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Changes in how English FAL learners appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a practitioner case study of Grade 11 learners in Gauteng

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education: Languages, literacies and literatures

May 2019

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UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND

Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report is my own and unaided work. Wherever other resources have been used, they have been acknowledged. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Grace Mavhiza

24 May 2019

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Above all, I give all glory and honour to my God who has made me to reach this far.

Dedication

To my father Mr Hosia Urayayi Mudzingwa and my late mother Mrs Chipo Mudzingwa for their love, endless support and sacrifices. My father has been a source of strength during moments of despair and discouragement.

Abbreviations and acronyms

English FAL	English First Additional Language
English HL	English Home language
ATP	Assessment Teaching Program
OBE	Outcome Based Assessment
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

Abstract

A vigorous poetry tradition has existed throughout South African history. It represents in many ways a truly original contribution to the literature in the English first additional language (FAL) classroom. The benefits of poetry in enhancing intellectual, emotional social and linguistic development in learners are well documented. Surprisingly, there is a negative attitude towards poetry by learners and teachers as they prefer other literary genres particularly in a secondary school where this research was carried out. I have realised that the oral traditional poetry which is an African form of poetry practice is largely absent in the classroom today. Through a practitioner case study, this research sought to elicit the Grade 11 learners' changes in appreciation of classroom poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the English FAL classroom. This study presents previous research regarding perceptions accorded to classroom poetry. This is a qualitative study in which data gathered through questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, poetry texts analysis and reflective writing was presented to answer the primary question; what could be the changes in the appreciation of classroom poetry if indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom?

The findings show that learners of English FAL do not appreciate classroom poetry due to the reasons that; classroom poetry is distant from the learners' life experiences making them struggle to interpret the poetry prescribed for them. Learners also said that classroom poetry is boring and this is due to the teaching methods employed in the classroom which are book centred and assessment driven. However, this study concluded through the intervention that encouraging learners to respond to poetry by presenting poems in a range of modes is more likely to boost their interest than focusing on the "traditional" line by line analysis of poems. The other important finding is that if indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom, learners' attitudes towards classroom poetry will positively change.

Key words: indigenous, appreciation, pedagogy, poetry, multiliteracies, multimodality

Table of Contents

Declaration ii

Acknowledgements iii

Dedication iv

Abbreviations and acronyms v

Abstract vi

CHAPTER 1 1

Introduction 1

Background to the study 1

Problem statement 2

Aims of the research 4

Research questions 4

Definition of terms and concepts 5

Indigenous South African Poetry 7

Pre-colonial Poetry 9

Izibongo- Praise Poems 10

Izithakazelo- Clan praises 11

The Praises of Mzilikazi, the Son of Matshobana 12

Amaculo- Songs 12

Colonial era poetry 13

Poetry of the struggle 14

Post apartheid era poetry 15

The contemporary *Imbongi* 15

Indigenous poetry in the modern curriculum 16

CHAPTER 2 17

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework 17

Introduction 17

Literature review 17

Benefits of using poetry in the English FAL classroom 18

Language development 18

Critical thinking 18

Entertainment 19

Cultural enrichment 19

Social and personal identity awareness 20

Educating the whole person 20

Poetry texts selection and policy 20

Reasons why poetry is not popular with learners 22
Theoretical framework 23
Multiliteracies/multimodality 24
Multiliteracies/multimodality in a multicultural poetry classroom 26
CHAPTER 3 28
Methodology and design 28
Introduction 28
Research design 28
Research methodology 29
Research instruments and data collection procedures 30
Research context and participants 33
Description of research site 34
Sampling 35
Reliability and Validity 36
Ethical considerations 37
Limitations of the study 37
Conclusion 37
CHAPTER 4 38
Data presentation and analysis 38
Introduction 38
1. Questionnaire 38
The close relationship between engagement and attitudes towards poetry 45
Failure of prescribed poetry texts to engage learners 46
The teacher's poetry pedagogies 46
The influence of peer/family support 47
2. Analysis of selected set-work poems 48
Analysis of poems written by Grade 11 English FAL learners. 53
3. Intervention stage 1: Oral poetry performance of self-chosen poems 55
Summary of main observations 64
4. Intervention stage 2: Oral poetry performance of classroom set poems 66
Summary of main observations 69
Themes emerging from observation of the intervention lessons (stages 1 and 2) 70
5. Reflective writing 72
6. Interviews 74
Themes emerging from the interviews 81
Conclusion 82

CHAPTER 5 83
Summary and discussion of findings 83
Introduction 83
Table 6: Summary of the findings 83
Sub-question 1: what poetry texts and practices do learners engage with outside of school? 84
Sub-question 2: What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards their out-of-school poetry practices? 85
Sub-question 3: What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the prescribed poems taught to them before the intervention? 86
Sub-question 4: What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the study of poetry in the English FAL classroom after intervention? 87
Sub-question 5: What impact do home poetry practices have on the English FAL poetry classroom? 88
Sub-question 6: What are the effects of including indigenous poetry in the English FAL poetry classroom? 88
CHAPTER 6 90
Implications, recommendations and conclusion 90
Introduction 90
Implications and recommendations 90
Conclusion 91
Appendix 1: Poems 98
Appendix 2: Questionnaire 99
Appendix 3: Observation schedule 100
Appendix 4: Interviews 104
Appendix 5: Reflective write up 105
Appendix 6: Grade 11 prescribed poetry texts 112
Appendix 7: Ethical considerations 127
Appendix 8: Information and consent letters 130

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background to the study

In my experience as a teacher in a public secondary school in Gauteng, poetry in school is both neglected and unpopular. There are various reasons for this situation which include poetry selection (the poems that are set in the curriculum), the sophistication accorded to poetry by both learners and teachers, failure to understand the purpose of poetry, and various contextual factors. Many learners seem to consider poetry to be difficult; I have noted that some learners score high marks in the short story section and they get low marks in the poetry section showing that probably poetry is difficult for them. Vala, Doublalova, Sladova and Rerichova (2012) assert that learners sometimes forget that poetry is the expression of the inexpressible. Furthermore, Eagleton (1996) postulates that "poetry is an emotive rather than referential language" p.39. He says that poetry organizes our feelings in satifying ways to describe the world. This may suggest that some learners of English First Additional Language (FAL) consider emotions and feelings evoked by a poem too vague and hardly graspable and find it difficult to verbalise them.

This negative attitude towards poetry is surprising, since in South Africa, most of the learners who do English (FAL) are introduced to poetry at home as part of the ordinary social orientation of growing up. They inherit a rich tradition of praise poetry in which poetry is a powerful tool for maintaining social consciousness. Praise poetry, which is an oral genre that exists among many African cultures, differs from one culture to the other. Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, for example, poetry has different purpose depending on context. The most popular in Zimbabwe is the totem praise poetry which is introduced to every child even before they start talking. The same social poetry orientation is also given to the Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho people of South Africa in the form of clan praises. Clan praises help orient children to the society and makes them conscious of their cultural and social identity. These are the three South

African indigenous languages that are studied at home language level at the school where I conducted my research. I have noted that some learners in this school are involved in other forms of poetry which are similar to praise poetry, for example, song lyrics, rap/hip hop and some are actively involved in poetry clubs. However, all these forms of poetry that learners are familiar with are not acknowledged in the classroom. The problem with poetry in school, I have realised, is that in South Africa, learners seem to find the gap unbearable between home oral performance poetry and the academic analytic study of written poetry in the school. This might mean that the school curriculum exposes learners to poetry that they cannot relate to, because it is so foreign to the nature of the praise poetry that they are introduced to at home. Hence real life contexts do not merge with academic practices resulting in learners having a negative attitude towards classroom poetry as they consider it incomprehensible and distant from real life. In this research, I examined the effects of incorporating indigenous poetry in the classroom as a way of creating a communication bridge between the learners' out of school social identities and their institutionalised identities, with the assumption that this may eradicate the conception that classroom poetry is irrelevant, foreign and difficult.

I find it important to highlight that none of the learners from the class selected speaks English as home language, which as Archer and Newfield (2014) point out, presents a significant problem for educators. South African classrooms are overwelmingly multilingual. Some learners have the advantage of having the language of instruction as their home language while others, for example at the school where the research was conducted, might not even have English as close to being a second language. That being the case, the value of this study lies in arguing for an approach relevant for a South African English FAL poetry classroom context which goes beyond the book system. Many students in the class that I teach are involved in the poetry practices outside school and in their home languages.Therefore, this study explored whether learners' appreciation of poetry change when indigenous poetry is brought into the English FAL classroom in a South African township school.

Problem statement

As an English FAL teacher in a secondary school in Gauteng in South Africa, I have noticed how my learners talk a lot about the poems that they write and also the clubs

that they have joined outside school where they recite poems. Yet when I teach poetry in Grade 11, the majority of learners struggle with the poetry in the literature curriculum as compared to other genres of literature. Although poetry appreciation is a key component of the literature curriculum, I have observed that most Grade 11 learners dislike and often shy away from classroom poetry. Another worrying trend is that, in my school, poetry consistently tends to be lowly rated and the school opts for other genres at Grade 12 leaving out poetry with the assumption that learners might fail if they are to study poetry at Grade 12. My concern is why these leaners show interest in writing poems and reciting them outside school but struggle to comprehend the poetry that is taught in the classroom. Given this complex situation, I am interested in investigating the attitudes of the learners towards poetry in and outside the English FAL classroom. My experience with the learners that I teach has led me to believe that my learners' out-of-school poetic experiences are varied and draw on a range of existing traditions both traditional and modern. One aim of this research is therefore to map these out-of-school practices. The second and major aim is to find out whether including indigenous poetry in the classroom might influence the learners' attitudes to poetry, and if so, what this impact might be.

The policy statement (Department of Education, 2010) states that "Poetry should be taught not poems. Read as many as possible in class and ensure that learners read and write poems as well" (p.17). Interestingly, the pedagogies that can be employed using this statement allow the inclusion of indigenous poetry practices, in contrast, the details of the assessment tool mandated in the policy speak differently as the teacher has to complete certain poetry texts within a specified period. In order to avoid failure for the learners, the teacher will choose to stick to the assessment plan as opposed to the assessment policy statement. This does not exclude me. It is a situation which leaves the teacher in limbo. Changing the poems set in the curriculum might be challenging because such decisions are made at a national level and also because any changes will have financial implications since changing poetry sets entail changing the anthologies prescribed. However, as an individual teacher I can change my English FAL poetry teaching pedagogy by incorporating indigenous practices such as performance poetry as well as meeting the CAPS requirements, to ensure that learners are taught all that they need to know for assessments.

A few studies have been done on classroom poetry teaching generally (Andrews, 1991; Black, 2009; Duff,1989; Dymoke & Hughs, 2009), and on multimodality and translanguaging in teaching poetry in South African FAL classrooms (Jewitt, 2005; Kress,2001; New London Group, 1996; Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006), but none focuses on the possible effects on learners' appreciation of infusing indigenous poetry into English FAL teaching in South Africa. Some researchers have concentrated on English FAL teaching and learning in general (Gultig, 1993; Samuel, 1995; Wright, 1993) but none is an in-depth study focusing only on poetry. There appears to be a gap in the literature on the inclusion of indigenous poetry in South African classrooms. Therefore, any study or research in this area will be valuable. My research is important because it will improve existing understandings of the perceptions that some learners have about poetry, which might help improve the way that teachers, myself included, teach poetry in the English FAL classroom. This is the reason that has led me into wanting to find answers to the primary research question: What is the impact of bringing indigenous poetry into the poetry classroom, in terms of how a group of South African Grade 11 FAL learners appreciate poetry?

Aims of the research

The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of including indigenous poetry on the appreciation of classroom poetry of some Grade 11 learners in South Africa. By classroom poetry I refer to the poems are prescribed in the Grade 11 English FAL curriculum. Interpretation and appreciation of literature are linked, because a learner's perceptions of and attitudes towards a text, which make up that learner's appreciation of that text, are largely responsible for shaping their interpretation of that text. For this reason, the study will investigate the perceptions of and attitudes towards classroom poetry of some Learners of English FAL. The findings from the study will offer an insight into pedagogies that could assist learners in South Africa to appreciate poetry.

Research questions

So as to answer the primary question above, the research will answer the following secondary questions:

1. What poetry texts and practices do learners engage with outside of school?

2. What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards their out-of-school poetry practices?
3. What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the prescribed poems taught to them before intervention?
4. What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the study of poetry in the English FAL classroom after intervention?
5. What impact do home poetry practices have on the English FAL poetry classroom?
6. What are the effects of including indigenous poetry in the English FAL poetry classroom?

Definition of terms and concepts

In this section I define the central terms that I use in this study.

1. Indigenous: For the purpose of this study indigenous poetry is poetry that originates in South Africa, and which is produced by the original or native peoples of the country and their descendants. Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that "indigenous peoples are those who have creation stories, not colonization stories, about how we/they came to be in a particular place" (p.6). Tuhiwai Smith (1999) reminds us that "the word *indigenous* is a way of including the many diverse communities, language groups and nations, each with their own indentification within a single grouping" (p.6). I think this is relevant for South Africa bearing in mind that the indigenous poetic tradition is not uniform and is not static, but growing out of the various cultural and linguistic traditions of South Africa's various indigeneous peoples. Indigenous poetry in South Africa can be understood from two angles, that is poetry by us here and now and poetry of our heritage. This includes the many South African diverse communities and language groups.
2. Poetry: Poetry in South Africa, just like any other African country encompasses a wide range of traditional practices and beliefs. South African poetry is fundamentally shaped by the social and political landscapes. This is the reason why defining poetry is complicated. However, Mtshali, in an interview with Thomson Learning (2001) says that poetry is what the poet sees, hears and experiences, this definition concurs with Dylan Thomas who says that poetry is

that which evokes some emotions, that which makes you want to do this or that or nothing, makes you know that you are alone in the unknown world, that your bliss and suffering is forever shared and forever all your own, Nastasi (2013). Many schools of thought have tried to define poetry but for the purpose of this study, I will define poetry as a group of words, spoken or written evoking some shared emotions between the poet and the audience. Poetry has a form which sets it apart from other uses of words. The words in poetry are grouped in short lines and stanzas, the words have metrical features like rhyme and rhythm. Repetition is another important feature of poetry as well as imagery and figurative language. Words in poetry can call for performance. This means that the group of words in poetry presents experiences, thoughts and feelings and creates for the audience a new understanding of these experiences, thoughts and feelings. This definition together with the aspects from Dylan Thomas and Mtshali as discussed previously are relevant to the aim of my study.

3. Perception: This is a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something, an opinion of or belief about that thing. In this study, perception involves the learners' awareness of or the ability to identify poetry. It also includes my interpretation of the learners' thoughts and beliefs about English FAL classroom poetry and indigenous poetry.
4. Attitude: This is a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something. Attitude is difficult to access and give a clear definition of because this is something which occurs in one's body and there are greater chances of misinterpreting one's attitude. However, for this study, attitude will be closely linked to behaviour of learners towards poetry which is exhibited through bodily reactions or gestures and what the learners say about poetry.
5. Appreciation: This is a way of enjoying and valuing the good qualities of someone or something. In this study, appreciation involves the excitement that learners have about poetry and how they value it.
6. Semiotics: This term will be comprehensively described in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework. Semiotics is the study of the rules underlying sign systems, so that the use and implications of signs can be understood, in particular visual and verbal signs in communication (Chandler, 2007). A semiotic approach concentrates on the meaning and interpretation of a text.

