variety of exercises for linguistic analysis, literary appreciation/interpretation, and additional questions for a more in-depth knowledge. Furthermore, it is possible to examine certain nuances in the poem that could shed light on social, cultural, and value-related aspects.                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on linguistic choices such as tense or adjective use, and how they are formulated in the poem (i.e. how inversion is used and what effect it creates)</li> <li>- Find what referring expressions mean</li> <li>- Analyse cultural/social factors underlying meaning</li> <li>- Put together jumbled lines</li> <li>- Work on synonyms/antonyms of selected words</li> <li>- Translate poems into other mediums such as prose or drama.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Cultivation:</b> This is a kind of personalization step aimed at cultivating information from the poem into learners' own lives. At this point, they are familiar with the poem. Hence, they can be involved in various speaking, listening, writing or even drama activities (in pairs/groups) to foster interaction and linguistic practice. Linking poetry with popular culture may help to cultivate further interest in the poem.                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change the speaker, addressee, mood, tone or some linguistic aspects</li> <li>- Write/add another stanza</li> <li>- Dramatize the poem with background music and costumes, or design a role play activity</li> <li>- Create a piece of art about the poem</li> <li>- Discuss how ideas in the poem are reflected/changed in popular culture through remixing popular songs with poems</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Bridge:</b> This step targets at building a bridge between the poem and language teaching methodology. This step serves as an opportunity for training practitioners (PSTs) on how to use poems in micro teaching contexts. In the previous steps, they are in the role of the students participating in the activities. Thus, they form ideas about what types of activities are boring or motivating while using poems. This step is where they can value the importance of teacher's scaffolding to promote motivation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a sort of microteaching context and ask practitioners prepare a short lesson plan to use the poem in the class.</li> <li>- Guide practitioners formulate learning outcomes (for personal growth, cultural understanding or linguistic gains)</li> <li>- Motivate practitioners to use various activities given in the previous steps</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Reflection:</b> In this step, it is important to find out how practitioners benefit from incorporating poetry into language teaching, and whether efforts to bridge the gap between literature and language teaching are useful in practice. Guiding practitioners reflect on their experiences through various tools may help to create an awareness on using poems in language practice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use written reflections such as reflective diaries/journals and checklists</li> <li>- Implement collaborative and/or dialogic reflection tools such as ad-hoc self-observation frameworks and stimulated recalls based on video recordings of teaching performances</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### **2.2.2 Social Constructivism Theory**

Again, this study is supported by Vygotsky's Social Constructivism theory, which proposes that "knowledge is primarily constructed in a social context and is then internalised and used by individuals" (Vygotsky, 1978:62). This study used the Social Constructivism approach as a lens to highlight strategies teachers can use for teaching poetry to EFAL learners in the Grade 10 classroom. Hence, Kelly (2012) recommends that Social Constructivism can be applied in the classroom using the following strategies for teaching poetry: group work, peer teaching, and scaffolding. Each of the strategies is explained below.

#### **2.2.2.1. Group work**

According to Rance-Roney (2010), group work is a teaching strategy in which learners collaborate to build knowledge and complete assignments. The effectiveness of this strategy in teaching poetry is supported by Juhlin (2018), who demonstrated that group work has a positive impact when it comes to engagement in the classroom. Learners can develop skills like writing and communication and better understand the content covered in class when they spend time working in groups (Akpan, 2020).

A study conducted in Botswana by Galegane (2018) revealed that when the group work teaching approach is used in class, learners interact better than when they are contributing to classroom activity individually. Ahn and Class (2011) confirm this by pointing out that group knowledge construction improves learners' participation and can alter their approach to learning. Furthermore, group work promotes "active participation and interaction among learners, the teacher and other components of the teaching-learning process" (Akpan, 2020:38). Thus, group work seems to be a significant activity, and if learners work together effectively, there might be fruitful results related to classroom interaction.

#### **2.2.2.2. Peer teaching**

Peer teaching refers to people of similar social groupings who help each other to learn by teaching themselves (Nshimiyimana & Cartledge, 2022). This strategy allows the

learners to teach each other so that they can share ideas. Peer teaching improves the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Ibid). The effectiveness of this strategy in the literature classroom is that it inspires learners to take charge of their learning, which, on the other hand, promotes the development of metacognitive skills (Stigmar, 2016). Gal and Fallik (2021) conducted a study to examine the degree of competence of the teaching-learning goals. The study revealed that peer teaching helps peers learn while at the same time they are learning on their own. Another study that investigated the effect of peer tutoring on students' academic performance revealed that "students in the peer tutoring group obtained higher scores than the students in the conventional instruction group" (ul Ain et al., 2023:6). It goes without saying that students do better in group settings.

### **2.2.2.3. Scaffolding**

According to Yildiz and Celik (2020:18), scaffolding is an "effective teaching and learning approach in language learning as it involves learners in collaborative activities." Scaffolding refers to the conditional support that more experienced people provide to a novice learner, mainly in the early stages of learning (Wood et al., 1976). This strategy is essential in providing teachers with opportunities to support learners in growing their learning. A study that investigated whether scaffolding affects students' perceptions of the support they receive from teachers when working in small groups found that it helps students complete their assignments more successfully (van de Pol et al., 2015).

Yildiz and Celik (2020) conducted a study to highlight the benefits of adopting scaffolding strategies in language learning situations. They demonstrated that scaffolding could boost learners' competency in completing activities and allow them to become independent learners. Scaffolding methods enable learners to come to class with their prior knowledge and use it to learn new information. Interactive activities enable teachers to transfer knowledge to learners to escalate from the level of actual development to the level of potential development (Yildiz & Celik, 2020). The following section reviews literature that relates to the focus of the present study.

## 2.3. Literature Review

The review of literature in this section begins by defining what poetry is all about. This is followed by a discussion on the purpose of teaching poetry in the EFAL classroom and the teaching of poetry according to the South African National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Then, the section delves into the specific challenges that teachers face, including issues related to overcrowding, lack of resources, language barriers, and cultural relevance.

### 2.3.1. What is poetry?

Poetry is a concept derived from the Greek word *poeo*, which means “to make, to construct, to create and to process as an entity in itself and a text that is useful to human kind” (Matalon, 2020:74). As mentioned earlier; poetry is a genre recommended in curriculum policies to be taught in the EFAL classroom. Several scholars defined poetry in various ways. According to Hanauer, poetry is “a literary genre that presents the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the writer through a self-referential use of language that creates for the reader and a writer, a new understanding of the experience, thought or feeling expressed in the text” (2001:67). Tamara and Merentek (2019), defines poetry as a form of literature that creatively conveys emotions and thoughts. It is composed by focusing on the strength of language, as well as its physical and inner structures. Syed and Wahas (2020) define poetry as a complex type of communication that frequently employs figurative language, ambiguity, and paradox. In addition, Aydın (2017:247) describes poetry as “a text which has a network of linguistic signs, constructed within the parameters of poetic discourse and employing certain non-literal devices that characterise poetry.”

The intriguing aspect of poetry is that it does not exist in a single form, and there is no one best way to explain and comprehend it. Poetry is a combination of several colours to accommodate their varieties. According to Lethbridge and Mildorf (2004), poetry is seen as imaginary, uses specialised language, and often lacks a pragmatic role while remaining unclear. Trinya (2012:168) sees poetry “as aesthetic (or artistic) expressions in patterned language and figuratively condensed creative language”. Haraldsson (2011) adds that a poem is a text that creates its meaning through the

poet's use and placement of words within it. Poetry is a way of "sharing experiences, telling a story, expressing feelings or ideas. It appeals to the imagination through the form, rhythm, and word choice that can create vivid visual images for the audience" (Antika, 2016:27). Dlamini (2019) describes poetry as a literary form that exists to transmit the speaker's/poet's feelings about different social issues using a specific kind of language which arouses the readers' feelings and provokes thoughts. Lastly, poetry is a personal writing in which the poet conveys their emotions (Hanauer, 2001; Dodsworth, 1975).

All the different definitions of poetry captured above provide various aspects of what poetry is and what it can do, reflecting the diversity of thoughts on the nature and purpose of poetry across literature. However, of all these definitions, I adopt Hanauer's (2001) and Dodsworth's (1975) that poetry is often a very personal form of text that usually has no explicit plot and thus demands more of the reader (i.e., for the teachers to make certain that learners construct meaning from the poem and be able to analyse the poet's message critically). To summarise the definitions, poetry is a type of verse composition that expresses deep feelings and decent thoughts in a rhythmic, beautiful, and ornamented language produced to convey an experience. Poetry is taught in the classroom for various purposes which are highlighted below.

### **2.3.2 The purpose of teaching poetry**

According to the CAPS, the main reason for reading literature, in particular poetry, in the classroom is to "develop in learners a sensitivity to a special use of language that is more refined, literary, figurative, symbolic, and deeply meaningful (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Teaching poetry is an added method of revealing, reinforcing, and highlighting ideas among learners" (ibid:10). Poetry teaching is an essential component of any high school curriculum. In that regard, teachers of EFAL play an indispensable role in promoting the importance of poetry and its use in the classroom (Young, 2016). When examining teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners, it is crucial to remember that teaching poetry entails more than merely appreciating literary art. Hence, it serves various educational and developmental goals, as explained below in terms of the following aspects:

### *2.3.2.1. Language Enrichment*

Teaching language to learners “without teaching them literature is like feeding data to computers, that are devoid of emotions” (Nigar & Kostogriz, 2024:382). Poetry does not only serve as a model of language but also acts as a medium for improving four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Khan, 2020). Also, poetry helps both learners and teachers to improve their vocabulary. It broadens its audience by providing poetry readers luxury and a better grasp of their world.

A study by Sigvardsoon (2020) investigated secondary teachers’ critical strategies for engaging pupils with poetic texts. The findings revealed that reading poetry text can stimulate learners’ interest in the language because it allows them to experience the beauty of the language used by poets and provides them with a real-world setting, both of which can help to strengthen and expand their language skills. Amala and Oboko (2019) also agree that teaching learners to analyse poetry texts improves their language skills and inspires them to learn. Poetry can make learners and teachers enjoy the language because of the poetic devices used in the poem, and it positively impacts language skills (Ahmed, 2022).

According to Panavelli (2011), poetry allows students to expand and enhance their vocabulary more authentically, which learners can retain and recall easily. This is supported by Motlhaka (2022) in a study that examined the effectiveness of teaching poetry in an EFAL classroom at a South African rural University. The findings of the said study demonstrated that using English poetry as a model in the EFAL classroom improves students’ grammatical and lexical understanding while also developing their creative writing skills. Furthermore, Gönen (2018) conducted a study with young language learners and found that poetry improved vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension.

### *2.3.2.2. Encourages critical thinking*

Critical thinking is a process that “involves reflective and purposeful judgment when dealing with a problem and increases the chances of reaching a logical conclusion” (Dwyer et al., 2014:18). Critical thinking in education is a basic need to train learners’

thoughts. In this case, education institutions are “responsible for providing learning tools and learning activities that enable students to develop their critical thinking skills” (Aisyah et al., 2019:239). The teaching of poetry in English classrooms helps learners develop critical thinking skills. Learners have many opportunities to express and share their ideas and opinions through poems because there is no correct way to interpret a poem (Ibid, 2019).

Poetry in the classroom can be used as an effective tool for developing critical literacy within the classroom activity system as it has the potential to convert the learning space into one where learners can critically reflect on “their own experiences and identities while creating a safe space for the engagement with different points of view of other learners in the classroom community” (Wissman & Wiseman, 2011: 236). A study conducted by Dlamini (2019:15) revealed that learners can express their intuitive responses and viewpoints on “how the issues have been presented, looking at whose voice and perspective is regarded as powerful in the presentation of the poet’s messages.” Using poetry as a tool can foster critical thinking and meaning making. Meidipa (2022) found that learners become crucial thinkers when discussing the theme of a poem they are expected to analyse and interpret.

#### *2.3.2.3. Promotes emotional expression*

Another purpose of teaching poetry in the EFAL classroom is to promote emotional expression. Poetry allows learners to express their feelings and thoughts (Syed & Wahas, 2020). It is a literary text that enables readers to “experience contradictions between their past experiences and new ideas which spur an internal dialogue in what they believe in, their attitudes, and how the world is constructed for changes” (Wright et al., 2010:105). Perhaps this could be the reason why CAPS prescribes poetry as a compulsory literary genre throughout schooling. Reading poetry can help persons who struggle with self-expression, just like composing it. This is supported by Ugwu (2022) when he stated that reading poetry allows one to see into the emotion of another person, see what is weighing on their mind and their hearts, and can open doors to feelings that are sometimes suppressed.



A study by Jack and Illingworth (2024), which explored the crucial role of poetry within health and social care education, revealed that poetry can act as an accessible bridge, enabling learners to express their feelings while shielding them from possible emotional pain. It removes the need for avoidance strategies, which might impede the growth of empathy and interpersonal relationships. Through poetry writing exercises, students can discover a wealth of empathic viewpoints (Coleman & Willis, 2015; Jack & Illingworth, 2017; Joshi et al., 2022). Furthermore, Kaşlıoğlu and Ersin (2018:214) assert that teaching poetry can help “learners become more tolerant and sensible towards others’ differences and develop a sense of empathy as they read literary texts such as poems.”

#### *2.3.2.4. Cultivates Creativity*

Creativity is the ability to generate new ideas that are startling, understandable, and helpful (Asteria et al., 2021). Learners’ texts in class reflect their creative aspects of divergent, convergent thinking and elaboration. To foster creativity amongst learners, a teacher should encourage them to put down their thoughts using their imaginations. Through poetry reading, learners can develop creativity, which helps them become poetic writers on their own (Nyembe, 2022). Creely (2018:67) states that “poetry is everywhere – in songs, raps, commercials, novels, blogs and children’s books, to name a few. It is the most ancient and enduring form of literature. Perhaps it is the language closest to our consciousness as human species”. A study by Hwang (2016) revealed that poetry cultivates creativity for teachers and learners. In a study by Ngidi (2020), it was revealed that learners in poetry classes develop their creative skills if they answer questions and when they have to write their poems.

### **2.3.3 Teaching Poetry according to the South African National Curriculum**

According to CAPS, learners are expected to use their additional languages frequently for various purposes, including, among others, ample opportunities to speak the language. The main goal of reviewing CAPS in 2011 and implementing it in schools in 2012 was to improve academic performance, targeting a 50% pass rate in Science and Mathematics and a 50 % pass rate in Languages by 2030 (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The CAPS document acts as a guide for teachers to follow the

curricular standards prescribed. CAPS stipulates that poetry must be taught during the three-year FET phase. This policy guideline allows teachers to choose which literary genre they want to teach in each grade. According to what is stipulated in the South African National Curriculum in secondary or high schools, poetry is expected to be taught according to the following three stages: *pre-reading*, *during reading* and *post-reading*, as explained below:

### **2.3.3.1 Pre-reading activities**

The teacher is expected to use this stage to prepare learners for the poem they are about to read. The focus is on activating prior knowledge and generating interest in the poem.

During this stage the teacher may introduce the title, author, and context of the poem. This may include discussing the poem's historical, cultural, or social background to provide students with a framework for understanding. The pre-reading stage can be conducted according to the following levels:

*Predicting content:* At this level, the teacher can ask learners to predict the poem based on its title, illustrations (if any), or initial lines. This encourages students to start thinking about the themes and content of the poem.

*Vocabulary preview:* The teacher introduces vital vocabulary or phrases that learners will encounter in the poem, particularly those that might be challenging or unfamiliar. This helps to reduce comprehension barriers during reading.

*Setting a purpose for reading:* The teacher sets a specific purpose for reading, such as looking for certain themes, emotions, or literary devices. This gives students a focus for reading and helps guide their interpretation of the poem.

*Connecting to students' lives:* The teacher may prompt learners to think about their own experiences or feelings that relate to the themes of the poem. This connection helps to make the poem more relevant and engaging.

### **2.3.3.2 During reading activities**

During reading activities is an active process that requires learners to participate actively and critically rather than passively receiving information (Choudhary, 2019). This reading stage seeks to help students perceive the material holistically by building a fruitful engagement with it. In this case, a teacher could use the learner-centred approach to allow learners to develop ideas independently. This can be accomplished by assigning learners tasks that require them to brainstorm ideas.

Thereafter, the teacher informs students about what they should look for while they read the text in class, and it is at this point that the text is read aloud or quietly, and meaning is derived from it. It offers a dictionary of terms learners may find difficult to understand, how to read appropriately, emotionally, and using tone. (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The role of the teacher here is to facilitate and let the students interpret the text by themselves (Mavhiza & Prozesky, 2020). This phase involves several exercises, such as summarising and pausing to read (maybe after every stanza). When the poem is read, the teacher must verify that all learners understand it. This will involve the teacher teaching the learners different reading comprehension strategies such as predicting, questioning to help learners understand and interpret the text. Learners should consider why the poet chose specific phrases over others and the poet's diction and style.

### **2.3.3.3 Post-reading activities**

This is the last stage of reading. At this point, CAPS recommends that students should view and evaluate the content. In this case, students are expected to draw together, or synthesise "ideas in the text, summarise ideas, compare different aspects of the text, evaluate the text, draw conclusions, and express their own opinions" (Department of Basic Education, 2011:14). Students are also expected to compose a poem or text during this stage. At this point, they clearly understand what the poem is about and should be able to back up their claims or arguments. Learners might begin by discussing the meaning of the poem, using literal and figurative language. Hlabisa (2020:35) states that post-reading (after, follow-up, beyond reading) exercises first check students' comprehension and then lead them to a deeper analysis of the text

when warranted. Learners must convey a deeper interpretation of the text to demonstrate their understanding because of the negative perceptions associated with poetry and the low literacy rate around it (Young, 2016).

Given the explanation above, as per the teaching of poetry according to CAPS, it is clear that teaching poetry to EFAL learners must be done step-by-step, according to the three lesson phases, as they can aid in the development of learners' comprehension of poetry, including its ambiguity, paradox, diction, and vocabulary, provided they are employed thoughtfully and with consideration for any language hurdles the teacher may have in the classroom (Hlabisa, 2020). This helps students gain self-assurance in their ability to read and comprehend poetry and accelerate their learning of their FAL. The next section provides a summary of the previous studies in order to understand what other researchers established regarding the reason behind teachers teaching poetry the way they do work.

### **2.3.4 Experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to EFAL learners**

Teaching poetry to EFAL learners may be challenging to teachers, given that many learners who are taught English in the classroom often speak languages other than English in their communities or at home. Hence, evidence shows that overcrowding, lack of resources, language barriers, and cultural relevance (Moea, 2023; Makgabo & Nyembe, 2022; Ahmed, 2022), as discussed below, are some of the challenges encountered by teachers when teaching poetry to EFAL learners.

#### ***2.3.4.1 Overcrowding***

Different institutions and situations give various definitions of overcrowded classrooms, suggesting that no exact definition of overcrowding exists. According to Miron, Shank, and Davidson (2018), a classroom is overcrowded when the number of students exceeds the expected number of learners in a class, which causes a hindrance in the teaching-learning process. An overcrowded classroom has more students than a teacher can effectively teach. It can be a classroom that is so dense with desks that one cannot quickly move around the room (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). As mentioned in section 2.3.3, teaching poetry to EFAL

learners involves a range of activities and strategies which should help them understand and engage with poetry. However, an overcrowded classroom makes it difficult for teachers to give individual support where it is due, and the learners may be negatively affected academically. This is supported by Limene (2018), who established that overcrowding has negatively impacted learners' performance in the English Second Language classroom. Although the former minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, indicated in replying to written parliamentary questions conducted on the 17th of June 2022 that there are no legislated norms and standards for learner-to-educator ratio in public schools (Mathonsi, 2022) the learner-educator ratio for public schools in South Africa is 37:1 (Department of Basic Education, 2016). Classes in some schools are overcrowded and "present undefeatable difficulties for educators. In many cases, a teacher experiences challenges when it's time to give feedback to learners" (Ayodele, 2016:30). Ahmed (2022) agrees that the learner-teacher ratio is not implemented in 60 per cent of the schools in South Africa.

A study conducted by West and Meier (2020), in terms of investigating the teaching of English FAL, revealed that most classes in rural South African public Schools have more than 50 learners, resulting in problematic behaviour and a lack of discipline within the classroom. "Safety concerns also arise owing to overcrowded classrooms, with studies conducted in South African schools showing that overcrowding leads to disciplinary problems such as fighting, bullying and harassment of smaller/weaker learners" (Biyela, 2019; Marais, 2016; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Overcrowding was also identified as a cause of several sorts of inappropriate behaviour in the classroom, ranging from 'minor' to 'severe' instances (Ibid), making teachers and students feel unsafe. These studies refer to physical and psychological safety, but another research study has linked overcrowding with health safety. For example, in a survey conducted by Biyela (2019:9), a participant stated, *"I have experienced learners getting sick of lung diseases and heat stress in overcrowded classrooms"*.

Overcrowding is not the only challenge faced by South African schools. It is an international issue that hinders effective teaching and learning (Hachem & Mayor, 2019). For example, Fatima, Mushatq and Fatima (2019) investigated problems of overcrowding teachers face in the Muzzafarabad district. Findings showed that many teachers face the issue of ill-discipline in class as learners are not easily manageable.

Also, there needs to be more participation by learners in the overcrowded classroom (Ibid), where learners need to pay more attention to what is taught. According to Siperto (2017), crowded classrooms are becoming increasingly problematic in facilitating effective teaching and learning. However, the findings by Osai et al. (2021) showed that despite the issues of overcrowded classrooms faced by teachers in Ghana, teachers are still eager to work hard under the constraints of limited resources and large student populations, implying that they have the best interests of their students at heart. A study conducted in Nigeria by Olubunmi (2019) with 225 learners in language classrooms found a negative relationship between large class numbers and learner performance, suggesting that overcrowding may not be singled out as the main challenge in teaching poetry to the EFAL learners, hence, strategies could still be explored to maintain effective teaching despite classes being overcrowded.

Shah and Inamullah (2012) found that overcrowded classes could directly impact the learners' academic achievement. Classes with more than 37 learners, as prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (2016), affect not only the learners' performance but also the teacher, who must deal with different problems such as discipline, behavioural issues, poor health, and poor student performance. In the South African setting, overcrowded classrooms exist, with a learner-to-teacher ratio of 70:1 (Venketsamy, 2023). Another South African study of 150 Limpopo teachers found that overcrowded classrooms made engaging students, developing their critical thinking abilities, and conducting problem-solving activities harder (Matsepe et al., 2019).

Literature in terms of overcrowding, suggests that effective teaching and learning in the classroom will remain a challenge for teachers to overcome. Teaching poetry to EFAL learners in an overcrowded classroom may be a hurdle, given the difficulties of needing help to provide individual learning support effectively.

#### *2.3.4.2. Classroom management*

Classroom management refers to the steps teachers take to establish a conducive learning environment for student's academic and social-emotional development. Francis and Oluwatoyin (2019) defined classroom management as the expertise of teachers in successfully realising learning objectives by organising instructional

activities. According to Brophy (2006:17), classroom management refers to “actions to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction.” The definition of classroom management, according to Garwood and Harris (2020), concentrates on particular behaviour, such as teachers’ capacity to identify students by name, show excitement, refrain from using harsh punishment when dealing with misconduct, involve students in the drafting of rules, and set up transparent processes.

All the definitions above emphasise the importance of actions taken by the teacher to facilitate learning among the students. Due to overcrowding, teachers need help maintaining discipline in their classes effectively. As a result, they need to engage with all learners during teaching and learning.

A study by Irawati and Listyani (2020) found that one of the problems of having classes that are not easily manageable, particularly in a rural school, is a “behavioural problem”. They also mentioned that classroom management behavioural difficulties include verbal disturbance, such as talking, singing, and laughing while the teacher discusses the subject. Because of these behavioural issues, students would struggle to comprehend the material delivered by the instructor, and they may fail to gain knowledge from what is taught in the classroom.

The findings of the study by Junker et al. (2021), which aimed to explore challenges faced by pre-service English teachers related to classroom management, revealed that learners disrespect their teacher, did not participate in class, and even sometimes slept during the lesson. Furthermore, the study showed that “good classroom management is closely related to learners’ understanding of the materials in their language learning process” (Ibid:28). This simply means that if the teacher can keep a positive atmosphere in the classroom, learners will be more comfortable and confident in learning English poetry. Ahmad et al. (2012) suggests that effective classroom management impacts teachers’ teaching quality and student learning.

#### *2.3.4.3. Language Barrier*

A language barrier refers to an individual’s struggle with communication (Chun & Abdullah, 2022). According to Friedman (2023), language barriers are a lack of a



standard language system that hinders the effectiveness of verbal communication. This is one major challenge in teaching poetry to EFAL learners; hence, given the issues involved in the complex language used in this genre, learners are unlikely to engage with it. As highlighted by Rodriguez (2021:21), language barriers are “pervasive and contribute to misunderstandings and misinterpretations between individuals”. Mohapi (2023) adds that the language barrier hinders learners from understanding the poetry text to the level of expectation.