7. Multiliteracies: My definition for multiliteracies is being able not only to read and write but also be competent in oral articulation, gestural interpretation comprehending and embracing multiculturalism and showing respect to diversity, which reflects in effective interaction. Multiliteracies refer to a pedagogy that does not only privilege alphabetical representations but brings into the classroom a varied range of literacies that help learners to make meaning. This is what I did in the intervention where learners brought their out of school literacies to the English FAL poetry classroom.
8. Multimodality: Kress (2009) defines multimodality as a theory which looks at the many different semiotic modes that people use to communicate with each other and to express themselves.

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of including indigenous poetry on the appreciation of classroom poetry of some Grade 11 learners in South Africa. To achieve the aim I have identified and defined the key terms and concepts above. However, it is also important to outline the history of South African poetry in order to give an understanding of poetry indigeneity in South Africa.

Indigenous South African Poetry

I use the terms indigenous poetry and traditional poetry synonymously. Definitions are numerous. Many schools of thought have come up with different definitions in an effort to try and understand what indigenous really refer to. Smith (1999) states that indigenous in as much problematic it is to define, it might be referring to the first people, the native or the people of the land. Deducing from the descriptions above, Indigenous poetry in South Africa might therefore refer to the traditional poetry which was spoken or sung and performed. This came from the praise poetry. In simple terms, my definition of the Indigenous poetry will encompass praise poetry, oral and performance poetry by South African people despite their ethnic background and language. My definition does not side-line poetry written by non-black poets because before colonisation black people's poetry was purely oral because the writing system was not yet in place. Therefore, my definition will include those poems translated from vernacular languages particularly Zulu to English. I am also flexible on language because English has become a lingua franca (a common language in today's global society) and the practitioner case study is focused on the English FAL classroom

aiming to find out how the inclusion of indigenous poetry in the English FAL Classroom can change the learners' appreciation of poetry.

The genre of performance poetry in present day South Africa, which encompasses pop culture forms part of the spoken word according to Chapman (2007) and it evidently has its roots in the indigenous praise poetry traditions of *Izibongo* as well as the combined influence of the protest poets of the 1970s through the 1990s, who often collaborated with or were musicians themselves. South African children from many cultural groups are first exposed to praise poetry (clan names) as a form of social and cultural orientation. Mtshali (1976) defines" black people's poetry" as the South African indigenous poetry. He further says that basing on the definition that poetry refers to the expression of emotions, a black man is "a poetic existence shaped by the harsh realities and euphoric fantasies that surround him" (p.199). He argues that black South African poetry is an endless series of poems of humour, bitterness, hatred, love, hope, despair and death. This seems to be the same across all human cultures.

Mtshali says every human being should be able to understand and appreciate poetry because humans have emotions. The only disadvantage that Mtshali cites is that early black people's poetry was not written down due to the black man's inability to write and this Mtshali calls a 'tragedy'. He notes that black people had the *imbongi* who sang praise poetry for the Chief but lack of documentation has led to the misrepresentation of black culture. Dohne (cited in Jordan, 1957) for, claimed that there was no poetry among the Zulu people except "*Ukuhlabela*", that is, praise singing. He further highlights that these praises were sung for the chief in a repetitive hyperbolic style with no metre nor rhyme. Jordan says that Dohne had worked in the Zululand for twenty years and his denial of the existence of poetry among the Zulu speaking people can therefore be attributed not to a lack of understanding of the language, but to his conception of poetry. Jordan (1957) argues that in the languages of Southern Africa there is a wealth of traditional poetry, covering in its nature a whole range of life experiences.

Praise poetry is however perhaps the most familiar form of traditional poetry. Echoing Mtshali, Jordan says that praise poetry has existed in South Africa among all tribes since time immemorial. In Zulu culture, any boy who lacked praise poetry accomplishments was held in contempt by the men as well as by other boys. It was

therefore a skill that every boy was expected to possess. Somniso (2008) says that among the Xhosa people, *imbongi*, could be a man or a woman, which might mean that the Xhosa culture was less patriarchal than the Zulu. Praise poetry also existed among the Sesotho people in the form of oral folklore and it was a facet of oral genre that anybody would engage in for example, a farmer praising his herd, a father praising his son or a wife praising her husband (Mtshali, 1976). The history of South African literacy therefore has strong evidence that poetry was among the recommended literacy practice in black people's culture.

The genre of praise poetry gives reference to King Shaka who led the Zulu people of South Africa to have control of their lives and defend their culture. As a result of his unwavering leadership, much of the praise poetry was done in his honour as *Izibongo zamaKhosi* (King praises). Individual *Izibongo* (self-praise poetry) was also composed by ordinary people as a societal practice serving to mediate the individual and the societal identities and define the individual in relation to the group or the community. According to Chapman (1996) these praises were used to excite and delight. This will be subject for further investigation considering that Chapman is an outsider whose assessment of how poetry functions might be shaped by his own cultural positioning. For the purpose of this study the oral traditional poetry can be placed into four categories; Precolonial poetry (before 1652), Colonial-Transition period poetry (1652-1833), Colonial poetry (1834-1948) Poetry of the struggle (1948-1994) and Poetry of the interregnum-post apartheid poetry.

Pre-colonial Poetry

The poetry of this period defines one of the two kinds of indigenous South African poetry. This is the period of oral literacy in South Africa. Surprisingly, it seems that the poetry of this period has never been taken seriously into consideration in assessing the appropriateness of the prescribed poems or classroom methodology for teaching poetry in South Africa. Probably, this is because historically, the accomplishments of black people were consistently ignored by colonial governments and by most missionaries. Oral poetry was not recognised as valid literary expression that deserves serious attention. This attitude persists even in the post-colonial curriculum despite the fact that oral poetry has survived from precolonial period until today. The traditional

poetic forms such as *Izibongo* (praise poetry), *Izithakazelo* (Clan praises), *Amaculo* (generic forms for songs) have survived from ancient times into the present.

For this study, Zulu oral poetry was chosen to serve as the paradigm of indigenous poetry in South for the following reasons: The research is conducted at a school in a township in Gauteng. Even though there are three vernacular languages studied at the school, Zulu is a predominant language in the school and out of school. Ritter (1995) affirms that the Zulus were the last ethnic group to succumb to Christian missionary influence which means the Zulu traditional poetry has survived since time immemorial to this date maintaining a significant degree of its original form. The Zulu oral poetry tradition is still alive, practiced by the educated and uneducated alike. Chapman (2007) says that praise wedding songs, work chants, lullabies and dance songs as well as Christian hymns adopted from oral traditional chants still form part of the Zulu repertoire of communication. This phenomenon is not unique to the Zulu but is also found in other ethnic groups.

Poetry was an important means of communication in traditional Zulu society. Even today poetry still plays an important role as it forms part of the routine of daily life. Unlike written poetry, oral poetry was not restricted to the educated or the elite intellectuals (Chapman, 2007), those who are privileged enough to unravel the subtleties of the written word. Ordinary people composed poetry, for example mothers composed lullabies, men composed work chants and youths composed love songs. Everybody was a poet in the traditional African society. This is reflected in my definition which states that poetry is a group of words which evoke emotions which can be written or spoken. However, there were professionals called the *Imbongi*.

Izibongo- Praise Poems

Izibongo are praise poems. Chapman (2007) adds that individuals could compose poems in praise of themselves or others. Self-praise was done to make declarations and endorse what the society expect from that particular individual. The praise name was usually adopted permanently and even used as a means to contact the person after death when the person has joined the ancestors (*amadlozi*). Praise poems about important persons like the Kings and Chiefs were composed by the professionals known as *Imbongi (Izibongo zamakhosi).* Those praises constitute the verses that gave reference to important historical events with which the person might have been

involved in for example the praises given to Shaka. Chapman (1982) cited the following poem as a good example of a King's praise poem translated from Zulu by A.C Jordan;

He is Shaka the unshakeable,
Thunderer-while sitting, son of Menzi.
He is the bird that preys on other birds,
The battle-axe that excels other battle-axes.
He is the long-strided pursuer, son of Ndaba,
Who pursued the moon and the stars.
He is a great hubbub like the rock of Nkandla
Where the elephants take shelter
When the heavens frown.
'Tis he whose spears resound causing wailings,
Thus old women shall stay in abandoned homes,
And old men shall drop by the wayside. P.59

The generations that hear this praise poem about their King not only get excited by the poem but also get informed about the great strength and ability that their King had. The imagery used in this poem also shows the great linguistic richness of traditional praise poetry.

Izithakazelo- Clan praises

The clan praises are an important poetry form in Africa. Among the Zulu people of South Africa clan names are known as *izithakazelo*. *Izithakazelo* always mentions the names of the important persons like the ancestors (*amadlozi*) of the clan. The name of the clan founder is mentioned first then the others follow. These names are related to the clan or family and are accompanied by a description of that person, his attributes, history as well as the clan's origin. As a descendent of the Nguni tradition, I know and I have experienced that *Izithakazelo* are used for the following;

1. Communication with the ancestors during marriages ceremonies like paying bride prize (*lobola*) or wedding ceremonies;
2. As an expression of appreciation or congratulations;

3. As a polite form of address which is the most common function; The clan name is used when greeting of acknowledging a greeting;
4. For consoling or comforting a child or a husband; and
5. During burial ceremonies to talk to the deceased person.

Below is an example of *Izithakazelo zakaMzilikazi* from the Zulu family that settled in Zimbabwe after the infights among the Zulu people over Chieftainship. This also suggests that the Zulu pride is in the blood regardless of time and geographical demarcations.

The Praises of Mzilikazi, the Son of Matshobana

Bayethe! Ndebele Nation!
You are the knobkerrie that menaced Tshaka.
You are the big one who is as big as his father Matshobana.
You are the string of Mntinti and Simangele
son of Ndaba.
You are the string of Mntitni and Ndaba
The string they made until they wet tears
You are the sun that rose from the ear of the elephant,
It rose where upon the birds announced to each other.
You are the son of Simangele who was kicked!
Who was kicked by long feet and by the short ones.
You refused to eat the gift of meat in Bulawayo.
You are the fighter who has marks of fighting,
You are the cattle that opened the closed pen with their horns,
Because they opened the Ngome forests and left.
You are the moon the people said had set
Yet it was just rising;
It rose in the year of Mpeyana.
You are the cow that showed its face from the crowd.
You are the log from which the Zulus cut firewood until they left it.
You are the cow that, while it was just emerging made progress.

The poem above is a clan praise in honour of Mzilikazi. This is a typical example of clan praises which start by mentioning the names of the ancestors to the name of the person being praised. There is praise about Mzilikazi being a great warrior who could not be influenced by his surroundings. The metaphors which refer to Mzilikazi as the string, the sun, the cow and the log make the poem interesting and the tone suggests a high pitch which calls for performance and admiration of Mzilikazi because of his accomplishments.

Amaculo- Songs

Amaculo broadly refers to songs. In the Nguni languages, poetry and songs are inseparable and manner of rendition determines what song was and what poetry was.

This tradition of poet/singer has persisted into the modern world with the likes of Mzwake Mbuli who is popularly known as the people's poet.

Colonial era poetry

Poetry always had a significant role in delivering messages to the people. McGiffen (2017) says that poetry has the power to transform undesirable social structures and she says that rich poetry of South Africa predates the arrival of colonial language and people by millennium. The transition period spans from 1652 with the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck to settle permanently at the Cape. Brown (1998) states that during this period Khoisan literature in the form of songs and stories were recorded by western observers. As in the Nguni tradition, these songs were inseparable from poetry as mentioned earlier. During this period also came Christianity. Ndebele (1994) acknowledges the hymns of Isaiah Shembe and the church of the Nazarites. He further says that Shembe hymns are popular forms which syncretise the *izibongo* with the poetics and rhythms of the Christian hymns in order to articulate religious and political resistance to colonial occupation. Colonial period poetry is characterised by poets mixing traditions - drawing on both their African heritage and on imported western poetic forms.

These hymns reveal sentiments also expressed by black writers like T.Plaatje, B.W Vilakazi and H.I.E Dhlomo. For example, H.I.E Dhlomo used his writing to condemn colonialism. Dhlomo's 13th November 1943 poem titled "Renunciation" (Appendix 1. p. 98) shows how bitter he was about the brutal killings and suffering among the black people at the hands of colonialists. Mokoatsi (2015) calls Dhlomo a militant writer which is reflected in the poem, "The Great Question";

> Would you have me as a brother
> Or a vengeful beast?
> Would you have us help each other;
> Or have our hates increased?
> Would you have us live despairingly?
> Starve, kill, revolt and die?
> Or free men co-operating:
> Wing helping wings to fly?

It is interesting to note that in this poem Dhlomo used Western poetic form such as rhyme and lines with regular meter to express anti-colonial sentiments.

Poetry of the struggle

Poetry became the voice of the voiceless during the liberation struggle in South Africa. Chapman,(1982) singles out the poetry of the seventies as the most important socio-literary phenomenon of the time. Deprived of an extensive knowledge of Western literature and forms of writing by Bantu Education, and rejecting the cultural forms associated with colonial occupation, Soweto poets sought poetic models in traditional African forms, particularly *izibongo*. This was later blended with jazz and blues. Jazz gave a voice to the liberation struggle. For example, Miriam Makheba had a profound influence on the South African jazz vocal style. Miriam Makheba had “Soweto Blues” released in 1977 referring to the children protests, (Jon, 2008). Miriam Makheba used instruments which enabled her to blend the spoken word during her live performance. Vershbow (2010) mentions Hugh Masekela as one of the fathers of jazz protest songs that not only brought humour but also strengthened the freedom fighters. Davey (2013) states that during apartheid Hip Hop became pupular featuring the prominent artists like Africa Bambaataa and the Fat Boys among others.

Poetry of the struggle also played a pivotal role just like music. Fazzini, Scarsella and Pozzobon, (2013,p.65) mentioned part of Mzwakhe Mbuli’s poem *Africa my beginning. Africa my ending* which denounced white imperialism over South Africa;

> Africa my beginning
> They came from the west
> Sailing to the east
> With hatred and diseases flowing
> From their flesh
> And a burden to harden our lives
> They claimed to be friends
> When they found us friendly
> When foreigner met foreigner
> Exploiters of Africa
> Africa my beginning
> And Africa my ending

Chapman indicates that most of the poems were expressed in English reflecting black consciouness worries that using indigenous languages might deepen the tribal fissures promoted by apartheid. According to Ngwenya (2012) the English used by protest poets was often ungrammatical and used diction drawn from Americanism, *tsotsi-taal* and the terminology of black power. Poets sometimes deliberately reflected the inadequecies of Bantu Education. Chapman (1982) argues that Soweto poetry made "its rejection of Western literary and cultural continuities almost a stylistic and moral imperative" (p.3). Black people of South Africa said that the poets reminded them of their languages, history, heritage and their identies (Chapman, 1982) .