A study in Soweto conducted by Makgabo and Nyembe (2022) in terms of investigating the challenges of EFAL learners in Grade 11 found that both teachers and learners struggled to understand most of the words used in the poem. This made teachers resort to using code-switching strategies when teaching poetry. Given the challenges of language barriers, teachers resort to engaging the learners’ home language as a tool to support learning in the English language. This makes the teacher allocate extra time explaining and code-switching into the learners’ home language. The language barrier is one experience teachers cannot afford to ignore if teaching and learning continue to be carried out in the medium of instruction, which is English, in our South African classroom context.

Learners struggle to read English with understanding, as shown in a study conducted by Lemmer and Manyike (2012) in Tzaneen in the Letsitele area of the Limpopo Province. It has been reported that English is the first language of instruction in that area. Because their first language is Xitsonga, learners from this area need help understanding materials written in English. Some teachers also find it challenging to explain the poem to learners using their home language, as they are not native speakers of their learners’ home language. This often disadvantages learners.

McConville (2023) stressed the challenges of students learning a language they do not often speak at home, emphasising the need for bilingual/multilingual teacher training. Language barriers faced by the learners cannot be ignored (Makgabo & Nyembe, 2022). Evans and Nthulana (2018) claim that “learners in rural areas seldom have time to interact in English with English home-language speakers, and when they do, their interactions barely go beyond greetings”. The authors also state that the only chance for such learners to engage with English is through textbooks and exam



papers, resulting in a disconnect between these students and the subject matter, particularly when learning poetry.

#### *2.3.4.4. Lack of reading material*

Lack of reading material means no access to literary texts such as learner's textbooks, novels, short stories and poems used for different purposes. The lack of teaching and learning tools has a negative impact on student. A teacher cannot successfully teach poetry or any other lesson if materials are insufficient.

Maffea (2020) conducted a study on the need for more resources in classrooms and found that shortage of learning and teaching material in classrooms can be tremendously stressful for both learners and teachers. Not only are learners and teachers desperate, but they are also unable to reach their full potential because they are not provided with enough teaching and learning resources (ibid). Lack of resources meant to promote effective classroom teaching and learning can demotivate teachers and learners. EFAL learners cannot write robust, creative written text because of being deprived access to materials which are supposed to be used to promote teaching and learning (Maja & Du Plessis, 2023).

South African schools are not the only ones experiencing challenges of lack of poetry text or reading material – this seems to be a global problem, as Maja and Du Plessis (2023) argued. This challenge significantly contributes to lowering the level of motivation in teaching and learning (Mangila & Adapon, 2020). In Nigeria, Akinfenwa (2019) highlighted that lack of reading resources has damaged the reading culture that used to prevail in creating the best authors and publishers, implying that the literacy standard has declined from where it used to be. In Tanzania, Malekani and Mubofu (2019) found that lack of reading material was due to inadequate funds, as it is well known that the education budget in some of our African neighbouring countries is very low compared to South Africa's.

A study conducted by Makena and Mpiti (2020) in Limpopo revealed that in the classrooms observed, they noted that teachers had few textbooks and did not give them to learners to read at home because they were in poor condition. To avoid losing the reading materials, teachers stored them in cupboards and only utilised them in class, which is also not good for the learners who do not have opportunities to read outside the classroom for enjoyment. Similarly, Mojapelo (2018) discovered that the deteriorating situation with reading materials, particularly in historically poor rural areas of Limpopo province, denied teachers and students the ability to build and sustain functional classroom libraries.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The theories and literature reviewed in this chapter revealed important themes related to overcrowding, language barriers, lack of reading materials, and classroom management. These insights were used to guide this study's design and analysis. However, even though several works have been done on teaching poetry, there was a need to look at what makes teachers do things the way they do when teaching poetry to EFAL learners. Hence, to fill the gap, the current study aimed to explore the teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. The next chapter describes the methodology used to collect and analyse data in this study.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter identifies, describes and explains the methodology used to explore the experiences of teachers in terms of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. First, it identifies and describes the research paradigm in which the study was approached. This is followed by presenting the research design and outlining data collection measures and the sampling methods. Finally, the research site, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations are presented

#### **3.2. Research Paradigm**

According to Okesina (2020:5), a research paradigm is defined as the “researcher’s thinking or philosophical orientation or perspective that influences what is supposed to be studied, how it should be studied, and how the findings should be interpreted”. The research paradigm chosen to underpin this study is interpretivism. The central belief of interpretivism is that there are multiple realities which the participants socially construct (Nel, 2018). Interpretive paradigm determines the meaning of events by constructing meaning within a particular social context. It focuses on human experiences, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the participants within their contexts (Cohen et al., 2011). Creswell (2017) explains that the interpretive paradigm aims to comprehend the experiences of individuals in a particular context and situation. Thus, it is important for Interpretivist researchers to know their participants so that they can understand how they interpret the world around them and their issues and situations (Phangela, 2019). This paradigm is relevant to this study because it aligns with the research aim of exploring teachers’ experiences in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. Interpretivism helps the researcher interpret their participants' responses, which were gathered through observations and interviews in the case of this study.

### **3.3. Research Approach**

A qualitative research approach was used for this study. According to Maree (2019), a qualitative research approach focuses on interactions occurring in natural settings rather than seeing social life in terms of statistics. This approach was selected to align with the study's aim to explore teachers' experiences in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. Employing the qualitative approach helped the researcher understand teachers' experiences and practices in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore themes identified from the participants' responses through interviews in great depth and detailed interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

### **3.4. Research design**

A research design is a practical plan researchers employ to answer questions precisely, economically and with validity (Creswell, 2018). A research design is a plan or blueprint that specifies the data-gathering methods to be used and the data analysis to be done (Maree, 2016). Case study was used as a research design for this study. Yin (2018) describes a case study as a comprehensive investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in its natural context, particularly when no clear distinctions between the phenomenon and context can be made. A single case study method in this study was employed, since the data was from two schools that are located in one district. Using a single case study was suitable for this study because the researcher was able to make comparisons and to identify contrasts across the data collected from the two schools from one district and one quantile.

### **3.5. Sampling**

According to Yin (2011), sampling is selecting a group of people or objects for a study in which a small sample of subjects is chosen to represent the broader population from which they are assigned. There are different types of sampling methods in research, including purposive, convenience, snowball, and theoretical sampling methods.

Purposive and convenience sampling methods were employed in this study to select the research site and participants.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which participants are selected for inclusion in the study because they are the easiest for the researcher to access (Anney, 2014). Two schools in Motheo district were selected conveniently based on accessibility as they are situated in the same circuit where the researcher works as a teacher. Additionally, convenient sampling was chosen because it was less time-consuming and made the data collection process more accessible regarding conducting observations and interviews with teachers.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), participants in purposive sampling are selected to be included in the study according to the specific characteristics or knowledge they have.” Hence, three teachers (one from School A and two from School B) were selected based on having taught EFAL for more than five years in Grade 10 and also teaching poetry as one of their literature genres. Another reason why only is because School A had only two Grade 10 classes which was taught by one teacher. Table 3.1 below presents the teachers’ and the schools’ profiles.

**Table 3.1. Demographic details of teachers and schools**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>School</b> | <b>Type of the school</b> | <b>Teachers' home language</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Subject &amp; grade</b>                     | <b>Teaching experience</b> | <b>Qualification</b>                                                                    |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher A   | School A      | quintile 3                | Sesotho                        | 39         | Male          | English FAL Grades 10-12.                      | 15                         | Bachelor of Arts in Education, Bachelor of Education, and Honours (Inclusive Education) |
| Teacher B   | School B      | quintile 3                | Sesotho                        | 49         | Female        | English FAL Grade 10-12                        | 25                         | Diploma in Education                                                                    |
| Teacher C   | School B      | quintile 3                | IsiXhosa                       | 32         | Female        | English FAL Grade 10-11 and Sesotho Grade 8-10 | 8                          | Bachelor of Education and Honours in Education (Curriculum studies)                     |

The work experience of teachers sampled in this study as EFAL teachers ranges between 8 and 25 years. The said number of years suggests that all the teachers had adequate experience in teaching EFAL and that they would have possibly experienced different challenges in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. This, therefore, enabled the participants to provide the required data to assist in responding to the research questions. However, Teacher B seems to be the longest-serving teacher than the others. Although the teachers had quite adequate teaching experience, as noted during observations, the number of years in the field may not necessarily guarantee that what is happening in the classroom matches the teaching experience already accrued.

### **3.6 Research setting and context**

A research site is defined by Given (2008) as the physical, social, and cultural location where the study is carried out. This study was conducted in two high schools in Motheo district in the Free State Province of South Africa. These schools were selected based on their diverse student populations, varying resource levels, and their inclusion of the EFAL curriculum for teaching and learning. Each of the schools chosen has distinct characteristics, as indicated below:

**School A** is a quintile 3 school situated in the township. It is a well-resourced public school with a student population of approximately 1300. The school serves a diverse group of learners from various socio-economic backgrounds. It has a strong academic reputation, particularly in language studies, and offers multiple extracurricular activities, including a poetry club encouraging student engagement with literature.

**School B** is also a quintile 3 school situated in a township area. However, it is an under-resourced public school with around 2400 learners. The student body is predominantly from low-income families, and the school struggles with issues such as inadequate teaching materials and a high student-teacher ratio. The school has a close-knit community and teachers who are deeply invested in their students' success, particularly in overcoming language barriers in learning.

### 3.6.1. Socio-economic and cultural context

These schools' socio-economic and cultural contexts vary significantly, which has implications for the teaching and learning environment. School A learners have access to various educational resources, such as libraries and cultural activities, whereas School B faces more significant challenges regarding resources and infrastructure. School B needs libraries or more classes, hence, classes in this school are large. The cultural diversity among students varies, with School A having a more multicultural student body than the predominantly homogenous population at School B.

## 3.7. Data collection methods

The data collected from teachers at the two schools sampled was done through interviews and classroom observations.

### 3.7.1. Interviews

According to Cohen et al. (2011) and Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014), an interview is a type of conversation that enables two or more people to share their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about a certain subject. Depending on the information and requirements being addressed, interviews can take several forms, which fall into three categories: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (Flick, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2014). For this study, semi-structured questions were formulated and utilised to conduct the interviews with teachers. Boeije (2010) states that semi-structured interviews permit participants to share their views, stories, and experiences about a particular phenomenon. This type of interview allows researchers to follow up or probe further for clarity from the participants' responses. The interview schedule used, included two sections: **Section A** comprises biographic data of the participants, and **Section B** includes open-ended questions (Appendix F).



### **3.7.2 Observations**

Observation provides opportunities for researchers to check nonverbal expressions of feelings from observing the participants on a particular phenomenon (Taherdoost, 2021). Observation is classified as a participatory study because the researcher must fully immerse oneself in the participants' surroundings while taking notes and recording. The current study used an observation schedule to collect data during poetry lessons in the EFAL Grade 10 classroom. This instrument was designed according to the six-step POT Framework (see Appendix G), which included the following aspects: to examine whether the teaching of poetry in the Grade 10 classroom is conducted in line with what is recommended in the EFAL CAPS and whether it is done for the benefit of the learners or not. Non-participant observation was used during the observations in all the sampled schools. Hence, classroom lessons were not disturbed nor distracted despite the researcher's presence in the classroom. Below is an outline of the procedures for collecting data through interviews and classroom observations.

### **3.7.3 Procedures**

The researcher arrived earlier in the morning at 7:30 am before the classes started. The researcher was invited to sit at the back of the class in School A for both Teacher A and Teacher C classroom, but in School B, in Teacher C's classroom, the researcher was offered the desk in the front row. The lessons observed lasted approximately 55 minutes per session. The researcher took notes during the observation to supplement the data captured in the interview schedule.

Interviews were conducted with each teacher at their respective schools. The duration of the interviews was approximately 70 minutes for each teacher. Teachers were given enough time to respond to questions, which helped the researcher gather enough data. The interviews were conducted during the teachers' free periods to avoid disturbing their teaching and learning time. The interviews were conducted in English as the researcher is not proficient in the teachers' home languages, Sesotho and isiXhosa.

### 3.7.4. Data analysis

As shown in Figure 3.1, this study used thematic analysis to analyse data because it is important for assessing the views of various research participants (Nowell et al., 2017) in qualitative research. Data were analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2012) six-phase framework:

- Familiarity with the data collected
- Generation of initial codes
- Searching for themes
- Reviewing of themes
- Defining themes and writing up
- Writing up

The figure below shows the stages of the thematic analysis process followed when analysing data.

**Figure 3.1: Stages of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)**



#### 3.7.4.1. Familiarity with the data

The data collected by interviewing teachers was audio recorded. To develop familiarity with the recorded data, the researcher listened to the audio several times and transcribed the recording. The observation schedule and field notes were used to supplement what was observed in the classroom during lessons. Hence, the

researcher, in this case, had to read all the information to become familiar with what was happening in the classroom.

#### **3.7.4.2. Generating initial codes**

At this stage, the researcher generated initial codes of the collected data. The data was coded because the questions asked to all the participants were the same, and the observation schedule used was the same. The researcher did this by manually colour-coding the transcripts using pens and highlighters. The sections of text were highlighted using different colours to describe their content.

#### **3.7.4.3. Searching for themes**

After being satisfied that the codes aligned with the research questions, the researcher focused on identifying patterns of meaning. The penultimate step was establishing themes, which were made up of grouped codes. A single category was used to give meaning to codes that were combined. The researcher divided the data collected into categories as data analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, trends and relationships, to show similarities and differences within the participants' experiences in their poetry teaching.

#### **3.7.4.4. Reviewing themes**

At this point, the researcher gathered all the relevant data for each theme. The researcher read the data associated with each theme and considered whether the data supported the themes identified.

#### **3.7.4.5. Defining themes**

The data was then grouped into themes and sub-themes. Repeated themes and sub-themes from the data were utilised to understand the experiences that teachers face when teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. Determining the precise meaning of each theme and how it could help with data understanding were necessary steps in defining and naming themes. The themes were categorised to search for similarities

and differences in how the participants gave meaning to their circumstances. The researcher then combined the various constructions.

#### **3.7.4.6. Writing up**

In this stage, the researcher wrote the final report from the data collected and submitted it for examination.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness**

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), trustworthiness refers to the degree to which the findings of the study can be trusted. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that interpretivism must meet the principles of trustworthiness for the data collected and analysed. Hence, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were taken into consideration in this study, as outlined below:

#### **3.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the level of accuracy of the interpretation of data received from participants. This helps indicate that the research was completed cautiously to ensure the phenomenon was correctly identified and described (De Vos et al., 2011). Credibility was ensured by avoiding recording incorrect or misconstrued responses. Hence, the researcher in this study constantly recorded the development process during the research and verified participants' responses. Additionally, the researcher personally collected data and immersed himself in the participants to confirm the credibility of the study. The raw data transcribed from the interviews was given to the participants for review and self-correct.

#### **3.8.2 Confirmability**

Ensuring that a researcher has no biases or control over the study is known as conformability (Rule & John, 2011). This was done by revealing to the teacher participants that the researcher was an English teacher who currently teaches Grades 10 to 12 levels in the Motheo district, where the targeted schools were sampled.

Creswell (2014:36) maintains that “a researcher should extend time with the participant to confirm and ensure that correct, reliable data is captured.” By adhering to the correct procedures for data collection and analysis, the researcher in this study ensured confirmability, which was supported throughout the study, regardless of whether the procedures were appropriate.

### **3.8.3 Dependability**

According to Bitsch (2005), dependability refers to the stability of findings over time. Dependability is the capacity of a study to be auditable by another researcher if they follow the primary researcher’s decision-making process to reach comparable conclusions. To ensure dependability, field notes were used to supplement the data collected through the observation schedule to make sure that all the necessary information was well captured in both instruments. An audio tape recorder was used to capture interview responses, which were also transcribed verbatim.

### **3.8.4 Transferability**

The degree to which the findings of a study can be applied to different settings or situations is transferability (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). For readers to assess the transferability of the findings, a detailed explanation of the data is essential to enabling transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Purposive sampling is another strategy employed to provide a thorough explanation for selecting the research context and the participants, making the results more readily comparable to those of other studies conducted elsewhere.

## **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

In order to protect the image of the university and the dignity of the participants, ethical principles were adhered to in this study. This was achieved by avoiding harm to all participants while conducting the current study. This means that the rights and welfare of the participants in this study were protected. The University of Free State Ethics Committee assessed the study as its proposal stage to ensure that the research

procedures met all the ethical requirements and granted approval for the study (see Appendix B). The participants' identities were protected by using pseudonyms when writing up the project. For example, A and B codes were used to name the two schools, and Teacher A, B and C codes were used for teachers to ensure voluntary participation. Participants were asked for permission to take part in the study. They were also allowed to withdraw from the study at any time during the process without being disadvantaged and with no questions being asked. The consent form clearly reflects these ethical principles (see Appendix E), which participants were asked to read and understand before signing. Permission to collect data was requested from the Department of Education in the Free State province under Motheo district (see Appendix A).

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter identified, described and explained the research methodology employed in this study. The choice of the case study research design was justified based on the aim and objectives of the study, ensuring the approach was relevant and rigorous. The sampling methods, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures were carefully selected to align with the objectives of the current study and to make sure that the trustworthiness of the findings was fulfilled. The chapter also addressed the ethical principles which were considered for protecting the participants and ensuring the integrity of the research process. The next chapter details the presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This study explores teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 learners in the context of EFAL classrooms. Hence, the primary goal of the current study was to understand the experiences that shape teachers' approaches to teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. Teaching poetry within an EFAL context presents unique challenges, including language barriers, learners' varied levels of interest and comprehension, as well as the complexity of poetic texts.

The study was guided by the following key objectives and research questions:

##### **Objectives:**

- To investigate the teaching of poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in Motheo district.
- To establish what makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners the way they do.
- To recommend strategies teachers can use to teach poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners.

##### **Research questions**

- What are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in Motheo district?

##### **Sub-questions**

- How do Grade 10 teachers teach poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in Motheo district?
- What makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL learners the way they do?

- Which strategies can be effective for teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners?

Data for the current study were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with three Grade 10 EFAL teachers from two schools. These teachers had a range of experiences and backgrounds, providing a rich diversity of perspectives on poetry teaching. The findings provide insight into the everyday realities faced by teachers, including the challenges and benefits of teaching poetry to the EFAL Grade 10 learners.

This first present the classroom observation findings collected from Teachers A, B, and C in Schools A and B in Motheo district. This is followed by presenting the interview findings gathered from the three teachers. The interview responses of the teachers were organised into themes which were identified from the analysis of the data. As mentioned in section 3.7.3, teachers in all the schools visited were interviewed in English, and their responses were *italicised* in the form of quotes. To protect the identity of participants, the following codes are used to name the schools and teachers throughout the presentation: Teachers A, B and C, and Schools A and B. Lastly, the findings from classroom observations and interviews are interpreted from the themes identified in the study.

## **4.2. Presentation of findings from classroom observations**

This section presents the findings from the lessons observed in two schools (one from School A and two from School B). Although two poetry lessons were conducted in School B, only one from each teacher was considered for the purpose of balancing the analysis in all three lessons observed.

### **4.2.1. Observation of Teacher A's poetry lesson in School A**

In School A, only one poetry lesson was observed because there was only one teacher teaching Grade 10 EFAL and the teacher preferred to be observed in one lesson. The observation took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2024 at 08h00 am, and the lesson lasted approximately 55 minutes. Figure 4.1 below shows the classroom of Teacher A.





*Figure 4.2: Classroom of Teacher A*

The EFAL Grade 10 classroom was set up in a way that made it easier to teach and learn during the poetry session. Although the class had 46 learners, seated one per desk, others were standing because all the chairs were occupied. The furniture was organised in rows; the teacher could easily move around the classroom while teaching. Despite the chalkboard's overall good condition, there were certain spots that were so damaged that the teacher was unable to write anything on them. There was a challenge of resources; for instance, there were only 15 learners' textbooks, which were packed in the classroom's front corner, so the teacher had to rely on photocopies.

When the poetry lesson in Teacher A commenced, he greeted the learners and instructed them to sit according to their respective groups of 6. The teacher then asked the learners to take out their exercise books. He introduced the topic of the lesson by telling the whole class that they were going to analyse the poem titled *Shantytowns*. The teacher gave the learners copies of the poem and asked them to read it silently by themselves before he could read it together with them. The teacher moved around while the whole class was busy reading the poem silently. After reading, the teacher then joined them in reading the poem aloud. However, learners standing at the back were unable to hear the teacher while guiding the reading aloud. Because most learners did not seem to have followed the reading, they kept on raising their hands to seek clarity from the teacher. The teacher read the poem two times before he analysed it with the learners. After the second reading of the poem, he asked the learners questions related to the poem. Some were able to answer correctly, but others could not. The teacher thanked the learners who provided the answers.

The teacher then explained the meaning of concepts in the poem. Thereafter, he analysed the poem, and some of the learners looked confused as they kept on asking questions, suggesting that they did not seem to have understood the poem. The

teacher tried to explain the poem to the learners using the learners' home language (Sesotho). Learners seemed to understand what the poem was about after it was explained in their home language. When the teacher analysed the poem with the learners, he wrote important words on the chalkboard. The teacher further asked the learners to provide the themes of the discussed poem. Then, he circulated handouts containing a list of the themes. Learners were referred to the handouts in order to identify the themes that were relevant to the poem. Thereafter, they responded verbally while the teacher was writing down their responses on the chalkboard. He then guided them on how to discuss the themes. The teacher gave the learners the handouts that had questions that the learners had to answer in groups. He moved around, checking each group and assisting them where possible. However, other groups were making noise, suggesting that they did not have interest in learning the poem, and the teacher said, *boys and girls, keep quiet; you are making noise, hey! quiet!* However, learners seated at the back continued to make noise until they were instructed to sit in front. The bell rang before learners could finish their classwork, and they were told to finish the work at home.

#### **4.3.2. Observation of Teacher B's poetry lesson in School B**

The observation in Teacher B's class took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 at 12:00 pm, and the lesson lasted for about an hour. Figure 4.2 below shows the classroom of Teacher B.



*Figure 4.3: Classroom of Teacher B*

Teacher B's class comprised 40 learners, and the size of the class was too small to accommodate these learners. Learners were seated in pairs, and the desks were arranged in rows. Because of congestion, the navigation of the teacher between the rows was not possible, given that the class was large. The windows were broken, and the weather was cold, which could have contributed to making it difficult for the learners to pay attention during the lesson.

The teacher started the lesson by asking the learners to take out their English exercise books and pens so that they could write down the notes while explaining the poem. The poem was titled *Those Winter Sundays* by Robert Hayden. Learners were also asked to take out the handouts of the poem that they were given the previous day. The teacher asked the learners the following questions: *What do you think the poem is all about? Which themes can you identify in the poem?* One learner tried to answer the question, but the rest of the class was just quiet. Teacher B asked one girl who was sitting at the back to read the poem aloud so that the whole class could analyse it. The learner did read the poem; while reading, some boys were making noise, and the teacher asked them to be quiet. The teacher then read the poem aloud and analysed it together with the learners. She had the lesson prepared for the learners, and the lesson plan was also shared with the researcher.

During the analysis of the poem, the teacher explained the meanings of the words used in the poem. Learners seemed bored because they were not actively participating, as they were just chatting, and the teacher had to give them classwork to do as a way of trying to manage their behaviours. She sent one learner to her office to fetch some photocopied material of the poem because of the shortage of original poetry texts. While the teacher moved around to check how learners progressed with the activity, she discovered that some learners had not started with the task. When she requested them to explain why they had not started with their work, one learner responded by saying: *Mme Ha ke utloisise thothokiso ena, puo e ntseng e sebelisoa e thata haholo bakeng sa rona, na o ka sebelisa sesotho ha u hlalosa thothokiso ena, mohlomong ke tla e utloisisa, empa ka 'nete ha ke rate ho sekaseka thothokiso ka lebaka la puo ena ea tšoantšetso eo ba ratang ho e sebelisa.* (Mam, I do not understand this poem; the language is difficult for us. Can you please use Sesotho when explaining this poem? Maybe I will understand it, but honestly, I do not like analysing poems because of the figurative language used.)

The teacher had to explain the poem in Sesotho, but when she was busy explaining, she told the learners that she could not translate some words in the poem to their home language, Sesotho. While the teacher was busy with the analysis of the poem for the second time, other learners at the back were busy making noise, and the teacher heard that learners were making noise; however, she did not seem to have identified which learners were making noise because she was in front busy with the analysis and could not move between the aisle to check on learners; hence, it seemed difficult to also give them individual attention. She then said *guys, please keep quiet and listen to the analysis of the poem*. By that time, they were only left with 5 minutes, which made it impossible for the teacher to give learners the class activity. She then told the whole class that they would continue in the next lesson.