Post apartheid era poetry

Mda (2002) argues that the theme of lamentation is a new feature of post- apartheid literature. After looking at the poetry time lines in the history of South Africa I would concur with Mda. Mda (1994) explains that traditional African literature and culture played an important role in pre-colonial Africa in educating and preserving indigenous African societies, hence their marginalisation and destruction by the twin force of colonialism and globalisation created a state of loss and nostalgia. He further explains that many of the anti-apartheid poetic figures were not just protesting against the political situation of apartheid but also against the loss of indigenous culture. He is of the opinion therefore that whereas the anti-apartheid writers were filled with optimism that one-day apartheid will be defeated, poets today, post-apartheid are disillusioned because the democratic dispensation has not placed much emphasis on the restoration of indigenous poetry.

The contemporary *Imbongi*

The *imbongi* still plays an important role in the present day South Africa. I mentioned earlier that the origins of the Southern African orature is traced back all the way to the first communities that thrived on the continent, as highlighted by Brown (1998), that the *imbongi* played the roles of the mediator, praiser, critic and educator. Kaschula (2013) states that during the 1960s and 1970s the *imbongi* took up the role of the mediator between the colonial government and people. Poetry became the voice of the voiceless and this role has continued. The *imbongi* still function as mediator, praisers, critics and educators even in today's African societies. Kaschula (2013) notes

that the context has however shifted from performing *izibongo* for the Chief to performing at political rallies, union meetings, funerals, weddings and many other gatherings. A contemporary example is the *imbongi* Zolani Mkiva, who is widely known in South Africa and who has performed at the presidential inaugurations of both Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki (Kaschula, 2013).

Indigenous poetry in the modern curriculum

Learners of English FAL should be taught poetry that aims at affirming and empowering them, helping them to be good readers, writers, good English speakers and critical thinkers. Newfield and Maungedzo have proved that these goals are achievable if the prescribed poems speak to the readers and the listeners and address their community needs being taught in a multimodal way (Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006). Currently, many of the themes of the selected poems do not speak to the experiences of learners who are studying English FAL. Therefore, this study argues that the English FAL curriculum should be injected with larger doses of indigenous poetry. This does not only pertain to the inclusion of indigenous poetry but also to how it should be taught. Mphahlele (2002) calls for the adoption of a new pedagogy, one which eliminates the hinderences of the current "page-centered" teaching methodologies. South African poetry syllabi must be contextualised, taking into consideration the themes addressed by the poets selected. Oral poetry should be included in the curriculum allowing learners to be assessed on the type of oral performance that they are familiar with. This might justify the negative attitudes in the appreciation of classroom poetry among some Grade 11 learners in my school. In addition to the curriculum that does not accommodate the African indigenous poetry, the pedagogy is also questionable as the indigenous poetry was oral, performance and musical which implies that it was entertaining and educational at the same time.

Chapter one has introduced the contextual background of the study, the research topic, the problem statement, the primary research question and the secondary research questions. I have also given a justification why this study is worth carrying out. I have defined what indigenous poetry is and also elaborated on the history of poetry in South Africa in terms of the different periods of time, namely, pre-colonial era, colonial era and post-colonial era poetry. The next chapter provides the literature review and the theories that underpin this study.

CHAPTER 2
Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The previous chapter focused on introducing my research topic and the context, aims, research questions and rationale of this study. My hypothesis is that bringing indigenous poetry into the classroom may help learners to appreciate the set poetry they have to study.

Literature review

This literature review provides information about previous studies done internationally and in South Africa. The impact of teaching indigenous poetry on English FAL learners' appreciation of poetry has not been widely researched. However, internationally, (Lazar, 1993; Slater and Collie 1991; Widdowson 1985) are among the scholars of poetry in the classroom. Their main focus is on the benefits of classroom poetry and how learners are missing out on the joy of poetry through negative perceptions as a result of inappropriate pedagogy employed in the classroom teaching of poetry. In South Africa, Stein and Newfield (2006) are among those who have written about English literature and the new pedagogic ways of teaching it. Stein and Newfield focus on the application of multiliteracies and multimodality to the teaching of literature as a way of opening the space for reconceptualising which texts and which textual practices count and for whom.

Newfield and Maungedzo (2006) illustrate that it is possible to shift from the traditional autonomous model of literacy and a pedagogy that expects learners to cram literary devices rather than experience poetry. They devised an intervention that draws on the use of multimodal pedagogies to revitalise the genre of poetry. Newfield and Maungedzo's objective was to steer away from the analysis approach to teaching poetry in South Africa and open the English curriculum to a range of cultural and

linguistic knowledge and practices. The theoretical framework that informs my study borrows from this approach developed by Newfield and Maungedzo, and can be described as semiotic multimodality. The theory of multimodality/multiliteracies that underpins this study highlights textual analysis of poetry that occurs in conjunction with language-in-use, rather than in isolation, and that is deeply reliant on other forms of making meaning in the English FAL poetry classroom. I find this theoretical framework relevant to my study because I used to teach poetry to my learners in the formal way following the ATP (Assessment Teaching Program) looking at the meaning of the poem and figures of speech. These are the aspects that are emphasised in the ATP. After that learners then answer the questions based on the poem being studied. However, I have realised that the boredom in the poetry English FAL class might have something do with the employed pedagogy, hence the call for the theory of multiliteracies/multimodality.

Benefits of using poetry in the English FAL classroom

Poetry can be used in the English FAL classroom as content for a number of reasons.

Language development

Widdowson (1980), Collie and Slater (1991) and Lazar (1993) among others have identified that studying poetry helps build and develop the intellectual faculties of the learners. Collie and Slater add that poetry reading is vital to learners as it enables them to experience the power of language outside the ‘strait-jacket’ of more standard written sentence structure and lexis. Poetry exposes learners of English FAL to a variety of grammatical structures and unique forms of discourse. Femer (2003) adds that poetry can act as authentic texts, which convey the aesthetic, historic, and social realities of the target language culture.

Critical thinking

Widdowson (1989) and Shirley (1983) see the study of poetry as one stage of the process of sharpening thinking skills and helping learners recognize the function of connotation, denotation, symbolism and imagery. Knowledge of these techniques, Shirley argues, is integrally related to critical thinking and students can use this knowledge effectively in confronting the “language of commercial and political persuaders” (p.1). Overall, exposure to poetry enables learners to interact with language in meaningful ways while developing academic reading skills by engaging in

critical poetry analysis (Hirvera, 2001). This means that engaging with poetry more often widens one's vocabulary and the way one thinks. Poetry takes one's thinking outside the box. Poetry has no straightforward answers like one plus one is equal to two. With poetry, the reader is forced to work out the meaning of complicated passages and puzzle over obscure references.

Entertainment

Another benefit of poetry is entertainment. Collie and Slater (1991, p.226) state that poems "offer a rich, varied repertoire and are a source of much enjoyment for teachers and learners alike". The ambiguity of poetry invites students to explore language in a non-threatening manner because it invites unique explications rather than finding a right answer (Kezemek, 1985). Poetry can promote creativity and a more positive learning environment (Khansir, 2012). Poetry serves as a good model for creative writing and can stimulate interesting ideas for creative writing or at least it can help learners to enjoy the English FAL classroom (McKay 1982). Carefully selected English poems offer various themes which are relevant to the interests and concerns of learners (Collie & Slater, 1991). Therefore, English poetry can motivate the learners to express their emotions, opinions, reactions and feelings. Department of Education (2010. p.16) refers to the genre in the National Policy Statement stating that "the learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts." Poetry helps the reader to make unusual connections. Readers will step out of their real world and engage with the imaginary world which nobody else can see. They start seeing the world differently and enjoy engaging in their emotions in a new way.

Cultural enrichment

Cultural enrichment is noted by Pushpa and Savaedi (2014) as one of the benefits of poetry. They note that poetry introduces different cultural patterns and traditional forms of life which aid learners to expand their knowledge about other cultures, and this cultural awareness can ultimately strike sparks of critical response as well as affinity towards one's culture and life as a whole. Richards, Brown and Forde (2007) assert that "in a culturally responsive classroom, effective teaching and learning occur in a culturally supported, learner-centred context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, natured, and utilized to promote student achievement" (p.64).

This might mean that poetry opens an interesting cultural window and learners may already be knowledgeable about the poets and poems that are part of their heritage but when they read poems from other cultures they may be able to appreciate cultural diversity and critically respond to the poetry. Learners in a diverse community like South Africa can develop cultural capital as a skill and knowledge which can draw on to give them an advantage in social life.

Social and personal identity awareness

Poetry raises self-awareness among learners and also helps them to position themselves in the society. Through writing and performing poems, learners may be conscious of their feelings and shape their character. Benton (1999) and Black (2009) suggest that poetry writing and performance boost teenagers' self-esteem and that poetry combined with performance can be a vehicle used to help learners to be proud of who they are. This might mean that poetry helps learners to overcome the challenges of identity crisis. Poetry helps learners to love and respect themselves and also to respect others.

Educating the whole person

The use of poetry in the classroom helps to stimulate the imagination of learners and increase their emotional awareness (Lazar, 1993). Learners' confidence could be trained when they are asked to respond personally or express their own ideas and emotions in English. Ghosn (2002) describes literature as a change agent. He believes that literature can transform, change attitudes and help eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy, tolerance and an awareness of global challenges. All the above echo the fact that adolescence is a time of emotional development therefore poetry can help learners to discover themselves and explore their lives hence poetry helps with personal development and growth.

Poetry texts selection and policy

It is important to note that for more than a century, there have been misconceptions about African literature by Western scholars who collected a vast body of oral literature and studied it from their own perspectives. As a result, many of their earlier approaches to the study of oral literature in Africa has been inadequate as it omitted

some interesting and relevancy of oral poetry giving birth to unexamined assumptions about the nature and role of oral poetry. For example, Tala (1999) notes that the professors of Anthology, James Vaughan and Allan Merriam declared that “Although Africans may have something which is similar in certain aspects to what is known in the West, they do not have any qualitative criteria for evaluating it”(p.7).

It might be that these scholars may have given a blind eye to the fundamental principles of literacy appreciation that affirms that literary judgement should rely on knowledge and acceptance of the cultural reference system from which the literature emanates. The observation from the scholars mentioned above referred reinforce the idea that Africa was a continent lacking in literary sensibilities. Jones, Palmer, and Jones (1988) say that there used to be a widely held view among European intellectuals who observed African societies in the nineteenth century that there was nothing of true poetic merit in traditional African literature. These intellectuals thought that the African societies were still groping in the dark and struggling with elementary problems of existence and had not yet attained the level of perception where men could engage with the pursuit of poetic excellence and also still battling with language development. Jones et al. (1988)’s argument may be pointing to the perceptions that led to the side-lining of African traditional poetry practices in the English FAL curriculum. One would consider the intellectuals’ conclusions to be unfair because the African societies’ language expertise and intelligence could not be judged using a foreign language.

South African educational policy has been under scrutiny many times. It is of no doubt that a country’s educational policy can have a negative impact on literature if it fails to acknowledge the presence of indigenous literature and focus on assessment driven approach. Janks and Paton (1991 p.227) comment grimly that the study of “elitist British high culture protects us from having to focus on the terrifying problems of the world in which we live”. They note that in the years leading up to 1990, most education departments did not prescribe works from the South African repertoire, instead choosing Shaw, Eliot, Miller, Wordsworth, Shakespeare and other Western poets. Janks and Paton suggest that the selectors should learn that they are living in South Africa, a land different from England. Surprisingly, nearly two decades after Janks and Paton’s observation, the curriculum developers have made a meagre progress which will be explained in detail in Chapter 4. The curriculum developers who select poetry

texts should take into account the needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the learners. Texts selected should arouse learners' interest and elicit strong and positive reactions. Chapman (2007) says that choosing poems that are relevant to the learners' real life experiences, emotions or dreams is of great importance. In addition, if the language of the text is simple this may facilitate the comprehensibility of the poetry text (Slater & Collie, 1991). It may help learners to cope with the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material.

Reasons why poetry is not popular with learners

In spite of all these potentialities, the position of poetry within literature teaching is not simple, as learners in many countries tend to show negative attitudes towards poetry and consider it incomprehensible and distant from today's world, and teachers are afraid of working with it (Benton, 1999). Teachers' limited knowledge and skills are noted by Benton as reasons for this. Flemming (1992), Benton, (1999) and Riley, (2012) argue that such limitations of knowledge can lead to inappropriate pedagogies being employed in the classroom and that the assessment employed by teachers and prescribed by curricula can make poetry lessons mechanical and difficult for learners. Riley finds this reluctant attitude among teachers, unfortunate because for learning to occur teachers need to update their teaching strategies. The selection of poetry texts also seems to be far removed from the contexts of the learners. Jocson (2005) claims that many teachers of English focus on the technical aspects rather than the meaning of poetry. They make learners master the stiff figures of speech such as metaphors, oxymoron and iambic pentameters making the teaching and learning of poetry not only boring but laborious.

The other difficulty is the abundance of literary and historical references found in the works of canonical English poets, which limits understanding greatly for non-native speakers of English as Brindley (1980, in Finch, 2003, p.29) points out: "poems often deal with geographical or social settings alien to the students' experiences". The curriculum expectations and the learners' experiences are divorced and this makes it harder for learners to bridge the gap between home practices and classroom expectations. As a result, when asked to analyse these poems students find it difficult

and conclude that poetry is difficult and this feeling is imprinted on their memories (Rezna, 2007) and mutually shared by teachers.

Poetry may be important in real life but it is sometimes misconceived as a difficult genre (Fleming & Stevens, 2015). Calway (2008) affirms that teachers of English fear poetry because of examination specifications, therefore their enjoyment of poetry is replaced by anxiety and uncertainty which is passed on to learners. Students then end up suggesting that the study of poetry is dull and pointless (Ofsted, 2007) because the teacher kills all creativity and this serves to contribute to learners' alienation from poetry. This means that assessment plays a major role in the perception of learners about poetry. The way that poetry is assessed can help determine the way it is taught, and create a negative perception in the learners.

Poetry is a genre rich with scholarly attributes, cultural significance and has the potential to promote language learning among English FAL learners. Poetry encourages cultural identity awareness and confidence as well as social justice in our diverse classrooms in South Africa. It is also a vital creative and critical art form but teachers are facing an uphill battle due to the curriculum and its description of pedagogy which does not take the history of South Africa into account, and reflects colonial attitudes towards African poetic tradition. This also has made poetry to be taken as an afterthought, a supplement or something not worthy studying at all. Therefore, a theoretical framework is needed for thinking of classroom poetry in a new way, which can do justice to indigenous poetic tradition. Such a framework can guide the design, implementation and analysis of the effectiveness of a new poetry pedagogy that can achieve the benefits and overcome the obstacles as outlined above. This is multiliteracies/multimodality theory.