#### **4.3.3. Observation of Teacher C's poetry lesson in School B**

The observation in Teacher C's classroom took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 from 08:00-09:00 am. Figure 4.3 below shows the classroom of Teacher C.



*Figure 4.4: Classroom of Teacher C*

Like Schools A and B, the EFAL class of Teacher C was big, with 49 learners who were seated in pairs or three per desk. However, some learners did not have tables. There were few textbooks which were placed in the corner of the classroom, and they were dusty, suggesting that they were not taken care of or used for teaching and learning.

The teacher started the lesson by giving the learners copies of the poem because only few had poetry textbooks. It was surprising to note that not all the learners in the classroom received books, whereas there were some copies lying in the corner of the classroom, which might have suggested that the copies had missing pages or were damaged, which is why they were not given to learners. The poem for the lesson was entitled *How do I love thee?*

After giving out copies of the poem, the teacher asked the learners to listen very carefully as she read the poem aloud. She then asked them to underline the words that they were not familiar with so that she could provide the definitions of those terms. The teacher read the poem aloud twice, thereafter, she asked the learners the following question: *What do you think the poem is about?* Learners responded by saying *the poem is about love, mam*. The teacher further asked them to explain *what they think the poem says about love*. There was no response. Then, the teacher commenced with analysing the poem. One learner raised their hand and asked a question: *Mme ke kopa o sebedise Sesotho hore re utlwisise hobane ha o hlalosa ka sekgowa ha re etse molaetsa wa thothokiso, kaha puo e rarahane*. (Mam please use Sesotho so that we can understand because when you explain in English, we do not understand the message of the poem).

The teacher had to use the learners' home language when explaining what the poem was all about. However, she seemed to have struggled to translate other terms to the learners' home language because she is not a Sesotho home language speaker, as also noted during interviews. This seemed to have added to the challenges of learners' failing to understand the poem. After trying to explain the poem for the second time using the learners' home language, she divided the whole class into seven groups; each group consisted of seven learners and each group was given one book to share, as poetry books did not seem enough for each learner. Each group was given an activity to complete and had different questions to answer. Thereafter, she visited each group to check the progress. However, she noticed that there were learners who were not participating in the group discussion. One learner responded by saying *I do not want to lie to you, mam. I don't understand the poem, which makes it difficult for me to answer the questions*. The teacher looked worried, which could have been the challenge of using the learners' home language to help them understand poetry

concepts in the English language. After the lesson, learners were given the task to read the same poem at home

#### **4.3.4. Overall evaluative comments on observations**

From the three observations, the researcher noticed that all the teachers experienced overcrowding in their classes, which seemed to be a challenge for them to have an effective teaching and learning environment as their numbers exceeded 37 learners in one class. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4.1, the class size in the FET is not supposed to exceed 37 learners per teacher. This is despite the previous mention of the DBE lacking legislation prescribing the number of learners per teacher ratio. Shortage of poetry texts was also problematic in all the classrooms observed because not all the learners received a copy of a poetry text. On the other hand, some of these texts were not used because they seemed damaged. However, the effort of making photocopies of the targeted poem by other teachers is commendable.

The language barrier was noted as a challenge across the classes observed. However, it was interesting to note that teachers tried to accommodate learners by using the learners' home language as a supporting tool that seemed to promote interaction between the teacher and learners. Classroom management during poetry lessons was also noted as a challenge to some teachers, where teachers had to keep on reminding learners to be quiet because some learners did not seem attentive, they made noise, especially those who were seated at the back.

Learner participation in all the classes observed was very poor, given that only few learners were able to answer questions related to the poem. Moreover, teachers seemed to have dwelt more on the traditional ways of teaching poetry when they seemed to have dominated the entire lesson and only sought the learners' contribution by asking them questions, which seemed confined to the literary level.

It was also commendable to note that although most teachers did not seem prepared for the lesson, one teacher shared her lesson plan to show the level of her commitment to teaching poetry according to what is recommended in the curriculum. It was also less interesting to note that none of the teachers seemed to have followed the three stages of teaching poetry as stipulated in the CAPS curriculum.

Although some strategies for teaching poetry were commendable in all the classes observed, teachers did not seem to have shown satisfactory knowledge and understanding regarding how poetry should be taught in line with the CAPS curriculum, which emphasises the engagement of three stages (e.g., pre, during and post). They also did not seem to have provided learners with opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, which is imperative for the learners to develop an insightful understanding of the poem taught in the classroom.

### 4.3. Presentation of findings from interviews

This section presents findings from interviewing teachers in terms of understanding what makes them teach poetry in the EFAL Grade 10 classroom the way they do. Their responses are *italicised* and reported verbatim. Below are the themes and sub-themes that emerged from interviewing the Grade 10 EFAL teachers. Each theme or sub-theme provides insights into the teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to the Grade 10 learners. Table 4.2 below shows a list of themes and sub-themes which were identified from the interview data.

**Table 4.1: Summary of the themes and sub-themes from the teachers' interviews.**

| Themes                                             | Sub-themes                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Challenges of teaching poetry to EFAL learners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Language barrier</li> <li>❖ Learners' attitude toward poetry.</li> <li>❖ Lack of poetry resources</li> <li>❖ Overcrowded classes</li> <li>❖ Classroom management</li> </ul> |
| 2. The benefit of poetry in EFAL classroom.        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Language development</li> <li>❖ Critical thinking</li> <li>❖ Development of reading skills</li> </ul>                                                                       |
| 3. Teachers' perspectives on teaching poetry.      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Self-doubt</li> <li>❖ Cultural relevance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
|  | Lack of support from the department |
|--|-------------------------------------|

#### **4.3.1. Challenges of teaching poetry to EFAL learners**

The said theme confirms what the teachers pointed out during interviews in terms of highlighting elements which make them teach EFAL poetry the way they do. Hence, the following sub-themes were identified when interviewing the three teachers: language barrier, learners' attitude towards poetry, lack of poetry resources, and overcrowded classrooms.

##### **4.3.1.1. Language barrier**

Learners in all the classes observed were taught English at its FAL level. However, they seemed to struggle to understand the poem taught in the classroom. This was confirmed by Teachers A and C when saying:

Teacher A:

*Language barrier is the biggest challenge that I face when I teach poetry because the learners do not understand English, they are not good at it.*

Teacher C added that

*Language barrier is the biggest issue in my class; these learners are only exposed to English when they are here at school,*

The responses of Teachers suggest that language barriers make teaching poetry to EFAL learners difficult, given that most learners are not proficient in the target language, which is English. As also noted, teachers resorted to using the learners' home language as a supporting tool for teaching poetry. However, learners in Teacher C's class were deprived of opportunities to learn simply because the teacher did not seem familiar with the learners' home language. Hence, Makolane



(2020) suggests that teachers should be trained effectively to deal with classroom settings that require a multilingual approach. Their study found that using a multilingual approach not only supports the learners' home language during lessons but enhances their understanding of concepts and encourages participation in class.

During observations, it was also noted that teachers in all the classes resorted to translation or code-switching to help clarify the meaning of poetry concepts. Lughat (2022) revealed that language barriers affect the production of the lesson. Hence, the teacher normally opts for code-switching so that learners can understand the text. Research has also demonstrated that most learners in rural schools only experience exposure to the English language when they are at school (Mohapi, 2023), which gives them limited opportunities to develop proficiency in the language. This seems quite common to learners attending schools which are surrounded by low socioeconomic status.

Evans and Nthulana (2018) emphasised that learners in rural areas do not have enough resources to provide them with exposure that could help them learn English to the level of using it for academic purposes. Neither do they have time to engage with native English speakers, and when they do, they seldom ever say much more than greeting. A study that examined the relationship between the socioeconomic backgrounds of the learners and their educational achievements found that parental income has a big role to play in children's educational achievements. Generally, learners from low socioeconomic status perform poorly academically (Vadivel et al., 2023).

Unlike the African indigenous languages, English is quite complex, given its opaque system of writing. This was supported by Teacher C, who indicated the difficulty they sometimes experience when teaching poetry to learners whose home language is different from English. Teacher C's response was unexpected, given that she had enough experience and qualifications to teach English poetry in her classroom, suggesting that qualifications and experience may not be adequate for effective teaching, hence the need for coaching and in-service teacher training.

#### **4.3.1.2. Learners' attitude toward poetry**

Another element that makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL learners the way they do is the attitude of learners themselves towards poetry. This is supported by Teacher C when saying:

*My learners are always sleeping in class when I am teaching poetry.*

Teacher A added that:

*Poetry is not the favourite genre of my learners, when I teach poetry, they do not pay attention as they do when I teach drama.*

Teacher B also added that:

*My learners do not show interest in poetry, they always complain that poetry is difficult and boring.*

The responses above indicate that learners do not seem to enjoy poetry. If a learner has a negative attitude toward poetry, this suggests that they are unlikely to perform well in that particular genre. Makgabo and Nyembe (2022) also revealed that learners did not perform well in poetry compared to other literature genres. This could be the result of the learners' negative perception and attitude toward studying poetry. Teacher C also mentioned that the other reason for the said negative attitude toward poetry could be because these learners seem to struggle, given the challenges of language barriers. Once a learner is not able to read the poem, it may be difficult for them to understand it, and they may likely lose confidence. What Teacher C said is true because, during observations, the researcher noted that learners experienced language barriers, and evidently, some learners seemed to have lost interest because they made noise. Beach (2022) concurs that learners lose interest in poetry because they struggle with words as they attempt to draw the connection between the image and what it is meant to express, which is why learners do not like poetry. Again, based on the observation, the researcher noticed that teachers are not teaching poetry according to what is prescribed in the curriculum. This is based on the fact that most

did not seem to understand how each stage (e.g., pre-, during and post-reading) of teaching poetry should be conducted.

#### **4.3.1.3. Lack of resources.**

Lack of poetry teaching material also contributed to the challenges of teaching poetry to the Grade 10 EFAL learners. For example, Teacher A said,

*Lack of resources makes it difficult for me to teach a poem since learners will not have a book. I will have to always rely on making copies, which sometimes becomes an issue.*

Teacher B added that

*The first challenge that I experience in my English poetry class is the lack of resources.*

Teacher C also said,

*The department is not providing us with enough resources that we can use to teach poetry.*

The responses of teachers above suggest that they struggle to teach poetry to English FAL learners simply because they do not have enough resources. As noted during observations, only a handful of learners in each class received an original copy of a poetry text. It is surprising to note that teachers at this time and age are still raising issues of lack of resources despite schools being supplied with teaching and learning resources yearly. Again, in comparison to other African countries, South Africa invests a lot of money in education (Baker, 2018). Hence, this could suggest that teaching and learning materials distributed in schools may not be well taken care of, as it was noted in one classroom that some poetry texts were unused, possibly because they had missing pages, which is the opposite of what teachers indicated in terms of lacking resources. Sawchuck (2012) posits that the provision of textbooks at a ratio of either one book per child or one book for every two children makes a very significant difference in achievement. Gumede (2018) highlights that lack of or poor facilities in our rural schools is a problem. "The absence of libraries and resource centres deprives

the rural child of a chance to read and explore on his/her own, suggesting that the core of the problems facing schools is not something new to our ears” (Shandu et al., 2016:35).

#### **4.3.1.4. Overcrowded classes**

Overcrowding also made teaching and learning of poetry in the EFAL classroom ineffective. For example,

Teacher A said,

*I find it difficult to conduct a productive lesson as I will not be able to give my learners’ attention due to overcrowding, my biggest class is having 43 learners.*

Teacher B added that,

*Teaching in a very large size classroom impact negatively on my poetry lessons as it leads to poor engagement and passivity among the learners.*

Teacher C also said,

*Oversized classrooms make it extremely challenging to teach and evaluate students successfully.*

The responses from all teachers indicate that they were unable to teach effectively because of the large numbers in their classes. The DBE (2016) prescribes a teacher-learner ratio of 1:37 in the FET phase. Given the number of learners in the classes observed, one can conclude that 40 learners and above can be regarded as a large classroom. According to West and Meier (2020), most classes in rural South African public schools house more than 50 learners. Managing an overcrowded classroom makes it difficult for a teacher to discipline the learners, as noted in the classrooms observed that teachers also spent their teaching and learning time controlling learners

who made noise and did not pay attention. They further indicated that lack of discipline and the increase in undesirable behaviour are caused by overcrowded classes.