Theoretical framework

In seeking to explore what impact the inclusion of indigenous poetry has on the appreciation of classroom poetry, one must come open-minded and ready for a great range of possible responses. In order to select a theoretical lens, it seems best to choose a general, encompassing, theoretical framework that is relevant to the work of including indigenous poetry in the English FAL poetry classroom, and to the interpretation and appreciation of classroom poetry. Due to the fact that my

participants will be learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the multiliteracies/multimodality theoretical framework has been selected for this study.

Multiliteracies/multimodality

The concept of multiliteracies was coined by the New London Group in 1996 to emphasise the many ways and contexts in which people experience communication and come to develop understanding by means of texts. The term refers to the increasing complexity and interrelationship of different modes of meaning (New London Group, 1996). The concept has a holistic and inclusive meaning. It is a means to comprehend literacy beyond formal school learning. The New London Group described four steps of multiliteracies pedagogy which are: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Situated practice according to the New London (1996) means that multiliteracies draw on the lifeworld experiences of learners as well as their out of school communities and discourses as an integral part of the learning experience. A multiliteracies pedagogy based in situated practice underpins my study. Situated practice means that literacy is a social practice which promotes classroom discussions, interactions and sharing of ideas.

Cope and Kalantzis (2009) believe that human cognition is situated and contextual, and that meanings are grounded in the real world of patterns of experience, action and subjective interest. They argue that experience is in two aspects, that is, experiencing the known and experiencing the unknown. The experience of the unknown is made easier when learners are immersed into new experiences which are close to their own life worlds (New London, 1996). This implies that if learners' home poetry practices are involved in the English FAL Classroom, learners' understanding of classroom poetry will improve. As said by Chapman (1999) that, poetry among the Africans was often performed for entertainment. This might mean that learners who experienced *Imbongi* festivals in their communities would not be puzzled in class as they will try to fit the new classroom poetry into their real life experiences.

Multiliteracies is, moreover, dedicated to investing in mobility, fluidity and a knowledge society that promotes multiple semiotic systems. The multiliteracies approach highlights two aspects of literacy; linguistic diversity and multimodal forms of linguistic expression and representation. Fairclough (2000) observes that the notion of multiliteracies encompasses the twin notions of cultural hybridity and multimodality.

Multimodality and multiliteracies have become a rapidly growing interdisciplinary field (Jewitt, 2005). This field is primarily concerned with a wide range of disciplines of semiotic modes that communicate meaning "from folk costumes to poetry" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). Multimodality is defined by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined" (p.20). A multimodal approach looks beyond language. Kress (2009) defines mode as a socially and culturally shaped resource for making meaning, for example, images, writing, layout, speech and moving images as modes. Secondly, Kress asserts that semiotic modes are shaped by both the intrinsic characteristics and potentialities of the medium and by the requirements, histories and values of societies and their cultures. This implies that a mode is understood within the society and culture in which it is produced. A multimodal approach presents learners with different potentials for engagement with a text, including the point of entry, the possible paths through a text and the potentials for re-making it (Jewitt, 2005). Most immediately, poetry's multimodal nature can be emphasised by means of performance. This helps learners to gain much greater understanding and appreciation of how language and structure create effects and convey meaning (Dymoke and Hughs, 2009).

The multimodal approach is growing in scope with the release of internet, computers and other digital technologies. Dymoke and Hughs (2009) argue that "we have suppressed poetry's multimodal nature too long within the confines of the print text… students are immersed daily in new media, the cultural tools of their time, and we must redefine our literacy practices in order to stay relevant" (p.230). Teachers should do their utmost to keep poetry multimodal, because leaving poetry on the page in the classroom is to "sound its death knell" (p.1). According to Black (2009) a multimodal approach helps learners to "develop an engaged enjoyment and appreciation of poetry" as well as "creative and critical thinking" (p.28) during their lessons. Therefore, curriculum designers should take into cognisance the new approach to teaching poetry which embraces the modern changes to accommodate the needs of learners in the 21st century.

A multimodal method of poetry-teaching has the potential to be effective in boosting learners' engagement. Dymoke and Hughs (2009) are convinced of the "powerful dynamic and multimodal nature of poetry which is … a key justification for its inclusion

in a 21st century curriculum" (p.93). As highlighted earlier in chapter 1, indigenous poetry is not static and it is in two aspects which is poetry by us, here and now and heritage poetry. Therefore, there should be focus on teaching poetry in a multimodal way instead of focusing on the traditional method of poetry teaching.

Newfield (2009) explores what she refers to as "transmodal moments" focusing attention on the multiple transformations that occur in the processes of transduction. Newfield's focus is on processes of transduction in materiality, genre, meaning subjectivity and learning, as well as revealing the situatedness of transmodal semiotic action. Semitic practices are historically, socio-culturally and politically inflected. Newfield adds that in her study with Maungedzo (2006), processes of transduction familiar but not valued in the school opened up spaces for the young African students. Students were able to remake meaning across modes and they got motivate and enjoyed poetry.

Multiliteracies/multimodality in a multicultural poetry classroom

Since the New London Group developed its characterisation of multiliteracies in 1996, much has changed in the field of literacies studies. The landmark aspect of their work was to make a connection between the multiplicity of literacies that are present in learning contexts, and the wider plane of social change so that teachers may make sense of this multiplicity of new literacies and use it in new pedagogies that correspond to diverse learning options such as – in this study – the learning of poetry in an English FAL classroom. The theory of multimodality and multiliteracies is important for my study because it encourages one not to adopt the conventional word-bound way of making meaning in poetry and instead constitutes a new way of conceptualising how meaning can be made in present day classrooms. It encompasses a combination of various semiotic modes such speech, writing, action, gestures and sound as resources to represent or make meanings. These modes are characteristic attributes of indigenous poetry in South Africa. Learners draw on whatever semiotic resources they need to connect with and communicate their meanings with others and this includes the infusion of indigenous poetry in the English FAL classroom. Many young people are increasingly favouring the genre of music, which is a form of African indigenous poetry since as mentioned earlier in chapter 1 that poetry and music in Africa is inseparable. These days learners are using technology to express their feelings. They

use smart phones to make music, mainly rap which is a poetry genre. Therefore, bringing these multiliteracies and modes to the classroom will help learners of English FAL to cope with the classroom poetry which many consider to be dull and difficult. A multiliteracies/multimodal approach to poetry is therefore ideally suited to the FAL classroom.

To sum up, in a social semiotic multimodal approach to learning, creativity is valued and individuals are seen not as users of a stable system but as makers and transformers of "sets of representational resources…in a situation where a multiplicity of representational modes are brought into textual compositions" (Kress, 2000. p.160). Different modes are conceded as having different potentials for learning and shaping of learners' identities, and learners are motivated to make meaning in innovated ways which engage their affect and interest. Recognition of multiliteracies help learners to realise that they can contribute to their own learning. Scholars like (Kress, 2000; Newfield, 2009; Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006) argue that creating spaces for this kind of exploration both in the classroom and out of the classroom stimulate imagination, enjoyment and learning. Most importantly, it develops the learners' sense of agency and voice (Block, 2016). The issues that I have addressed in this review will inform the analysis of the impact of indigenous poetry infusion on English FAL learners' appreciation of classroom poetry among Grade 11 learners in a township school in Gauteng.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and design

Introduction

This chapter outlines the collection of data in order to investigate the research questions stated in chapter one. Data was collected from five sources: firstly, the questionnaire was filled in by all 43 learners in Grade 11c; secondly, analysis of prescribed texts and of poetry texts produced by learners; thirdly, interviews with four participants, of which two were engaged with poetry practices outside school and two were not; Fourthly, observation of the intervention lessons; and lastly analysis of the reflective write up written by all 43 learners. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the research design and the methodology of the study.

Research design

This research aimed to explore the impact of including indigenous poetry in the English FAL classroom on Grade 11 learners' appreciation of classroom poetry. I played a dual role, being a teacher in the class putting on a researcher's cap. The objective was to understand what changes may be experienced in learners' appreciation of classroom poetry after the inclusion of indigenous poetry, using a multiliteracies and multimodal pedagogics approach to poetry as explained in Chapter 2.

The study was empirical and classroom-based, and as I was researching my own practice it was practitioner research. Such practitioner research is an empowering and developmental tool for teachers, which offers them the chance to systematically investigate and continuously learn from their practices and come up with ideas and conclusions that enrich their understandings of their practices and enhance their teaching (Campbell, 2013). I identified a problem in the school that I teach. The problem is that poetry is shunned both by teachers and learners. Therefore, I decided to conduct a case study focussing on my school as the case. This is the research design that best suits my purpose, being a combination of the case study approach and practitioner research.

Research methodology

Each research approach has evolved to fulfil specific research aims and functions and specific methodological styles. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) describe research methodology as the approach that the researcher takes in carrying out the research project. To some extent, this dictates the particular tools the researcher selects. There are basically two approaches to doing research; qualitative and quantitative. However, it should be noted that there is also the mixed research methodological approach which is the combination of the two approaches. In this study, a qualitative methodology approach was chosen.

This practitioner case design employs qualitative methodology. Such research takes the position that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the on-going action being investigated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). This follows the interpretivist belief that reality is based on an individual's cognition. In order to understand learners' appreciation of classroom poetry and the effects thereof if indigenous poetry is brought into classroom, it is necessary for leaners to voice their views. As a practitioner, I take part in a shared situation which displays contemporay phenomenon, within a shared real life context (Yin, 2002). The approach is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection (Cresswel 2008) where being bounded means being unique according to place, time and participant characteristics. This study involves intervention which aims to complement and analyse a change in my English poetry classroom pedagogy. Therefore, the practitioner case study approach is ideally suited to this classroom-based research. This study can be described as an in-depth or intensive research project that is aimed at finding out changes in the learners' appreciation of classroom poetry if indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom.

Many scholars have written extensively on qualitative research in an attempt to provide adequate definition for it. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest that qualitative research is "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (p.3). These practices transform the world because qualitative research focuses on understanding people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interaction. This approach is used to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon usually with the purpose

of describing a phenomenon from the participant's point of view (Cresswell, 2008). In this study, the Grade 11 English FAL learners must be heard, if I am to achieve the aim of this research. This practitioner case study allows me to focus on the cultural phenomenon which is the including of indigenous poetry in the English FAL classroom.

Qualitative research has faced much criticism from scientifically oriented disciplines such as mathematics and medicine. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000: p.7) qualitative research has been labelled "soft science" or "unscientific". However, these scientists seem to give a blind eye to Bogdan and Biklen (2007)'s definition which looks at qualitative research as an approach to social science research that emphasizes collecting descriptive data in natural settings, using thinking and understanding the subject's point of view. This implies that qualitative research has a definite strength because of its naturalism as it focuses on real people and their actions in real daily life situations. Because qualitative research is able to examine phenomena within real life contexts, it is for this reason that I employed qualitative research in this practitioner case study.

Research instruments and data collection procedures

Data was gathered empirically, through questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, intervention lessons and observation, poetry and learner texts, and reflective writing. I followed the procedures below:

1. Questionnaires: I used questionnaires (Appendix 2. p. 99) because that helped me to elicit information about the learners' demographic profiles, the poetic texts and practices with which learners routinely engage, and their attitudes towards poetry. The questionnaire also serves as a reliable tool to assist in the formulation of interview questions.

2. Poetry text analysis: I analysed two prescribed poems and two poetry texts composed by some grade 11 learners in the class which I chose for this research. Textual analysis is defined by Klein (1996. p. 228) as the type of reading which involves "the identification, examination and evaluation of various techniques and tools used by the creator of a text". I take into consideration the poems' themes, structures and diction to ascertain elements that have an impact on learners' appreciation of poetry in the English FAL classroom. I also interrogate how the kinds of questions or

activities I use to teach the poems position the learners in terms of the way they understand classroom poetry, bearing in mind that easy of interpretation may in some cases influence appreciation of the text. My textual analysis takes into consideration my multimodal pedagogy, which influences meaning making in the texts. This includes multimodal features such as rhythm and tone in performance, mixing of languages, and gesture. Text analysis helped me to do a comparison of the types of poetry prescribed for the Grade 11 learners and the poetry practices that they engage in outside school. This procedure assists in identifying the poetry that the learners enjoy and also looks at characteristics of the prescribed poetry in comparison to the poems that learners engage in.

3. Intervention and observation (Appendix 3. p. 100-103): The intervention aimed to help learners to enjoy the English FAL classroom poetry using a multimodal approach. Multimodality is a rapidly expanding field and an energising tool which can be used to creatively respond to learners' resistance to English FAL classroom poetry. Since my class consists of 43 learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, I allowed them to work in small groups. Through my teaching experience I have learnt that group work assists those learners who have low self-esteem to feel more comfortable working with peers before they present their work in front of the teacher. The intervention was implemented over four lessons. I asked the learners to write or choose their own poems at home in their own space. This was done to make learners feel comfortable with what they wanted to present and also for them to feel ownership of their work. This to me counts as indigenous taking into consideration my definition of indigenous poetry which I gave in Chapter 1. Smith Tuhiwai (1999) notes that South African indigenous poetry is not static and I observed that indigenous poetry can be understood from two angles that is, poetry by us, here and now and heritage poetry. The learners presented their poems, in groups or individually, in the first two intervention lessons. In the following two lessons, the same methods that the learners used in the first two lessons were then employed but using the classroom Western poems. This worked more like scaffolding where I had to make use of the learners' already known literacy and move to the Western poetry which they consider difficulty but using the methods that are familiar with them. During the intervention lessons, I observed and wrote some notes to assist me to be accurate while doing data presentation.

The following are the procedures I implemented;

a. I prepared learners for the intervention by explaining to them how the presentations were going to be carried out and also assuring them that it was not an assessment task.
b. I then gave them instructions to think about their poetry experiences outside the school, and I asked the learners to bring in the poetry that they engage with outside school and allowed them to do this in different ways which include, writing the poems on paper, digital presentation or live performance.
c. The next stage was to give each group a prescribed poem to prepare for presentation in a multimodal way of their choice, just the same way they did with the home poetry. To incorporate multiliteracies, translanguaging was implemented as this helped as a linguistic tool among learners to help them with the interpretation of poetry. Translanguaging also helps learners to understand poems when ideas and words are translated into the languages learners understand best. Translanguaging is defined by Canagarajah (2011) as the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, "treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (p.401). I allowed learners to have their poems in their home languages if they preferred it that way, then translate them into English. Makalela (2015) adds that using the pedagogy of translanguaging is important for identity formation and further suggests that translanguaging can be seen as a decolonial move. This motivated me to allow learners to bring in artefacts which can also be another mode of meaning making and to show their African identity. Learners presented the poems, again in groups or individually, in the second two intervention lessons. During the intervention, I took field notes as I observed. The field notes helped me to code both the descriptive information and my immediate thoughts, reactions and interpretations.