Teacher A further added that

*Teaching in the classroom needs a conducive space; if the classroom has more learners, the lesson does not become productive, and learners become uninterested in the lesson.*

The response of Teacher A reinforces the challenges of teaching in a large classroom, suggesting that even if teachers could try to apply strategies to deal with overcrowding, they may not likely succeed in motivating learners to develop an interest in learning poetry. Emvula (2020) indicated that teaching poetry to EFAL learners needs more time and a class size that is manageable. Due to overcrowding, assessments are also likely to be administered unfairly. Moreover, learners may be unlikely to pay attention because they know that the teacher may not notice their ill behaviours. According to a study conducted by Chimbi and Jita (2021), overcrowding in classrooms leads to reduced individual attention in learners, resulting in a decline in academic performance.

#### **4.3.1.5. Classroom management**

Saleem et al. (2020) argue that teaching in an overcrowded classroom is challenging for teachers as they cannot manage learners, and learners become ill-disciplined.

Teacher A during the interviews mentioned the following:

*Due to overcrowding, I cannot manage my class effectively, and actually, I find so many problems when I am teaching in class, but most of the problems are students' misbehaviour, and sometimes they don't do their homework.*

Teacher B added that:

*I cannot check all my learners' exercise books to see whether they have done the work or not, you cannot see that this learner has not done his work, let alone assist him*

Teacher C also said that:

*In managing a classroom, the biggest challenge is to gain learners' attention and make them attentive, because in such a classroom, the situation is very troubling you silence one group of students in class and others start talking, sometimes when the number of students exceeds in the classrooms there is a space problem that doesn't allow teachers to even move among the students in the class properly or have a look on the backbenchers.*

The responses from the three teachers suggest that having an overcrowded class as a teacher is challenging because they are unable to deliver the lesson to the level of their satisfaction, given that they have to waste time calling learners who have problems of misbehaving to order. This is also supported by the findings of Irawati and Listyani (2020), who established that one of the problems of having classes that are not easily manageable, particularly in a rural school, is a behavioural problem. Teacher A further explained that

*In order for me to maintain order in my class, I have to use corporal punishment, which is not allowed at school, but unfortunately, that is the only way that is helping me in this situation.*

This shows that learners are ill-disciplined, and teachers find it difficult to manage them. It is clear from the responses above that teachers are depressed in overcrowded classes because they use strategies to control learners that are no longer permitted in schools. These findings are similar to a study by Mweru (2010) that discovered Kenyan teachers thought that using corporal punishment was a good way to manage big classes.

#### **4.3.2. The benefit of poetry in EFAL classroom.**

Diehl (2021) argues that poetry equips learners with various skills, such as critical thinking and text analysis, and enables them to be creative as they learn. In spite of the challenges noted above, teachers highlighted some good things about teaching poetry to the EFAL learners. For example, they said:

*Poetry is helpful because it uses mainly figurative language consisting of vivid images and creative expressions, which in a way can help EFAL learners improve their usage of English (Teacher A)*

Teacher C added that

*My learners' language always improves when we analyse poem because they learn the literal meaning of the figurative language used in the poem.*

The responses from Teacher A and Teacher C suggest that poetry helps learners develop their language skills, despite the fact that they struggle to use the targeted language, which is English. According to Hirsch and Macleroy (2020) and Liao (2018), poetry can improve students' speaking skills by strengthening both language and non-linguistic qualities. Teacher C explained that poetry helps learners develop good analysis skills. The more they read the poem, the more their reading skills and vocabulary develop. The study conducted by Syed and Wahas (2020) revealed that the use of poetry in English classrooms has the benefit of introducing learners to reliable material and contributing to improving their language knowledge and skills. Reading poetry, according to Sigvardsson (2020:25), can stimulate students' "interest in the language as they touch on the beauty of the language that poets use and offer students a real context that can be a beneficial source to develop and reinforce students' knowledge of language skills". Teacher B, further explained that

*Poetry only improves the English language of those who have an interest in literature. Not every learner is interested in poetry. They might be doing it because they have to but are not really enjoying it. Those who love poetry, it helps them to become writers themselves; it brings the love of writing and exploring different avenues of expression, just like music.*

The above response by Teacher B, indicate that poetry could develop the language of those learners who have a positive attitude toward or have an interest in learning poetry.

Teacher A further explained that

*Poetry broadens the vocabulary and improves the quality of our language while instilling and inculcating the habit of reading.*

The above response indicates that the teaching of poetry in class is helpful for both teachers and learners in terms of improving language skills and usage. The findings of the study by Mora, Coyle and López (2020) confirm that teachers believe that poetry-based English lessons are more useful for developing language skills such as pronunciation and grammatical and lexical knowledge than for intercultural or motivational gains. Poetry also allows learners to be able to express their emotions. Nyembe (2022) revealed that poetry is necessary for the expression of feelings. Teacher C pointed out that poetry is beneficiary to learners who want to develop their language and one day want to do art.

#### **4.3.3. Teachers' perspectives on teaching poetry.**

The said theme includes the following sub-themes: self-doubt, prescribed poems, and lack of support from the department.

##### **4.3.3.1. Self-doubt**

Despite being qualified English teachers, two of the participants expressed uncertainty about their pedagogical approaches or content knowledge of poetry. When the teachers were asked whether they like teaching poetry and what is their view on poetry, they responded by saying:

*I do not enjoy teaching poetry because I am not confident in teaching it due to the language used in the poems, I prefer another genre. (Teacher A)*

Teacher C added that

*I am not confident with teaching poetry because of the complex language that is used in the poem and I am also not confident because learners might ask me questions that I might not be able to answer.*

Both teachers' responses indicate that they lack the confidence to teach poetry. Teacher C articulated that analysing poetry can be challenging because of the difficult words used in the poem that need the teacher to make use of a dictionary. Teachers showed a negative attitude toward poetry, which arose from their perception of its complexity and their inability to establish an effective teaching strategy that would give



them adequate confidence in their teaching abilities. The teaching of poetry has long been recognised as one of the significant aspects of the English language curriculum, which presents teachers with specific pedagogical challenges (Dymoke, 2014). The observation revealed that Teachers A and C were not confident in their teaching of poetry, which might be the rationale behind the way they teach poetry in their classrooms.

#### **4.3.3.2. Cultural relevance**

As per the curriculum recommendations, teachers are expected to teach poetry in the Grade 10 classroom. A list of poems to be taught in the classroom is prescribed by the Department of Education (DoE). Teachers pointed out the following about the prescribed list of poems:

Teacher A said:

*Well, I love poetry, but the ones that are prescribed to us are not reader-friendly poems; they are difficult.*

Teacher B added that:

*I fail to understand why the department prescribes difficult poems for learners and does not provide the material with the analysis of the poem.*

Teacher C also said that:

*I don't understand why the curriculum developers like to select the difficult Western poem.*

The above responses indicate that teachers are not happy with being instructed to teach poems which have been prescribed instead of being the ones to select them for their Grade 10 learners, as some of the poems are Western poems, and the language used is not an easy one to understand. Teacher C further said,

*If we were given the privilege to choose which poem we want to teach, I think it would make things better because now we are given a list of poems which are difficult for our learners, and they are in different settings for them, which makes it difficult for them to enjoy.*

According to the responses highlighted above, teachers seem dissatisfied with being instructed to use poetry texts which do not seem to accommodate the needs and contexts of their learners. Teachers also pointed out that learners are finding it difficult to pronounce some of the words which may be the result of the figurative language that is used in poems. According to Gangchuk and Dukpa (2024:15), “the use of figurative language, rhythm, syntax and structure technically make the understanding of poetry difficult for students”. Teacher A further mentioned that she is not happy with the poems selected at the level for the Grade 10 learners because there are words that she herself finds difficult to pronounce correctly. She mentioned that when she had to teach sonnets, her learners preferred the poems which cater for the local context but were still written in English. The finding of the study by Makgabo and Nyembe (2022) revealed that EFAL learners and teachers preferred to learn poems that were contextualised. Learners fail to relate to Western poems because of their difficulty with the language and also because they do not connect and relate with the culture depicted in Western poems (ibid). During observations, it was also noted that learners showed lack of interest in poetry because they might have experienced challenges in connecting the poem to their own reality, as most of the poems prescribed for the Grade 10 learners do not seem to have been contextualised to accommodate the cultural identities of the African learners.

#### **4.3.3.4. Lack of support from the department**

Lack of support from the education department was the common issue shared by the teachers. When asked the question, *do you receive teacher training or workshops on how to teach poetry in the classroom?*

Teacher B said:

*No, the department does not offer us training on how to teach poems.*

Teacher A added that:

*They do not train us on how to teach poetry, which makes it difficult for me to do justice to learners when I am teaching the poem because I do not know which strategies I should use.*

Teacher C also added by saying:

*Well, I so wish I was receiving support from the department because, wow! I really need help with how to teach poetry to learners.*

The above responses indicate that teachers do not seem to be workshopped or provided in-service training regarding how they are expected to teach poetry in the EFAL classroom. Although teachers have been trained to qualify as teachers for a period of four years, they still need support in the form of in-service training workshops to improve their professional practice and implement what is prescribed in the curriculum. Studies have also recommended effective in-service training workshops for teachers to implement the curriculum in the classroom (Khosa, 2022, 2023) so that teachers can know how to apply the knowledge in teaching poetry according to the POT Framework, which explicitly specifies different steps and activities teachers can follow for teaching poetry effectively to the EFAL learners.

#### **4. 4. Interpretation of findings**

This section aims to analyse the meaning of the themes and sub-themes that emerged in relation to the research questions, objectives and existing literature. In terms of the data gathered from observations, the findings showed that all the classes observed were overcrowded. Teachers also confirmed during interviews that overcrowding makes it difficult for them to teach. Hence, they are unable to teach effectively in classes where they can't provide individual learner support. The Social Constructivism theory emphasises the importance of conducting scaffolding for supporting individual learners or small groups of learners who struggle to learn. However, if classes are large, the said strategy may be unattainable.

The findings also revealed the challenges of language barriers, which affected both teachers and learners during poetry lessons. This seemed to be a challenge across the classrooms observed. As noted, all the teachers seemed to be resorting to using the learners' home language as a supporting tool when teaching poetry to the EFAL Grade 10 learners. It also turned out from the teachers' responses during interviews that they struggle to make sense of the language used in the poems prescribed for the Grade 10 learners, suggesting that teaching poetry to EFAL learners is challenging

not only because of the learners' lack of proficiency in English but also because of teachers who lack content knowledge of teaching poetry.

Additionally, teachers also did not seem to follow the teaching method of poetry as prescribed in the CAPS curriculum. As noted during observations, they seem unaware of what is expected to be done in each one of the three stages (e.g., pre-, during and post) defined in the curriculum for teaching poetry. Most would spend time asking learners to read the poem silently or aloud and then ask questions. Learners in all the classes observed did not seem to be effectively engaged during the teaching of poetry – teachers seemed to be the main controllers of their lessons. This is contrary to what is emphasised by the Social Constructivism theory in terms of encouraging a student-centred learning approach.

Also, teachers seemed to experience the challenge of not having enough material to teach poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. This is surprising, given that educational authorities provide public schools with enough stationery for the learners and reading materials on a yearly basis, which could suggest a lack of care for these materials. As noted during observations, teachers had to rely on copies, and some learners had to share a textbook. There were also discrepancies between what teachers said during interviews and what was observed in the classroom regarding the issue of teaching and learning resources, given that lots of unused books were placed in the corner of one classroom that was observed.

## **4.5. Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the information gathered regarding experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in the Free State province and thereafter interpret the findings for meaning-making. By so doing, the data presented and analysed above data have provided a platform from which to answer the research questions in this study. Hence, it is apparent that teachers teach poetry the way they do because of various challenges experienced in the EFAL classroom, which relate to language barriers, shortage of reading texts, overcrowding, which leads to poor classroom management, etc. The next chapter summarises the key findings of the current study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This study aimed to explore teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners for the purpose of understanding what makes teachers teach poetry the way they do in the EFAL classroom. The said aim was addressed by the following research objectives and questions:

##### **Objectives:**

- To investigate the teaching of poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners in Motheo district.
- To establish what makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners the way they do.
- To recommend strategies teachers can use to teach poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners.

##### **Research questions:**

- How do Grade 10 teachers teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners in Motheo district?
- What makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners the way they do?
- Which strategies can be used effectively for teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners?

This chapter first provides an overview of the study, summarises the key findings, discusses the implications and recommendations based on the findings, as well as outlining the overall contributions of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations and suggestions for further studies. Finally, the chapter is concluded by outlining the final thoughts.