4. Semi-structured interviews (Appendix 4. p.104): The semi-structured interview structure enables participants to participate more freely than closed questions. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions; these open-ended interview questions enabled me to gather in-depth information concerning learners' general perceptions about poetry both out of school and in the English FAL classroom. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. I then transcribed

the interviews to assist in coding and data analysis. The emerging themes were analysed categorically based on the questions.

5. Reflective write-up (Appendix 5. p. 105-111): I set this task for all learners as part of everyday English FAL classroom work. The reflective write-up is the last instrument and in it learners reflected on their appreciation of classroom poetry after the intervention which included indigenous poetry practices. I asked all the learners to write a reflective essay or paragraph. The reflective write-up yielded information about whether there were intact changes in the way learners of English FAL appreciate classroom poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom.

Research context and participants

My investigation was carried out in the school where I teach. My participants were aged between 16 and 19 years at the time that the research was carried out. The school is situated in Johannesburg South, Gauteng. The school draws its 1,200 learners from the multilingual and multicultural township in which it is situated. There is a high probability that all the 11 South African official languages are spoken in this community but three languages which are IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and Sesotho are studied at home language level in the Grade 11 class that I teach and English as First Additional Language.

A poetry anthology is prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL. A selection of the poems from that anthology is made by government course curriculum planners and passed on to the school. Over the course of this study, I taught the ten prescribed poems for 2018 listed below in table 1. Two of these poems I critique in detail (see chapter 4). Full texts are attached (appendix 6. p.112-126).

Table 1: Grade 11 English FAL prescribed poems (Appendix 6)

Title	Author	Nationality
"Mirror"	Sylvia Plath	American
"This letter is to say"	Raymond Wilson	British
"Shanty Town"	Anonymous	Anonymous
"A sleeping black boy"	Mongane Wally Serote	South African
"The call"	Gabeba Baderoon	South African
"Composed upon Westminster Bridge"	William Wordsworth	British
"Chimney Sweeper"	William Blake	British
"At a snail's pace please"	Oswald Mbuyiseni Thali	South African
"Memory"	Chris Van Wyk	South African
"I sit and I look out"	Walt Whitman	American

Description of research site

The area from which the participants come suffered intense political violence during apartheid and after. There is also a history of tribal turmoil which has left many children orphaned and some homeless. The issue of language in this community is sensitive. Because many indigenous languages are spoken in the area, English is not widely spoken in everyday life in the community. Language is important to consider in this research because my study was carried out in an English FAL classroom and it is based on the performance of the participants in English, a language which might be, to some, a third, sometimes even fourth language.

The school has gone through difficulties with English as a subject with the grade 12 results falling every year since the school was opened in 1996. After realising that the problem was with the poetry section of the curriculum, the Head of the English

Department opted to drop poetry and pursue other literary genres at matric level, to boost the pass rate. The perception that poetry is difficult was therefore inherited by every English FAL teacher who came to the school, until it became like a culture that poetry is done from Grade 8 to Grade 11 only.

The school only has a skeletal library and most of the books found in the library are outdated and irrelevant. Many of the books are from the phased out curricula like OBE. The library has almost no material to meet the learners' needs. There is a white elephant computer lab which is a no-go area for the learners and the teachers. This makes it very difficult for the teachers and the learners to carry out multimodal lessons especially looking at the digital area. Recently, there was a massive campaign to make Gauteng township schools ICT compliant through the MEC's initiative. So now smartboards are in the Grade 11 and 12 classrooms, but accessing the internet is a big challenge, which leaves the smart boards being just replacements of the old chalk boards.

Literature in my school is allocated two days per week. One day per fortnight is allocated to poetry while the other days are for short stories or drama. This means that poetry might have an allocation of 30 minutes or one hour per fortnight depending on how the individual teacher's timetable is designed. Considering that most of the learners that I teach come from disadvantaged families, telling them to browse the internet and get more information about the poems that are prescribed to them sounds insensitive. Internet to most of them is likely to be a luxury which they have to live without. Therefore, to some extent I can say that poetry is given less time in my school because many teachers assume that short stories and drama need more time, since the books are sometimes thick volumes. This is one of the challenge that the school is facing which might probably be the root cause of the negativity towards English FAL classroom poetry.

Sampling

For the purposes of this research, I used purposive sampling, which is also known as the judgmental technique (Saunders, Luise & Thornhill, 2012). I selected the class that I teach poetry to in Grade 11 because I wanted to do practitioner case research. This purposive sampling helped me to avoid any inconveniences that might have occurred if I had to work with a different class or a different school. My participants

were from Grade 11c, a class of 43 learners. They all agreed to fill in the questionnaire. The table below shows the profile of my questionnaire participants.

Table 2: Profile of questionnaire participants

Gender	Home language	Practising Poetry outside school	Not practising poetry outside school
Female	IsiZulu	10	11
Male	IsiZulu	1	12
Female	IsiXhosa	2	
Male	IsiXhosa	3	
Female	Sesotho		1
Male	Sesotho		3

After the questionnaire, which all the learners in the class completed, I purposively selected four participants to interview. The purposive sampling helped me to select two learners who are actively involved in poetry practices at home and two who are not involved with poetry outside school. This was necessary for me to get information about the poems that some learners engage with outside the classroom, to be able to answer my secondary research questions 1 and 2. Question 1 probed learners' out of school poetry practices while question 2 enquired learners' perceptions and attitudes towards their out of school poetry practices. The out of school poetry practices also guided my definition of indigenous poetry as both contemporary and heritage poetry as mentioned earlier in Chapter 1.

Reliability and Validity

I used triangulation in my data collection methods to ensure reliability and validity. Olsen (2004) says that triangulation is mixing approaches to get two or more viewpoints upon the things being studied. I found triangulation useful because using five data sources helped me to do cross verification on the same information. Olsen adds that using survey data with interviews is a profound form of triangulation. This overcomes the weakness of intrinsic bias and the problem that comes from a single

method study. Therefore, this study used five sources including survey and interviews making the findings of the study reliable and valid.

Ethical considerations

This research adhered to the Human Research Council's ethical standards. I applied for ethics clearance at Wits School of Education (Appendix 7.p.127). Approval was also granted by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) (Appendix 7.p.128-129). Pseudonyms for the school and participants were used and all data and material used to collect data will be stored safely in my password secure computer and destroyed five years after the completion of the research. Consent forms were signed by all participants, parents, the school principal and school governing body (Appendix 8.p.130-134). Participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary and they were not going to be penalised for deciding to quit in the middle of the research.

Limitations of the study

The research focused on a single Grade 11 class with only 43 learners. The interviews were conducted with only 4 participants. The results obtained from the data collected are not widely generalizable and might not be applied to other schools or other classes that experience the same problems or schools in the same circuit. Results are context specific. Results collected could not be taken as the only factors that contribute to the changes in appreciation of classroom poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the English Grade 11 poetry classroom.

Conclusion

Chapter three focused on how the study was carried out, detailing the design, methodology, research site and participants. It has focused on the reliability and validity of this study, ethical considerations and also pointed out the limitations of the study. The following chapter will present the data and analyse it.

CHAPTER 4

Data presentation and analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter focused of the research design, so now, this chapter will present the data and analyse it. Researchers have an obligation to report their findings. Data from the questionnaire, interviews, text analysis of both prescribed poems for the Grade 11 English FAL and the learners' home poetry, and the reflective write-up will be presented in this chapter.

1. Questionnaire

The first three questions sought to get information about the participants' age, gender and poetry practices as earlier indicated in Chapter 3, Table 2, participants' profile. This section focused on the number of participants for the three home languages that were studied at the research site and indicated the number of participants who were engaged in poetry practices out of school and those who were not engaged in such poetry practices. These figures helped me to answer my research question; what are the changes in appreciation of classroom poetry if indigenous poetry is brought into the English FAL classroom? Answering my research question also helped me to understand the context of my classroom and learners more fully.

Table 3: Learners' out of school poetry practices

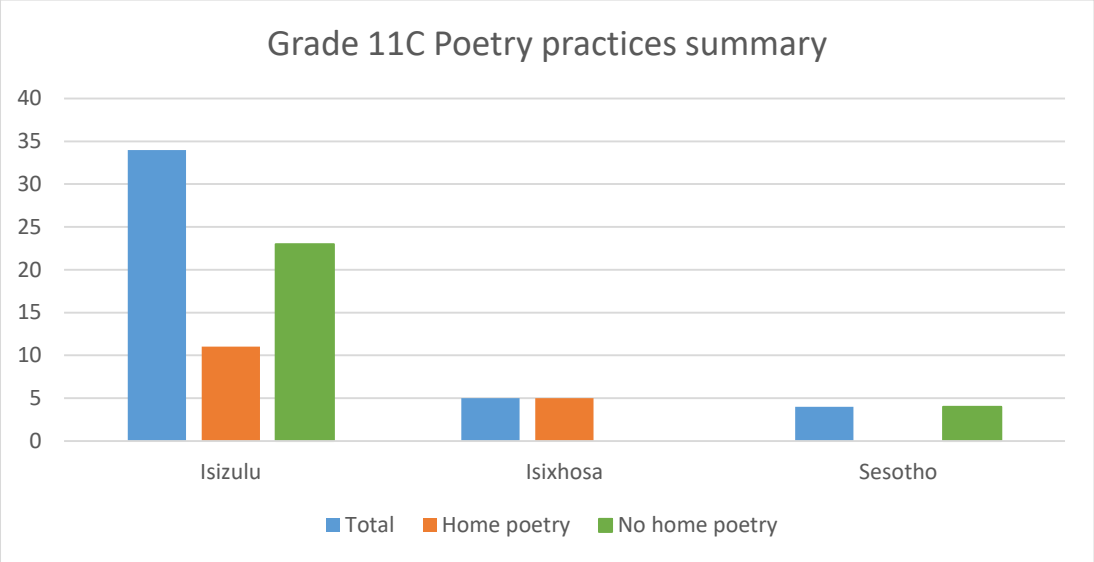


Table 3 above shows that 16 out of 43 participants are engaged in poetry practices outside school. As earlier mentioned none of the participants speaks English as home language, and IsiZulu is the dominant language in the area where the research was conducted. Of the 43 participants in the class, 34 speak IsiZulu as home language and out of these 34, 11 participants engage with poetry practices at home while 23 do not do poetry at home. The total number of IsiXhosa speaking learners in this class is 5 and all the 5 practice poetry at home. There are 4 Sesotho speaking learners in the class and none of them practices poetry at home. Despite the fact that the sample is small, the lack of poetry involvement among Sesotho learners in this class is surprising considering how rich the oral poetry is among the Basotho. The total of 27 out of 43 indicated that they do not do poetry at home.

Question four required participants to specify the poetry practices that they engage with at home if they had indicated that they do poetry outside school. For the participants who stated that they do not engage with poetry, they were requested to explain their reasons for this lack of engagement with poetry. Of the 16 participants who indicated that they are involved with poetry at home, 14 participants indicated that they do performance poetry while 2 participants stated that they only write poems. This shows that among those who are doing poetry outside school, oral poetry, which is the form of traditional South African poetry, seems to be popular as compared to written poetry.

Some of the participants who are engaged with poetry outside school indicated the forms of poetry that they are interested in. For example, participants; 4, 6, 9 and 11 highlighted that they are more interested in musical poetry. Participant 11 shows that her poetry is more of a social practice which involves the whole family. She states, "*At home there is a room where everyone expresses their feelings and writes a poem. Sometimes we meet together in the room and share our feelings and emotions. Then we come up with stanzas and make some pictures then we make a poem."* This may suggest that participant 11 has a family that supports poetry practices and it seems like they take poetry as a social norm and as a practice that brings the family together.

There is evidence that different participants engage with different forms of poetry. Participants 6, 8 and 15 enjoy poetry about their history. Participant 15 says, "*I practice poetry about my origin and I do praise poetry. I write the poems and I perform them."* This may suggest that the participant is conscious of his cultural and personal identity which he preserves in form of writing and expresses through performance poetry. Participants 6 and 8 share the same interests with participant 15. Participant 6 says that he enjoys poetry of love and history. In her own words, participant 8 states that "*musical poetry- takes me back to my journey of my life".* When I asked the participant what she meant by the journey of life she explained that she was referring to history and her life experiences.

The participants who engage with poetry at home also shared their positive attitudes towards poetry. All the sixteen participants indicated that they enjoy classroom poetry. The reason why these participants enjoy poetry both at home and in the classroom is arguably because poetry is part of the real world patterns of their experience, as Cope and Kalantzis (2009) would put it and so for them, the experience of unknown classroom poetry is made easier because they are guided into this new experience by its closeness to their own life worlds (New London 1996).

Participant 1 says that he gets advice from poetry and poetry uplifts his spirit and helps him to work hard. When I asked this participant which kinds of poetry has this impact on his life, he said that mostly he listens to the poems that are performed in his community at community gatherings and he also reads poems particularly by Malika Ndlovu because his mother has a copy of Ndlovu's book titled *born in Africa but* (2000). When participant 1 says poetry "uplifts my spirit" this might imply that when he

is sad, he takes comfort and solace in poetry. His words also suggest the importance of family in shaping learners' attitudes towards and exposure to poetry. Participant 2 shares the same emotion with participant 1. In her own words, participant 2 says, *"When I am happy I think of writing a poem, a joyful poem."* This shows that poetry does not only have an entertaining function in some of the participants' lives but plays a greater role of shaping the participants' behaviour and helping them handle and express emotions such as sadness and happiness.

All 27 participants who indicated that they are not involved in poetry outside school stated that they do not engage with poetry because they do not like poetry and they do not enjoy it. However, they gave different reasons for their dislike. Participants 20, 27, 36 and 37 indicated that they do not understand poetry. Participant 37 says, "*Poetry are hard enough for me…"* He shares the same emotion with participant 36 who also says "*I don't know how to do poetry even if they teach me I learn a little."* These participants show that they struggle to interpret poetry hence they do not appreciate it. This might mean that comprehension of poetry might have an influence on learners' perception of the genre.

Participants 18, 28 and 29 highlighted that they do not engage in poetry activities outside school because they do not see the value of doing poetry. Participant 18 says, *"I don't see if it is important to do or for it to be part of my life. And I don't really understand the reason of doing poetry."* This shows strongly that the participant questions the purpose of poetry in life and in school. He sees no reason for even studying poetry. This shows how frustrated the participant is about doing poetry. Participants 28 and 29 said that they also do not do poetry at home due to time constraints while participants 39 and 34 indicated that they do not like poetry because their friends do not do poetry. Some participants also noted that they do not do poetry outside school because they are scared. They stated that they have stage fright hence they cannot do poetry. To me, this suggests that these participants believe that poetry has to be performed in front of an audience which is the reason why they mentioned stage fright. However, participants 25 and 42 indicated that they do not do poetry at home because they do not enjoy it but when it is done in the classroom they have a better understanding and they tend to appreciate it. Participant 42 had this to say: "A*t home it is not enjoyable but in the classroom you enjoy and have fun with it."* Participant 25 also said that she enjoys classroom poetry when she does it with the

teacher and classmates. This may indicate that learners have fairly complex ideas about poetry as an art form that must be shared, but different attitudes about the various public spaces where this sharing can happen.

Questions 5 to 9 were answered in a table, as shown below in Table 4;

Table 4: Questionnaire responses

	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
5. I find classroom poetry similar to my home poetry.	16	8	19
6. I enjoy home poetry more than classroom poetry.	11	7	25
7. I enjoy classroom poetry more than home poetry.	23	8	12
8. The inclusion of indigenous poetry may help me understand classroom poetry.	30	13	0
9. There is a relationship between indigenous poetry and classroom poetry.	16	25	2

The table 4 above shows the responses by the participants to the questions that relate to their attitudes towards classroom and home poetry. It also shows the participants' opinions on the inclusion of indigenous poetry in classroom poetry. The results above show that only 16 participants find the classroom poetry similar to their home poetry. Some participants said home poetry is similar to classroom poetry because all poetry is about emotions. There is a bigger number of participants who enjoy classroom poetry more than home poetry and the majority of participants think that the inclusion of indigenous poetry in the classroom may help them to understand classroom poetry better.

Question 10 had a variety of responses. The question probed the participants' opinion on what could be done to make classroom poetry understandable and enjoyable in the English FAL classroom. Participants 1, 2, 10, 7, 8 and 14 suggested that learners should write their own poems for study in the English classroom. Participant 2 stated, "*I think it can be more enjoyable if we make poems for ourselves"*. This statement may suggest that the learners need to feel empowered to decide on what they should be taught in the classroom, of these learners, participants 1 and 7 also suggest that new poems should be prescribed. Participant 7 puts it in his words as, "*for poetry to be*

enjoyable, the government must design new poetry". In other words, the suggestion of new poems by these participants might imply that they are not interested in the poems that are currently prescribed for them. The participants who suggested that learners be given the leeway to write their own poems to study in class are mixed, some are currently engaged with poetry outside school and some are not. This suggests that this is a mutual feeling among the learners in this class, despite their current status with regards to poetry practices.

While other participants suggested ways of improving their understanding and appreciation of classroom poetry, participant 31 shows that he has already given up on poetry. He says that he does not know anything that can be done to make him like poetry because poetry is not "*my thing".* The lack of interest even in suggesting ways that might assist him shows a profound sense of disenjoyment that the participant has lost hope in poetry and does not even believe that he can be helped to understand poetry.

21 participants view performance poetry as the way to help learners understand and enjoy classroom poetry in an English FAL classroom. Participant 12 indicated that "*classroom poetry can be enjoyable if each and every one can write and perform their own poems*". Participant 13 added that "*I think the English teacher should give us the chance to perform in front of the class*". Participant 18 elaborated *"When you do poetry you should use actions or signs and show confidence in what you are doing".* The words; "performance", "actions", "signs" and "movements" might be related in this context, all probably meaning that poetry should not just be theoretical, it should be multimodal, alive and taken out of the book for the learners of English FAL to be able to appreciate classroom poetry. This echoes Ofsted (2007) who accuses the teacher of killing all creativity contributing to learners' alienation from poetry. Even though participants 3, 30 and 43 are not engaged in poetry, suggested that classroom poetry should be musical for it to be interesting. Participant 3 said that classroom poetry should be read as if people are singing. In a short statement, participant 30 stated, "*We could do musical poetry"*. By musical poetry these learners mean that they express their emotions through music and their music is written in stanzas or verses with rhyme and rhythm just like poetry. They also elaborated that poetry in the classroom should be fun and help them to make movements just the same way they

do with music. This suggests that some learners in this class are familiar with the South African indigenous forms of poetry or with popular forms of music.

Participants 24 and 33 indicated that the time allocated for poetry teaching is not enough for them to enjoy poetry. Participant 33 said "*I think that it can be enjoyable if the teacher teaches us poetry everyday"*. Similarly, participant 24 also said *"I think that our teacher needs to read poems with us every day"*. During the interviews, I asked why these participants need more time for classroom poetry. They responded that the time given for poetry is not enough for them to understand the poems studied in class because some poems need them to think and have pictures in their minds of what the poem entails. This suggests that the time allocated to teaching poetry in the school and in this class might not be enough to help some learners to appreciate poetry.

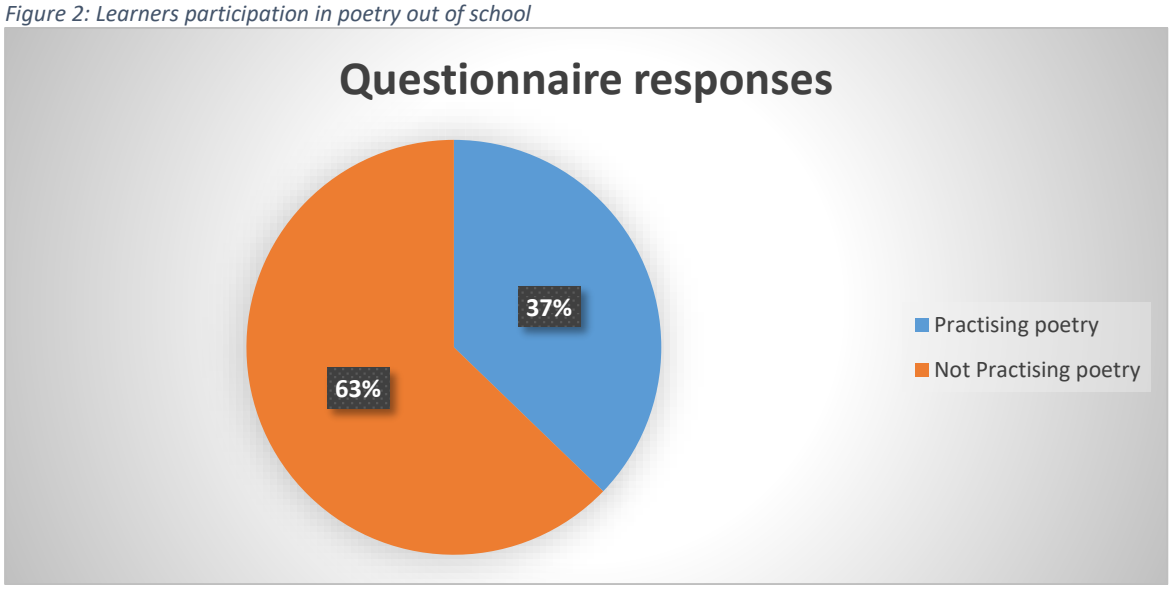
13 participants think that the teacher should do more to help them understand poetry. Participant 17 said "*If ma'am could explain more about poetry, maybe I will understand.*" For participant 6 the teacher should not only explain but "*ma'am should act poetry to make it understandable and enjoyable".* This shows strong sense of multimodality in this participant who also enjoys musical poetry. Participant 27 says that he does not enjoy poetry because he does not understand it. He highlighted that, "*They must explain it to me properly so that I can understand*". For these participants, it seems as if the teacher's poetry pedagogy is not comprehensible enough. This is supported by Flemming, (1992), Benton, (1999), and Riley (2012) who assert that inappropriate pedagogies being employed in the classroom and inappropriate assessment employed by teachers and prescribed by curricula can make poetry lessons mechanical and difficult for learners. Despite the fact that the word "properly" used by participant 27 might not be very clear as to what the participant really means, this raises a need for the formation of interview questions which seek further clarification on the ways of teaching poetry that can easily be understood by the learners of English FAL.

The responses to the questionnaire are evidence of the heterogeneous situation regarding the appreciation of classroom poetry in an English FAL classroom. It also depicts the varied home poetry practices that the learners in the class that was chosen for this study have. Some mutually illuminating themes were identified, which can now be summarised.

The close relationship between engagement and attitudes towards poetry

There is negativity towards poetry among a sizeable number of the participants who filled in the questionnaire.

Figure 2: Learners participation in poetry out of school



The data as analysed above shows that the 63% of learners in the class who are not engaged with poetry give different reasons for this. For example, participant 18 said "*I don't see if it is important to do poetry or for it to be part of my life. And I don't really understand the reason of doing poetry."* Similarly, participant 19 wrote, "*I am not interested in poetry but I just do it at school*". Participants 23 and 24 share the same negative attitude with participants 18 and 19. Participant 18 indicated that *"I don't like poetry*" while participant 24 said "*I love reading short stories more than poetry. I don't understand poetry; I only understand short stories*". What these negative attitudes towards poetry have in common is, a lack of engagement with poetry can be linked to the lack of comprehension which results in the negative attitudes as the complex relationship is revealed in these learners' words.

The questionnaire reveals that all the learners who are engaged with poetry at home also have a positive attitude towards poetry. Participant 2 thought that "*If learners could write their own poetry, that would make classroom poetry enjoyable*". She also had indicated in her response to question 4 that she enjoys poetry and that when she

is happy she writes a joyful poem. This might mean that probably one of the reasons for the negative attitude towards poetry is the school text selection.

Failure of prescribed poetry texts to engage learners

Participant 2's opinion of learners writing their own poems is shared by participants 1 and 7. According to participant 2, if learners were to write their own poems and share their poems in class that would make the classroom poetry in the English FAL classroom enjoyable. Participant 1 thinks that the government should prescribe new poems which is agreed to by participant 7, who says, "*We could try new poems as a class.*" I assume these participants think that the problem lies with the poetry texts that are prescribed to them. Therefore I probed further what exactly about the set poems repels the learners, and their response was that the set poems sometimes speak of things that they do not know about and cannot imagine but when they write their own poems they will be expressing their thoughts, imaginations, emotions and experiences, which are rarely found in the set poems. This suggestion by participants to write their own poems implies that learners need some poems which they relate to and over which they have a sense of ownership.

The teacher's poetry pedagogies

Some of the participants who indicated that they do not like poetry because they do not understand it suggested that probably with the teachers' assistance they may understand. For example, participants, 3, 6, 7, 17, 24, 35 and 39 all agree that the teacher could help them to understand poetry through a pedagogy that makes poetry comprehensible. Participant 35 said that the teacher must make poetry enjoyable while participant 7 said that the teacher must explain poetry properly so that they can understand. In this regard, participant 24 said that the teacher must read the poems in class for the learners slowly so that the learners may understand. The suggestions above show that these participants may also still be struggling with the skill of reading for comprehension, which they should have mastered more fully during their early literacy education, implying that some challenges that are faced at Grade 11 level could have been dealt with earlier in the lower grades. Another factor to consider is that learners are accustomed to teacher-centred pedagogies, and so they resist attempts to help them to develop their own interpretations of poems.

21 participants agreed that performance poetry would help the learners to understand poetry in the English FAL classroom with participant 13 adding that "*I think the English teacher should give us the chance to perform in front of the class"*. Learners in this class said that they would appreciate indigenous poetry practices which are less formal than the Western poetry practices in their Grade 11 English FAL classroom. They indicated that they wanted to perform their *kasi* poetry (township poetry) which they said is fun and relatable to them.

The influence of peer/family support

There is evidence from the questionnaire responses that peers and/or family have great influence on an individual's literacy. This could justify the reason why some participants said that they enjoy poetry in the classroom when they do poetry with classmates and the teacher. This shows the importance of peer support. Participant 41 said, "*I don't enjoy poetry because I feel lonely when I practice*". The word "lonely" suggests that for this participant to enjoy poetry he needs company. Participants 11, 21, 39, 40 and 42 all agree with participant 41 that peers or family can have an impact on someone's attitude towards poetry. Participants 21, 39, 40 and 42 all said that they do not have anyone at home do to poetry with. In contrast, participant 11 has an extremely supportive family that takes poetry as a social activity and has actually allocated a room where the family members can gather and share their feelings and together compose poems, and also work on pictures which they could develop into poems. This is fascinating. It shows how this family values poetry as a social norm. Possible reasons for a lack of family and peer involvement in poetry which emerged as subthemes include time constraints, lack of resources, and insufficient time allocated to teaching and learning poetry in the English FAL classroom. These subthemes can be discussed in turn:

Time constraints

Probably some families do not practice poetry in the same manner that participant 11's family does due to time constraints. Participants 28 and 29 indicated that time is an issue. Participant 28 wrote, "I don't do poetry at home because I am busy with a lot of homework and I also play soccer". This might mean that according to participant 28 engaging in poetry practices at home is not among his priorities occupying his limited free time.

Lack of resources

Participants 21 and 40 agreed that they do not do poetry at home because they do not have the poetry books. They indicated that they only do poetry at school, reading only the poems that are introduced to them by the teacher. These participants view poetry as a written genre only which does not have a sense of shared oral tradition.

Allocated time for poetry teaching and learning

A third subtheme that emerged is the time allocated to the teaching and learning of poetry at the school and in the class that was selected. Participants 33 and 24 indicated that more time should be allocated for teaching and learning poetry for the learners of English FAL to understand classroom poetry. The fact that in this class poetry is taught only once per fortnight might be an issue of concern.

The questionnaire administered to the whole class of Grade IIC was the first data-gathering instrument. The next set of data to be analysed is the set-work poems themselves.

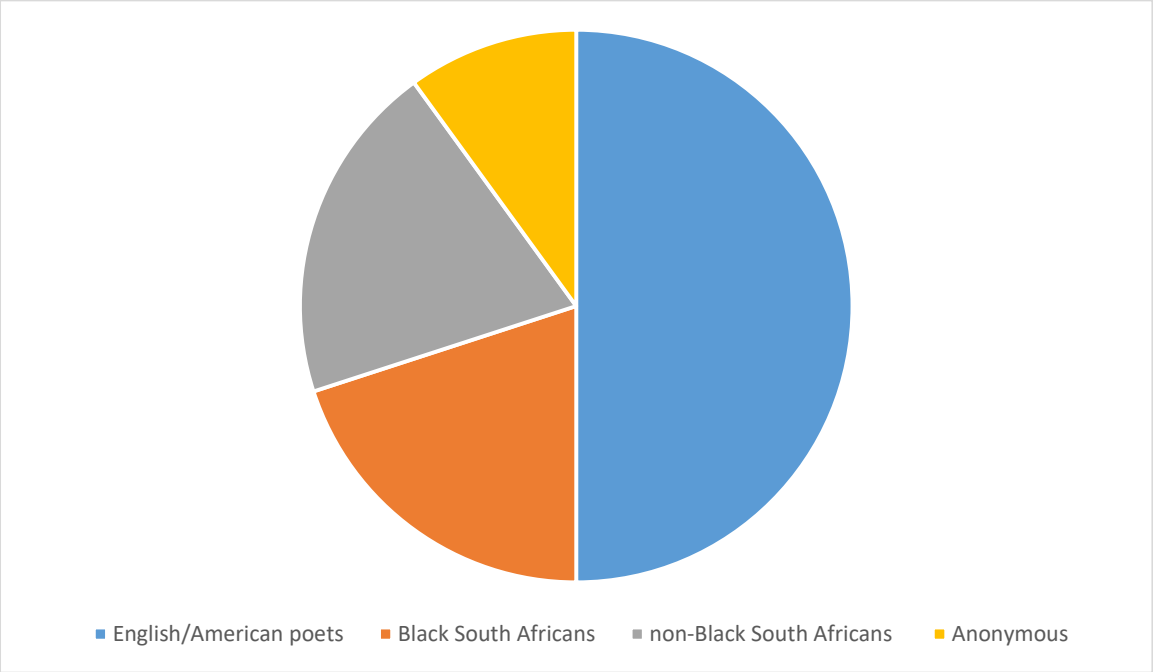
2. Analysis of selected set-work poems

Poetry texts analysis is another data collection instrument that I used. It is important to note that colonial prejudice against indigenous African culture and literature, as earlier mentioned in Chapter 2, resulted in European and colonial scholars consistently engaging in a belittling stereotyping of Africa oral poetry. The intention was to portray African oral poetry as uncivilized and uncultured. However, they were forgetting how oral poetic traditions contribute to the Africanness. Gunner (2008) holds African orality in high esteem and argues that the book itself in terms of written literature form has been profoundly influenced by orality. Therefore, according to Gunner, orality is not waiting for any form of redemption by modern manifestations of written or print-based literacy. It is rather a protean presence, changing, interacting and producing a different kind of cultural equilibrium defining its own modernities. Therefore, my analysis of the prescribed poetry texts depends on Gunner's notion of ongoing, shifting, modern orality, in an effort to find out whether including indigenous poetry in the form of oral presentations in the classroom might influence the learners' attitudes to poetry, and if so, what its impact might be.