## 5.2. Overview of the study

**Chapter 1** provided a detailed discussion of the background of the present study regarding what encouraged the present study, presented the problem statement and theoretical framework used to anchor the study, stated the aim, objectives and research questions, and briefly described the methodology. Finally, it presented an overview of the study, which comprises five chapters.

**Chapter 2** discussed the theories underpinning the study, focusing on the POT framework and Social Constructivism theory. In addition, the chapter highlighted what poetry entails and discussed the purpose of teaching poetry. This was followed by a discussion of teaching poetry according to the South African National Curriculum, the challenges of teaching poetry in the EFAL classroom and the experiences of teachers in this regard.

**Chapter 3** described the methodology used to explore the teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. First, it described the research paradigm in which the study was approached, research design, data collection measures, sampling methods, description of the research site, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

**Chapter 4** presented the profile of the teachers and the schools. Thereafter, it outlined the procedures followed when collecting data. This was followed by presenting and analysing the key findings of the study, organised into themes identified from the analysis of the data collected from teachers teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. Lastly, an interpretation of classroom observations and interviews was made.

## 5.3. Summary of key findings

This section summarises the main takeaways according to the research questions.

**Research question 1** (*How do Grade 10 teachers teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners?*) was addressed by observing three poetry teaching lessons in Schools A and B.

The findings of this study revealed that the teaching of poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners happened in classrooms which were overcrowded, with class sizes of between 40 to 49 learners, as also noted during observation of lessons in each classroom. This finding corroborates the findings of West and Meier (2020), who established that most rural public schools have more than 50 learners in class. Teaching in overcrowded classrooms is difficult for both teachers and learners. Hence, teachers in this study resorted to teaching while standing only in front of the class, without moving between the aisle for the learners sitting at the back to hear and pay attention to the lesson. Given the current situation, learners sitting at the back did not seem to focus on what the teacher was doing or saying in front, instead, they made noise.

Again, the findings revealed that teachers are unable to maintain good classroom management due to the learners being ill-disciplined. This finding supports the finding by Fatima et al. (2019), who revealed that teachers face problems of management of the discipline in class, which makes them lose time allocated for teaching and learning because they use it to control learners rather than teaching. Similarly, a study by Venketsamy (2023) found that teachers have more than 70 learners in class, and they are unable to give each learner attention, which ends up resulting in some learners developing less interest in learning.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that teachers experience a shortage of teaching and learning material, which could be caused by large numbers in their classes, and this was also noted during observations in each class visited. This finding authenticates Osai et al.'s (2021) findings in terms of demonstrating that most overcrowded classrooms face the challenge of shortage of teaching and learning materials (LTMS).

It was also commendable to note that some teachers during poetry lessons used group work strategies to encourage learners to learn from one another. Group work is supported by Vygotsky's theory of Social Constructivism which promotes collaborative learning. Teachers did not seem to have shown satisfactory knowledge regarding how poetry should be taught in line with the CAPS curriculum, which emphasises the engagement of three stages (e.g., pre-, during and post). They also did not seem to

have provided learners with opportunities to develop critical thinking, which is imperative for the learners to develop an insightful understanding of the poem taught in the classroom. These findings confirm the findings by Fynn (2019), who revealed that poetry teaching is neglected in schools, which could have contributed to the ignorance of familiarity regarding how the three different stages of reading should be approached when teaching poetry. Hence, the POT emphasises the five steps teachers can incorporate in their implementation of the three stages of teaching reading.

The findings of this study also revealed that the teaching of poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners happened in classrooms where learners experienced challenges of language barriers, which made it difficult for the teachers to achieve the objectives of their lessons. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.4.2), the language barrier in class affects learners' performance. It was noted during observations that teachers code-switched most of the time because they wanted their learners to understand what the poem was about. Teachers who participated in this study said that most of their learners have difficulties in understanding English in general and that learning poetry makes it more challenging for their learners to grasp the language used. This finding supports the findings by Mohapi (2023), who revealed that learners in most public schools, struggle to understand the English language. They cannot comprehend what is said or written in English, and the teacher has to code-switch for them to better understand.

**Research question 2** (*What makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners the way they do?*) was addressed by the following sub-themes:

**Language barrier:** From the responses of the interviews, all the teachers indicated that their learners struggle with proficiency when it comes to engagement with the English language, in particular, poetry, which uses more complex language. This could be what contributed to most learners finding it difficult to learn poetry in the classroom. For example, some learners would raise their hands in the classroom for the purpose of informing the teacher that they do not understand the poem because it uses complex words. Hence, teachers indicated that the language barrier compels them to use the learners' home language as a tool to help them understand difficult concepts



used in the poem. This finding supports the findings by Fynn (2029) who established that issues of language barriers are created by English as the language of instruction. On the other hand, Mogano (2022), revealed that teachers use code-switching in their classes to help students understand the content.

The findings also revealed that some teachers struggled to explain some complex words in the poem using the learners' home language because they did not speak the same home language as their learners. Teaching in cases where teachers are limited in using the learner's language to facilitate classroom interaction simply because they are not proficient in their learners' language is likely to pose significant challenges for effective communication and learning. Both teachers and learners lacked English proficiency, which made it difficult for teachers themselves to teach poetry in English. This finding is similar to the finding by Chun and Abdullah (2022), who revealed that teachers struggle with understanding some of the concepts used in the poem because most poems that are prescribed in high schools are written in Shakespeare language.

***Shortage of reading resources:*** From their interview responses, all the teachers indicated that they experience challenges of not having enough reading materials, which could negatively impact the learners' performance and understanding of the poem. Again, it was noted during observations that learners seemed demotivated as they did not have reading material that they could even take with them at home and read in order to improve their understanding and read for enjoyment. This finding supports the findings by Maffea (2020), who revealed that the shortage of reading material demotivates learners and teachers obviously can't teach to the best of their ability.

**Research question 3** (*Which strategies can be effective for teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners?*) is addressed by providing recommendations based on the findings of this study, as indicated below:

***Overcrowding:*** Data gathered through observations and interviews revealed that overcrowding is a challenge for teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. As a result, teachers are likely to use a one-size-fits-all approach, which may not accommodate all learners. Given what was noted, teachers could not provide

individual attention to learners, neither were they able to move around the class to check on their learners' progress during class activities. Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers should be trained effectively to deal with overcrowding in their classrooms. This is also supported by Meier and West (2020), who emphasised that in-service training could equip teachers with the necessary skills to handle disruptive behaviour or discipline issues brought on by overcrowded classes.

***Language barrier:*** The findings of the present study revealed that language barrier was a challenge for teaching and learning poetry in the EFAL Grade 10 classroom. The researcher, during observations, noted that some teachers were unable to use their learners' home language as a support tool to facilitate communication because they were not familiar with their learners' home language. On the other hand, learners themselves found it difficult to understand and interpret the poem because of the complex words which were used in the poem. To overcome the challenges of language barriers, teachers are advised to use the learners' home language as a support tool to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Sharma (2019) also established that the learners' home language is a valuable tool that promotes interaction between teachers and learners. Additionally, it is also recommended that teachers teaching in multilingual classrooms should be trained in terms of developing proficiency in the languages spoken by their learners in the classroom so that all the learners can be catered for during the teaching and learning of poetry in the EFAL classroom.

***Shortage of reading resources:*** According to the findings of this study, it was revealed that shortage of reading material is one of the challenges teachers face in the teaching of poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. Given what was noted, teachers had to make copies so that each learner could have access to the poem, while other learners had to share a textbook. As a result, learners were not permitted to take the reading texts home with them. The shortage of reading resources has a negative impact on the learners' performance. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Department of Education provide enough reading materials and build more libraries where learners can access enough reading material so that they can have more time to read for enjoyment. Mogano (2022) also emphasised that the learners'

academic performance is positively impacted by enough provisioning of reading materials, including physical facilities, equipment, and teaching and learning materials.

***Cultural relevance:*** The findings of this study revealed that EFAL Grade 10 learners struggle to understand the poems simply because they cannot connect and relate with the poem as it is from a different context. Given what was noted during the classroom observations, learners seemed bored because they did not seem to relate well to the poem, which is written in a different context and culture. Based on these findings, it is recommended that curriculum developers prescribe poems which are informed by African cultures and backgrounds, written in English. The reason for this recommendation is that the learners will start to enjoy learning poetry that presents contextual knowledge which familiar to them. Makgabo and Nyembe (2022) also established that African poems are easier for a learner to relate to and identify with than Western poems because African poems are about the learners' history, tradition and culture.

***Classroom management:*** The findings further revealed that teachers struggled to manage their classes because other learners made noise and did not pay attention during lessons. As also noted during observations, teachers were unable to manage and control ill-disciplined learners. As a result, learners sitting at the back continued making noise even if the teacher tried to manage the situation. Based on these findings, it is recommended that relevant educational authorities take the initiative of workshopping teachers so that they know how to deal with ill-disciplined learners, rather than using corporal punishment, which, according to law, has been abolished in the classroom. Although most teachers used overcrowding as an excuse, as per the finding, it is thus recommended that teachers should enact their role as agents of change so that they can resolve these challenges themselves without worrying about the curriculum advisors not conducting school visits to support them.

## 5.4. Implications of the findings

This section presents implications relating to the teaching of poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. Hence, the consequences of what makes teachers teach poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners the way they do are highlighted below:

**Language barrier:** Findings revealed that one teacher in School B classroom was unable to clarify English concepts using the learners' home language when teaching poetry to EFAL learners because the teacher was not familiar with or proficient in the learners' language. These deprived learners of opportunities to interact effectively with the teacher who could not speak their language, Sesotho as well as impacting negatively on academic performance.

**Overcrowding:** Findings showed that teachers were unable to give learners feedback on time due to overcrowded classrooms, and they were unable to move around to check the progress of the lesson. This deprived the learners of the opportunity to be given individual support, given that every learner is unique; they are not gifted the same.

**Shortage of resources:** Findings revealed that teachers do not have enough resources for teaching poetry; they rely on making photocopies, and Teacher C even mentioned that she borrows textbooks from another school. This deprives learners of opportunities to have reading material that they can even take with them to read for pleasure at home.

**Cultural relevance:** The finding showed that most of the poems prescribed for the Grade 10 learners have been developed with a focus on Western culture. As a result, teachers find it challenging to encourage learners to develop an interest in learning and enjoying poetry when taught in the classroom.

**Classroom management:** The findings have also shown that classroom management is a challenge to all the teachers observed, as it was found that some learners made noise during lessons, and teachers were unable to control these learners. This seemed to have negatively affected learners who wanted to learn without being disturbed or interrupted by noise.

## **5.5. Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the literature and empirical study conducted. The motivation for conducting the study was given in Chapter 1. The study aimed to explore teachers' experience of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. After analysing the data that were collected, the following recommendations for curriculum policy, teaching practice and future research were made.

### **5.5.1. Recommendations for practice**

A study explored teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners from three Grade 10 teachers in Motheo district. During classroom observations, it was noted that teachers face a common challenge of managing large classes, which makes it difficult to engage the whole class for teaching and learning poetry, effectively. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers divide the learners into groups and train them to work without being supervised so the teachers can focus on supporting learners in their small groups. The effectiveness of group work is also supported by Juhlin (2018), who demonstrated that it has a positive impact when it comes to engagement in the classroom. Another recommendation is the engagement of peer tutoring, which aligns with Vygotsky's theory of social interaction. Thus, in a large class, the teacher can support individual learners in a form of a peer tutoring while other learners are kept busy by being assigned group tasks, working independently without being supervised. It is worth noting that ul Ain et al. (2023), in their study, also demonstrated the significance of peer tutoring.

The findings also revealed that teachers do not seem knowledgeable regarding the implementation of teaching poetry following the three stages (pre-, during and post reading) recommended in the curriculum policy. It is therefore recommended that teachers should familiarise themselves with the six steps of the POT Framework, which aligns well with the three stages of teaching literature mentioned above.

### **5.5.2. Recommendation for curriculum policy.**

It was noted during the lesson observations that teachers do not follow the three stages of reading when they teach poetry. Therefore, it is important that the Department of Basic Education at the district level support teachers by providing quality workshops for training teachers effectively in teaching poetry to the EFAL learners as well as teaching according to what is prescribed in the curriculum. This would be done in line with the well-developed syllabus, helping to provide appropriate and helpful material for poetry teaching and learning; helping teachers too to be knowledgeable in different teaching approaches as far as poetry is concerned. Classrooms observed also had challenges of shortage of poetry texts. It is recommended that the district office provide schools with quality reading materials and encourage teachers to look after the provisioned materials by teaching their learners to care for those materials so that they could be sustainable. The development of teaching material packages may even ease the pressure on teachers and spare the time which proved to be a predicament to teachers as far as finishing the syllabus content.