I selected the ten poems that are prescribed for Grade 11 English FAL in Gauteng and taught in the school at which I teach. I will do an analysis briefly of all the ten poems

but in detail I will analyse two Western poems, and then compare them with two of the poems that were written by the learners that I taught in the Grade 11 class. The poems and the origin of the poets that are prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL learners are presented in a pie chart below, in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Poets for Grade 11 prescribed poems



The pie chart above shows that 5 of the 10 prescribed poems are Western poems by English and American poets. Considering that poetry is deeply embedded in cultural and personal experiences, I would argue that 50% of the poetry that the South African English FAL learners that I teach have to study in class is largely alien to their personal life experiences and their culture. Khatib (2011) notes that much of the pleasure of poetry lies in the creative reading that is caused as a result of involvement with the text. Involvement with a text arguably entails having an imaginative grasp of what the content is all about. In the case of the learners who were chosen for this study, much of the content in the classroom poetry is unrelatable and considering that these learners are not English home language (EHL) speakers, the textual meaning can easily be lost. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is one of the reasons why the learners struggle with poetry and find it boring, because they find difficulties with the language as well as the content. The difficulty of language also means that there is no guarantee that the learners will be able to appreciate and interpret the other 50% of the set poetry, though it written by South Africans and has local content. Taking into consideration

that learners of English FAL need to achieve 60% as the university entry requirement, the above statistics indicate that the Grade 11 English FAL poetry syllabus is not fair to the learners. Learners have to cope with 50% of the material that is strange and learn to appreciate and interpret such poetry for them to achieve academically.

The 10 set poems are listed in Table 1, in Chapter 2. As shown in Figure 2, five of the poems are by South African poets, some black and others non-black:

- “A sleeping black boy” by Mongane Wally Serote
- “At a snail’s pace please” by Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali
- “The call” by Gabeba Baderoon
- “Memory” by Chris Van Wyk
- Anonymous “Shanty Town”

Arguably, some of these poems share the colonial view that Africa and African practices are undeveloped, primitive and poor, instead of affirming African identities and celebrating African values. For example, poems like *A sleeping black boy, At a snail’s pace please, Memory and Shanty Town* are centred on poverty, underdevelopment and recklessness. It is also significant that none of these poems draws on the indigenous praise poetry form. This causes learners to struggle with two blows simultaneously, that is, comprehending the language of instruction and familiarising themselves with the foreign form of the prescribed poems. Therefore, a poetry pedagogy that keeps learners glued to the book has very little chance of enabling English FAL learners to improve their marks. The long-term effects are that many of these learners will struggle to cope at university with any other subject since their critical thinking will be low and they struggle even in adult life as they will not be competitive in the world of work.

The Grade 11 English FAL prescribed poems by Western authors include;

- “Chimney sweeper” by William Blake
- “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” by William Wordsworth
- “This letter’s to say” by Raymond Wilson
- “Mirror” by Sylvia Plath
- “I sit and I look out” by Walt Whitman

William Blake was an English man born in London in 1757. His poem prescribed for Grade 11, “Chimney sweeper”, was written in the context of the exploitation of children during the Industrial Revolution. It is an anecdotal poem, describing in a first-person voice the life of a chimney sweeper. In other words, it describes an experience which is far from the learners in the English FAL classroom that was selected for this study. Another poem was written by Raymond Wilson who was born in the United Kingdom. The title of his poem is “This letter’s to say”. It is a classic satire which is humorous but probably not very appealing to candidates of English FAL who cannot comprehend the poem from the first reading and the third and fourth without assistance. The same applies to Whitman’s “I sit and I look out”. This problem is even worse for the next two poems, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” by William Wordsworth (1770-1850), and “Mirror” by Sylvia Plath 1961, which I will now analyse in detail, and compare with two poems which were written by the learners in the Grade 11 class. I chose these poems for detailed analysis because they best demonstrate my arguments and investigation on appreciation and interpretation of classroom English FAL poetry if indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom.

Wordsworth’s “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” ably illustrates the arguments around the relevance of 19th century poems in the African 21st century curriculum:

> Composed Upon Westminster Bridge 1802.
>
> Earth has not anything to show more fair:
> Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
> A sight so touching in its majesty:
> This City now doth, like a garment, wear
> The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
> All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
> Never did sun more beautifully steep
> In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
> Ne’er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
> The river glideth at his own sweet will:
> Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
> *And all that mighty heart is lying still!*

The poem was composed in 1802 and two centuries down the line the poem is being studied in an English FAL classroom by learners and teachers who cannot even visualise the appearances of the Westminster Bridge in the 21st century. The poem is far from the experiences of the learners in the school where the research is conducted.

Folcon (2010) alludes that an educational system is established by a particular society to meet its specific needs. No education stands apart from the society which establishes it. Tala (1999) also adds that we have African traditions to draw on, traditions that teach us the values from an African perspective. In as much as the teacher tries to contextualise and bring back home the Westminster Bridge learners struggle to comprehend the poem. What makes it worse is the archaic English which learners have to understand and analyse before they even get the message of the poem. It is undeniable that the poem is a classic masterpiece of the English Romantic period, but it can be saved for other platforms rather than the English FAL curriculum.

A useful contrast is the poem below by Sylvia Plath:

Mirror

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful---
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

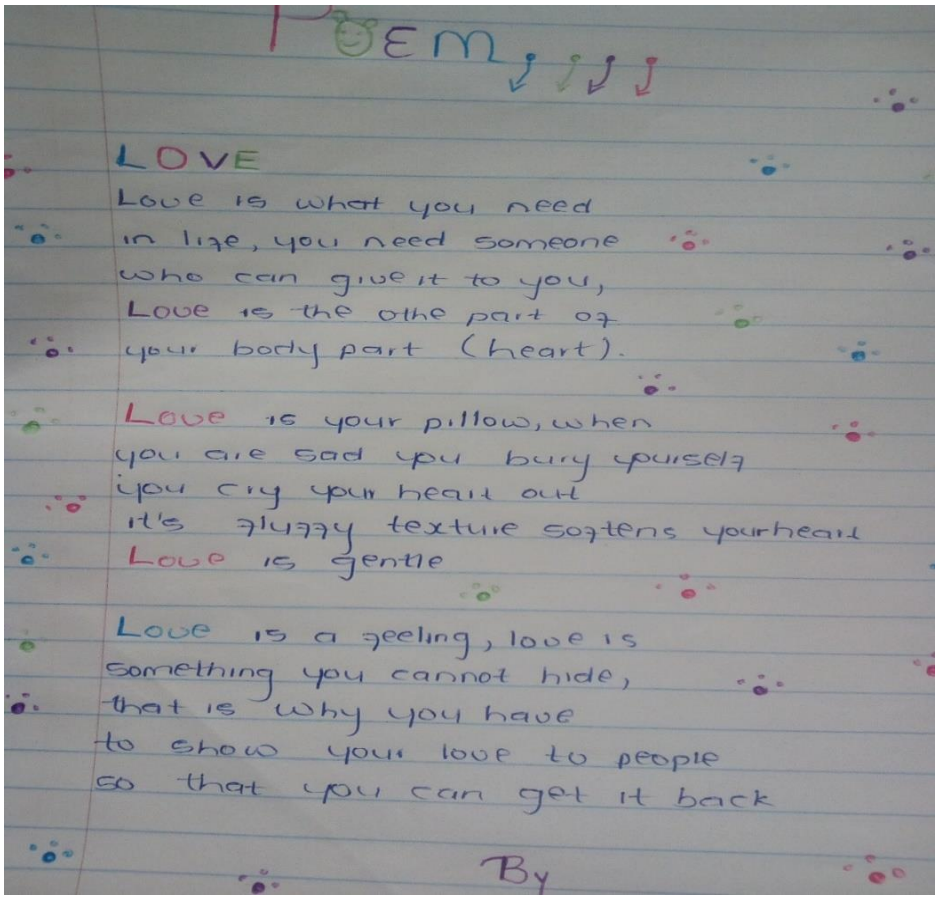
Now I am lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises towards her day after day, like a terrible fish.

When I turn to the poem “Mirror”, I am struck by the truth in the poem regarding aging. The matter of appearances is reality to everyone. Plath reflects on the way the society puts pressure on the way you look and how this can destroy an individual. I selected this poem to show that despite the origins of a poet, some themes may be general and apply to all humans regardless of their race, creed or century. I also chose this poem because I realised that it can also be easier to perform orally, helping some of the learners to understand what the poem entails. However my biggest challenge with Plath’s “Mirror” is the poem’s powerful language, which might be a hindrance to the

English FAL learners' comprehension of the poem. The poem also shows a plethora of traditionally Western literary elements. "Mirror" has sharp imagery and dark undertones, unusual syntax and no obvious rhyme. The poem has a great depth of personification, being spoken by the mirror itself. This can easily confuse average learners who may not realise that this is the mirror speaking directly, objectively and openly. The mirror has a personality presented metaphorically: "I am not cruel, only truthful, / The eye of a little god, four cornered". The final few words, "like a terrible fish" constitute a simile. This poem is a problem to learners of English FAL because of its too many literary devices which reinforce the dominance of Western poetic forms and tradition. Below are poems which were written by some Grade 11 learners.

Analysis of poems written by Grade 11 English FAL learners.

Figure 4: love

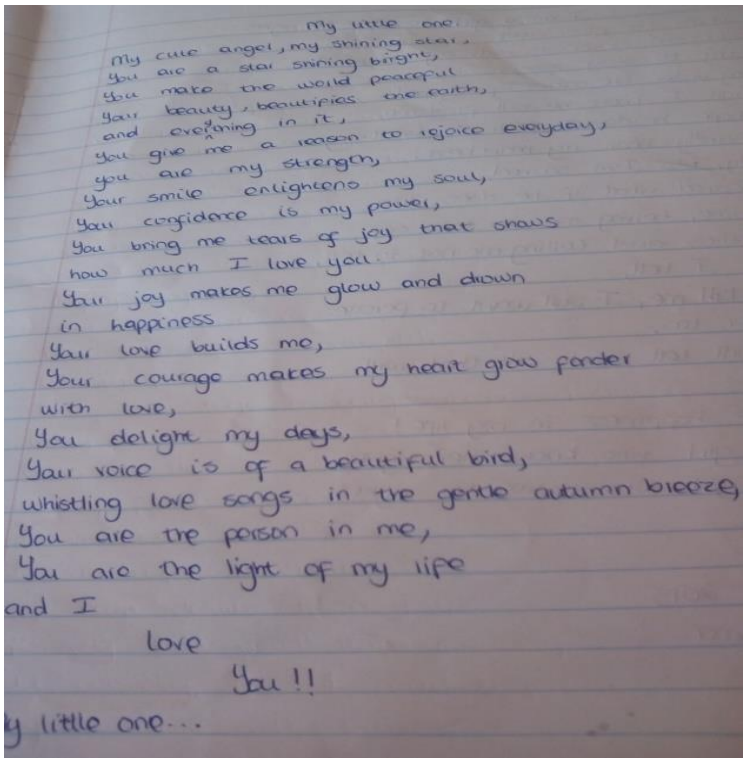


The poem above by a learner is a praise poem about love. The learner writes about love as a fact of life. Love is indeed what everyone needs in life. The poem is written in stanzas showing one aspect of love in each stanza. The language is simplified and appropriate for the learner's level. The art around the poem may suggest that the

learner intended to make the poem live and appealing to the audience. The art and colours used by the learner have a multimodal effect in the sense that even before one reads the poem, attention will first be grabbed by the outstanding colours and create a zeal in an individual to feel that the poem might be worth reading.

The learner used different colours which have different connotations according to the social and cultural context that I share with my learners. The colour pink is generally considered as a delicate colour might convey connotations of sweetness, romance, femininity and tenderness. The colour blue often represents the sky. It can be associated with openness, stability, and sincerity, among other connotations. This meaning of love is emphasised in words in stanza three. The learners mentioned the openness of love, saying "*Love is something you cannot hide*". The colour green can be associated with life, freshness, nature and renewal. Lastly, the colour purple sometimes stands for royalty, nobility, power, wisdom, dignity and wealth. This may suggest that the learner carefully selected the colours that are so closely related to her theme of love. In other words, these colours represent what love means to her without using the words. The love that the learner talked about in this poem is general love which applies to all human beings. A different learner wrote the poem below:

Figure 5: my little one



The poem above takes up what in Western poetic terminology would be called the free verse style. This is the same style that was used by precolonial indigenous African poetry writers, for example the poems quoted in Chapter 2. The title of this poem shows that the praise poem is addressed to a child by the child's mother or father. Metaphor and simile is used throughout the poems in simplified language that is comprehensible to learners of English FAL. The use of the words, "angel", "shining star" and "beautiful bird" may suggest that this child may have been born after some years of parents' experience of barrenness or has gone through difficulties during pregnancy or the child suffered during infancy. This poem is all about the child's innocence as represented by the word "angel", his or her beauty as represented by the words "shining star" and joy that can be interpreted from the phrase "beautiful bird". These emotions that the poem conveys are consistent with the widespread cultural belief in Africa which values children and fertility. This is in striking contrast with Sylvia Plath's "Mirror", a poem written after Plath gave birth to her first child. Instead of appreciating motherhood she sees herself as aging and getting ugly.

The poems written by the learners as pictured above show that the learners have been influenced by the Western definition of what poetry looks like, as is evident in the structure of their poems which are written in stanzas and verses. However, the two poems are clearly praise poems, which echoes Gunner (2008)'s argument that praise poetry has been used across the African content and this testifies the importance placed upon the genre as a carrier of public social values and ideologies.