### **5.5.3. Suggestion for future research**

In view of the limitations highlighted above, suggestions are provided for further research which may similarly focus on the following areas:

- Research which will focus on testing learners' ability to analyse and interpret poems to establish if how teachers teach poetry has an impact on the learners' performance.
- Another study may be conducted on how universities prepare teachers to teach poetry to learners learning English as an FAL. This could help teachers overcome the challenges of teaching poetry to EFAL learners.
- Further studies may focus on investigating the teaching of poetry to EFAL learners across various Grades, such as Grades 8, 9, and 11. Exploring across grades may be helpful in terms of identifying various challenges and identifying strategies which could be appropriate for each grade.

- Although the challenges encountered seem to be universal, perhaps the inclusion of further voices may uncover strategies or novel approaches to introduce poetry into the diet of the Grade 10 learners with more positive results
- Lastly, another study may use focus group interviews with learners, given the opportunities for the participants to express diverse viewpoints

## **5.6. Limitations of the study**

According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018:156), “limitations of any specific study concern potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher’s control and are closely related to the chosen research design...” The first obvious theoretical weakness is the very small sample size of three educators. The limitation of this study is that it cannot be generalised across different grades because it focused only on the EFAL Grade 10 learners and in only two schools. Again, another limitation was that the researcher was a teacher in the district where the data were collected. Therefore, participants may have withheld important information out of the concern that they would be unofficially evaluated by a friend, colleague, or peer. The third limitation was that only three participants were sampled for the study. This may have been a limitation, but it helped the study because the researcher was able to fully concentrate on the investigation and interpretation of the participants’ experiences teaching poetry to EFAL students in Grade 10. The fourth limitation is based on conducting interviews one-on-one with learners, which might have created anxiety for some learners to be interviewed alone with the researcher. Lastly, another limitation was based on the fact that out of the three lessons observed, only two lesson observations per lesson were done in one school, and the other lesson in the second school was done only once, which might have compromised the trustworthiness of the data collected.

## **5.7. Contributions of the study**

The study focused on the teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to EFAL Grade 10 learners. The findings in this study can contribute to the development of effective strategies for teaching poetry to EFAL learners across various grades. This would help teachers to minimise challenges experienced in their classrooms during lessons. The findings could also provide insights into the level of support teachers need from the

educational authorities in terms of conducting school visits, providing enough materials and opportunities for teachers to be trained for teaching in bi/multilingual classroom settings. The findings will also provide insights into the types of poetry text required for teaching EFAL learners.

## **5.8. Conclusion**

To conclude, this report highlighted the significance of effectively training teachers so that they can teach poetry to EFAL learners in line with what is stipulated in the curriculum. Thus, knowing exactly how they should manage overcrowded classrooms and accommodate linguistic diversity as well as having enough teaching and learning material, in particular, reading texts, will not only promote a stimulating classroom environment but motivate learners to develop an interest in learning poetry in the EFAL classroom. This will also create an awareness for the educational authorities and relevant stakeholders to provide the necessary support required in the EFAL classroom.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: PERMISSION: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango  
Ref: Research Permission: M. T. Buthelezi  
Tel: 051 404 8808  
Email: [MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za](mailto:MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za)



C 321 Qalo Village  
DM Selemela Street  
Bloemanda  
9312

Dear Mr. M. T. Buthelezi

#### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: MOTHEO DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Mofheo Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the University of the Free State are as follows:

Topic: Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry to Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners.

1. List of schools involved: Kagiso Comprehensive secondary school and Vulemasango secondary school.
2. Target Population: Three teachers teaching English FAL in grade 10 at the selected schools.
3. Period of research: From the second week of February 2024 until 30 September 2024. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
  - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
  - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein or can be emailed to the above-mentioned email address.
  - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
  - 4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. MZAMANE, JACOBS  
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 27/1/2023

RESEARCH APPLICATION BY M. T. BUTHELEZI, PERMISSION LETTER 27 NOVEMBER 2023, MOTHEO DISTRICT  
QAGME, M&E and Strategic Planning Directorate Private Bag 920905, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Thuto House, Room 101, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, St Andrew Street, Bloemfontein

[www.fseducation.gov.za](http://www.fseducation.gov.za)



## APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA  
FREISTATA



### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

26-Mar-2024

Dear Mr Mzwandile Buthelezi

#### **Application Approved**

Research Project Title:

**Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry to Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners.**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2023/2272**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted via an Amendment on RIMS to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit a Final Report on RIMS for your study/research project to the ethics office once the project has concluded. Should you require more time than the allotted 12 months to complete this research, please apply for an extension by submitting a Continuation/Report on RIMS. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Adri Du Plessis**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

Dr Adri  
du  
Plessis

Digitally  
signed by Dr  
Adri du Plessis  
Date:  
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## APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT FOR THE PRINCIPAL

C321 Qalo village

Bloemfontein

9300

20 June 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I, Mzwandile Trueman Buthelezi, a student at the University of Free State, enrolled for a Master of Education Degree, request permission to conduct research at your school. In terms of conducting research in your school, I will be asking English First Additional language teachers questions about their experiences in teaching poetry and also observing their teaching of EFAL poetry.

The title of this study is. ***Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry to Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners***. The main aim of the study is to explore teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL Learners. The fundamental objectives of this study are:

- 1.To investigate the teaching of poetry in the EFAL Grade 10 classroom.
2. To establish the experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners.
- 3.To recommend strategies teachers can use to teach poetry in the Grade 10 classroom.

Furthermore, I wish to bring to your attention that:

- Your teachers' identity will be protected in the report writing and research findings,
- Their participation will be voluntary.
- The school will not be mentioned by its name, instead, pseudonyms will be used for all schools and participation.
- Interviews will be voice recorded to assist in the accurate capturing of data collected.

Should you have any concerns or queries about this study please feel free to contact me or my supervisor Dr Khosa on +27 51 401 1452 or [KhosaM@ufs.ac.za](mailto:KhosaM@ufs.ac.za).

Yours Sincerely

Buthelezi MT

Cell: 079 252 0665

email address. [truemanmzwandile@gmail.com](mailto:truemanmzwandile@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT FOR TEACHERS

C321 Qalo village

Bloemfontein

9300

20 March 2024

To: English FAL teachers

Dear sir/ Madam

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Mzwandile Trueman Buthelezi, I work for the Free State Department of Education as a teacher in one of the Secondary schools in Motheo district. I am currently studying for a master's degree with the University of the Free State, and as part of my master's program I am required to interview teachers and do classroom observations during poetry lessons. I am asking for permission to interview you and observe your poetry lesson. The interview will be between 30-40 minutes.

The title of my research is: ***Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry to Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners***. The main aim of the study is to explore teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL Learners. The fundamental objectives of this study are:

- 1.To investigate the teaching of poetry in the EFAL Grade 10 classroom.
2. To establish the experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners.
- 3.To recommend strategies teachers can use to teach poetry in the Grade 10 classroom.

Furthermore, I wish to bring to your attention that:

- Your identity will be protected in the report writing and research findings,
- your participation will be voluntary.
- The school will not be mentioned by its name, instead, pseudonyms will be used for all schools and participation.
- Interviews will be voice recorded to assist in the accurate capturing of data collected.

Should you have any concerns or queries about this study please feel free to contact me or my supervisor Dr Khosa on +27 51 401 1452 or [KhosaM@ufs.ac.za](mailto:KhosaM@ufs.ac.za).

Yours Sincerely

Buthelezi MT

Cell: 079 252 0665

Email address: [truemanmzwandile@gmail.com](mailto:truemanmzwandile@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM –PARTICIPANTS

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understood the request from Mzwandile Trueman Buthelezi, who is doing his Master's in Education at the University of Free State. I understand the scope and course of the research that is being conducted. I have been made aware of the following:

- My identity will be protected by the use of different names.
- I am not obligated to take part in this study and can withdraw at any time.
- The information that I give will be recorded so as to ensure accuracy.
- I will receive a copy of the transcription of my interview in order to check its accuracy

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion    YES NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion    YES NO

Signature Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX F: TEACHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **Section A: Biographical Data**

**Name of Teacher:** (optional)

Gender:

Age:

Home Language:

Qualifications:

Teaching Experience:

### **Section B: Semi-structured questions**

1. What is your experience of teaching EFAL poetry to Grade 10 learners? Or What can you tell me about teaching poetry in your EFAL classroom?
2. According to policy, you're permitted to choose your preferred genre for teaching literature in your EFAL classroom. Can you explain the reason for choosing poetry specifically for teaching literature?
3. What informs you to select/choose poetry texts/books for EFAL Grade 10 learners' reading?
4. How do you help learners understand poetry in your EFAL classroom?
5. What challenges do you face as a teacher when teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners?
6. How do you teach poetry to EFAL learners? Which method or approach do you use when teaching poetry?
7. How do you support learners who struggle with understanding poetry simply because the language used is foreign to many learners?
8. English language is foreign to many black African learners, how do you overcome challenges of language barriers during poetry lessons?
9. Do you think poetry helps learners to improve their English language? Why?
10. Do you enjoy teaching poetry? If yes/no, please elaborate.
11. Do learners actively participate during poetry lessons?
12. Does the school promote the use of English as a language of instruction?

## APPENDIX G: LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

*This instrument includes the following sections:*

|                                        |
|----------------------------------------|
| <b>SECTION A: SCHOOL VISIT DETAILS</b> |
| <b>SECTION B: LESSON OBSERVATION</b>   |

| SCHOOL VISIT DETAILS |                                                                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Teacher name      | Optional                                                                        |
| 2. Grade             |                                                                                 |
| 3. School            |                                                                                 |
| 4. Date of visit     |                                                                                 |
| 5. Name of Evaluator |                                                                                 |
|                      | 1. Main Language of Instruction:                                                |
|                      |                                                                                 |
|                      | 2. Lesson observation will focus on the following aspects during poetry lesson: |
|                      |                                                                                 |

|                                                        |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Introductory activities used during poetry lessons.    | 1.1 |
| Does the teacher relate poem content to everyday life? | 1.2 |
| Strategies used for teaching poetry.                   | 1.3 |
| Approaches used for teaching poetry.                   | 1.4 |
| Communicating clearly and accurately.                  | 1.7 |



|                                                      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Asking questions and providing feedback to students. | 1.8  |
| Materials used for teaching poetry.                  | 1.9  |
| Support given to struggling learners.                | 1.10 |

## SECTION B: LESSON OBSERVATION

| POETRY LESSON IN THE EFAL GRADE 10 CLASSROOM                |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1.1. Introductory activities used during poetry lessons.    |  |
|                                                             |  |
|                                                             |  |
|                                                             |  |
|                                                             |  |
|                                                             |  |
| 1.2. Does the teacher relate poem content to everyday life? |  |
|                                                             |  |
|                                                             |  |
|                                                             |  |
| 1.3. Strategies used for teaching poetry                    |  |
| 1.4. Approaches used for teaching poetry.                   |  |

|                                                           |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1.5. Communicating clearly and accurately.                |  |
| 1.6. Asking questions and providing feedback to students. |  |
| 1.7. Materials used for teaching poetry.                  |  |
| 1. 8. Support given to struggling learners.               |  |

## APPENDIX H: TURNITIN REPORT

### Mzwandile Project

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

9%

SIMILARITY INDEX

8%

INTERNET SOURCES

3%

PUBLICATIONS

4%

STUDENT PAPERS

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

1

researchspace.ukzn.ac.za

Internet Source

3%

2

Submitted to University of the Free State

Student Paper

2%

3

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5

Marien Alet Graham. "Overcrowded Classrooms and their Association with South African Learners' Mathematics Achievement", African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, 2023

Publication

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ulspace.ul.ac.za

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## APPENDIX I: LANGUAGE EDITOR CERTIFICATE



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Ladysmith, 3373

Date: 06 November 2024

Student: Mzwandile Trueman Buthelezi

Research project title: **Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry To Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners**

To Whom It May Concern,

I hereby confirm that I, Dr Sithembiso Mnoqbi Sthandwa Ndlovu of Benyathi Research and Consulting Services (BRACS), edited and proofread the Master of Education (M.Ed) dissertation of Mr. Mzwandile Trueman Buthelezi, titled **"Exploring Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry To Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners"**. BRACS provided recommendations for changes to the record and sent the document to the client with tracked changes and comments for the client to address.

Kind regards,

Dr Sithembiso Mnoqbi Sthandwa Ndlovu  
BSW (UCT) MPH (UCT) PhD (UKZN)



ENTERPRISE NO: K2022519563