3. Intervention stage 1: Oral poetry performance of self-chosen poems

For the first intervention lesson, I told the learners in the selected class to prepare the poems that they would want to perform in class in front of their peers and the teacher. Learners were given four weeks to prepare before the presentations. I asked them to prepare their poems and I also told them that they were free to use any language which they were comfortable with. I did this to acknowledge Richards, Brown and Forde (2007) who assert that effective teaching and learning occur in a culturally supported, learner-centred context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement. Through the lens of the multiliteracies/multimodal approach, I believed that allowing learners to write or select their own poems, use the languages they are comfortable with, make their own

decisions whether to work in groups or individually and bring in artefacts and perform the poetry the way they do outside school or the way they see others doing it would assist learners of English FAL in the selected class for this research to appreciate and be able to interpret classroom poetry better. The full texts of the poems can be found in Appendix 6 (pages 112-126).

All the learners in the class participated. The first intervention lessons took two days. There were no set criteria of who should start presenting. Everything was done voluntarily. The first group had only boys and they presented a song which had two lines, "*Ubani onendaba ukhuti kwakusihlwa i phutu noshukela, / Sivala iminyango nama fasitela akeko umuntu uzosibona ukuthi siyahlupheka*.*"* The first line means, "Who cares even if we eat thick porridge and sugar for dinner." This may suggest an element of poverty. In Africa people can only eat thick porridge and sugar or salt if there is absolutely no relish, particularly when the meal is dinner, since in an African home dinner is highly valued and that is the meal that many people will not forego if all things are well. Meat and vegetables are served alongside any starch of choice, which includes thick porridge. Therefore, eating porridge and sugar might be an indication of poverty. The second line says, "We close our doors and windows so that no one sees that we are struggling." Resilience is a character trait that is instilled in Africans even during infancy. An African child is trained to be strong even in hardship and it is also an African custom of concealing when there is trouble in the house. The closing of doors and windows might mean that whatever happens in our house is not shared with outsiders. When there is no food in the house, the members of the family still pretend like all is well.

The participants used an African drum (see Figure 6 below) in their performance. The drum was used to create a beat. The moderate sound from the drum allowed the participants to dance, moving slowly and coordinating their hand gestures with the rhythm of the song. The song that was sung is the participants' own composition and they said that it is rap music. Rap music is popular in the area where the research was conducted and many young people use it as a way of coping with the challenges surrounding them

Figure 6: A typical African drum

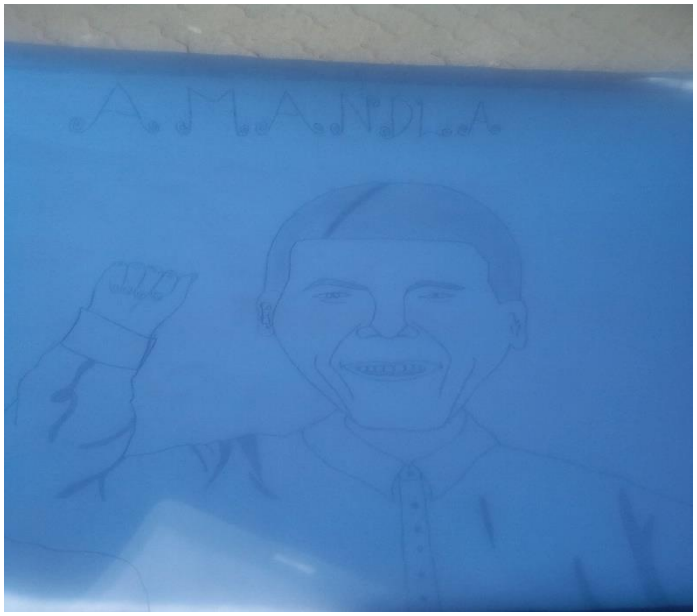


The African drum is used for different purposes in various African cultures. Back in the days the drum apart from being a musical instrument served as a means of communication. People would tell through the sound of the drum the message that was being communicated either by the Chief's messenger or by the neighbours. For example, there was a beat that would tell people that there is traditional beer which is ready for sale where the drum beat would be coming from. The other sound would communicate a funeral. Therefore, with every beat people had to listen carefully and discern the meaning. The drum apart from entertainment during social dances it could also be used in healing ceremonies, rites of passage, ancestral worship. This is my knowledge of the use of the drum according to my Shona culture which is also closely related to the Zulu culture since both are Bantu cultures. I have several times heard the different drum sounds particularly the funeral one and as a child staying in a rural area I heard the sound to announce traditional beer. The participants who performed here for the purpose of this research used the drum for entertainment. From my perspective, the participants did not care much about the message in their song; what seemed to be more important to them was entertaining their audience and themselves through their music, dance, drum sound, and clapping their hands.

The second group to present was a trio of boys who performed a poem entitled "The Shield" which they composed on their own. They performed their poem in English and they did not have artefacts. They only had cue cards which they continuously referred to which could be the reason why they seemed more shy than Group 1. Each participant recited a stanza. Their poem is about Nelson Mandela, whom they referred to as the shield in their title. Groups 3 and 5, who all performed on the first intervention day, also recited poems about Nelson Mandela. Group 3 consisted of two girls, who also did not use artefacts. Group 5 had 8 girls who first sang a song from the musical *Sarafina* and then one participant recited a poem with humming in the background by

the other group members. The girls who presented Mandela poems seemed to be more energetic than the boys. There was a lot of bodily movements from both groups and lifting of clenched fists which is a symbol used by many politicians and as a sign of solidarity, unity and power (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Picture of Nelson Mandela drawn by the learners in group 5



Groups 4 and 6 presented poems with motivational messages. Group 4 said, "*Before you see the rainbow / Reach your goals."* This might mean that before experiencing the good life one has to work hard. One has to set goals and work hard to achieve the set goals then enjoy the fruits of one's hard work. Similarly, group 6 said, *"Life is an opportunity, benefit from it."* This might mean that life is not guaranteed, while one is still alive one should do one's very best to make sure one lives a better life. Group 4 said, *"Let yourself be drowned by the strange / Be able to put up with the pain / Push harder than yesterday." "Drowned by the strange"* could mean to be engulfed by mysteries of life, things that one cannot comprehend which includes challenges but should persevere. Group 6 in their poem titled "Life" used a number of words to describe life, including beauty, dream, challenge, duty, promise, song, struggle, tragedy and adventure. This might mean that the participants think that life is what one wants it to be at any given time. Learners used simple diction in their poems and they also used the Western features such as stanzas and rhyme. Their use of praise names and dance is drawn from the traditional poetry oral practice. This shows that some learners appreciate some aspects from both Western and indigenous poetry practices.

Therefore, the inclusion of indigenous poetry in the English FAL classroom can help some learners to appreciate poetry.

The presenters on this first day of the intervention performed their poems and songs in bigger groups, which may suggest why they volunteered to present early because they had peer support. Slavin (1983) asserts that group work helps because content is reinforced as learners work together and teach each other. This improves understanding through additional discussions and explanations. The presenters' choice to work in groups also demonstrates that poetry in African culture is a communal activity. I have also realised that learners in the English classroom prefer talking to the teacher in the language of instruction but using their home language when they discuss among themselves and explain things to one another. This might mean that until you have enough content you are hesitant to stand in front of an audience and present.

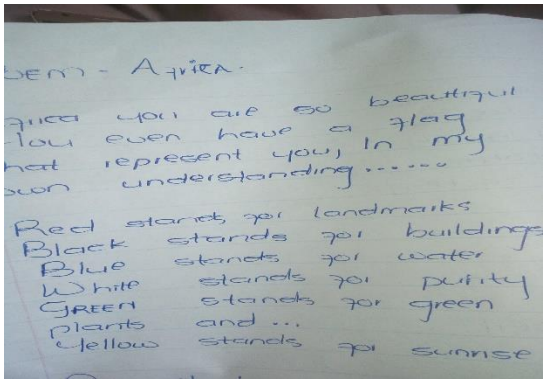
The learners who presented on day two presented either in pairs or as individuals. I called the pair presentations duets. Just like the first group on day one, the first duet on day two was presented by boys. They presented a poem titled "Africa," and as their artefact the participants had the South African flag (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: The South African flag



Holding the South African flag may symbolise patriotism. The participants did a call and response performance and they also explained what they understood to be the meanings of the colours on the South African flag. In their own words (see Figure 9) the participants wrote:

Figure 9: Poem "Africa"



It is amazing that the participants gave their own meanings which are different from the official meanings of the flag. This may suggest creativity and the sense of ownership that if something belongs to you nobody dictates to you how, when, where and why it should be used. According to these participants, red stands for landmarks, black for buildings, blue for water, white for purity, green for plants and yellow for sunrise. In actual South African political history, the colours of the flag are drawn from those of the flags or logos of the three major political groups (African National Congress, Inkatha Freedom Party and National Party) who came together to form the Government of National Unity in 1994. The different meanings given here may suggest new thinking by the younger generation whose focus has moved from holding on to the past to appreciating nature and its surroundings. The last interpretation of the colour yellow referring to "sunrise" may suggest new beginnings.

The second presentation on day two was done by two girls, who titled their poem "I am an African". The participants sat cross legged on a traditional reed mat (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Reed mat



The gesture of sitting on the reed mat cross legged is an African cultural practice which is done even when people are performing some cultural rites like the healing ceremony or ancestral worship. It is also sat on by the *sangomas* (traditional healers) during

consultations and healing ceremonies. This explains how important the reed mat is even today in the African culture. I would associate this gesture with affirmation of African cultural identity. The reed mat is commonly known as a place where woman and children. In the olden days it was also used as a sleeping mat which was highly valued. There is a Zimbabwean proverb among the Shona people which says, *"Tsapata rukukwe hazvienzani nekurara pasi"* meaning that a torn sleeping mat is better than sleeping on the floor. Today reed mats are used as sleeping mats in poverty-stricken homes where they do not have beds to sleep on. In their poem the participants say, "*I am proud to say I am an African."* This shows that the participants are conscious of their identity.

The next presentation was done by two girls who presented Maya Angelou's poem, "I rise." The girls performed the poem so powerfully that they reduced their classmates to silence in the room. The participants' actions and the way they paced the room drew the attention of the audience making every word spoken to sink in and make meaning. This poem talks of hope, endurance and resilience when the participants said, *"You may shoot me with your words / You may cut me… / You may kill me / But still…I will rise."* Angelou's famous poem expresses disgust at oppression. The learners' choice of this poem shows that despite age and location these girls could relate to this poem as they contextualise it to address the forms of oppression in their present lives as South African teenage girls.

The individual participants were the last to perform even though the intervention was not designed like that. The common theme among the individual participants was love, in the poems chosen both by girls and boys. Three boys and one girl individually performed love poems which I would categorise as erotic love poems. Bearing in mind that the participants are teenagers, it is highly likely that they are at a stage particularly boys where they may have crushes on fellow learners at the school, even in the same class. The technique of expressing love in public is an old African tradition which young boys and girls used to do at social functions, through music, poetry and art works. The girl who performed a love poem brought as her artefact a bracelet of Zulu beadwork (see Figure 11).

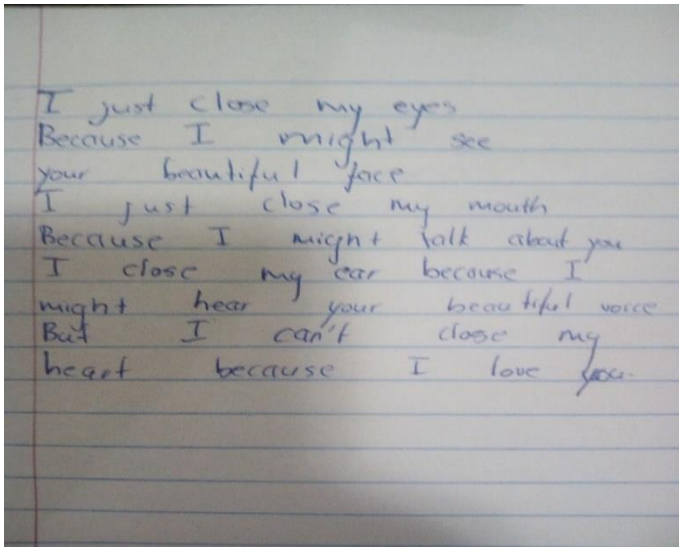
Figure 11: Zulu beads



Beadwork is widespread among African cultures, but its meaning can vary. In some cultures, beads are very secret. The beads were used as a love letter which usually in the olden days a girl would give to a boy whom she loved and after some time when there was reciprocation of the love the boy would ask the girl what the colours on the bracelet meant. The shape and the colours varied depending on the mood of the person who might have designed the bead and in most cases the meaning would be shared only between the two people who are in courtship or even in marriage. The learner's choice to bring beads as her artefact suggests that among some Zulu people the practice might still be prevalent. She was able to use a traditional African literacy practice, which employs a traditional multimodal textual form (the beads), to express hidden emotions, since in traditional African cultures girls are not permitted to openly speak of love to a boy; it is considered a sign of indecency and lack of grooming. In this way the intervention created an opportunity for the learner to connect with past out-of-school experiences. The fact that some participants used the intervention as a platform to exhibit their cultural practices is relevant to the research question on the changes in appreciation of classroom poetry if indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom. Learners of English FAL might be more willing to learn poetry if they do it in the multimodal ways that they are familiar with.

In their love poems, the participants used many figures of speech, mainly metaphors, to express how they feel about their loved ones. The first love poem by a boy does not have a title but it is clearly about love (see Figure 12):

Figure 1: Love poem



The poem above is about romantic love, and it seems as if the boy is not presumptious, but rather uncertain whether his love is reciprocated. The poet expresses his feelings and might be showing that he may be mainly attracted to the girl because of her outward apprearence because he says, "*I just close my eyes / Because I might see / Your beautiful face*." This suggests that the partcipant is overcome by the beauty of his beloved and cannot stand to see this exquisite beauty with his eyes. He also says that he closes his ears so that he does not hear the beautiful voice. He also shuts his mouth to avoid talking about his beloved. The only thing that he cannot close is the heart because he is in love. As mentioned above, in African tradition these emotions were usually kept a secret to avoid embarrassment in the event that the beloved does not love in return. Hence the boy has to keep it in his heart until there is confirmation that he may be loved back.

Two other individual participants, a boy and a girl performed praise poems for the people who matter the most in their lives, which is a different love that they were expressing (see Appendix 3. Page 100-103). The boy participant recited a long poem about his grandmother. In his poem, the participant said that the grandmother works so hard to make sure that the family is fed but no one in the family appreciates her efforts. He also expressed sadness that his grandmother has lost her sight and he has to do all the chores in the house after school to help his grandmother. The participant is disappointed that he is a child without a childhood as he has to be with the

grandmother while other children of his age are playing his favourite game after school which is “soccer.” It might be that the participant found the intervention lesson and the chance to write a poem as a platform to share his worries and concerns. The participant also said that grandmother promised him that one day he will be rich because he will inherit her pension. This might also be the driving force behind the persistence and endurance that the participant has since there is a promise of a reward in return of his efforts.

The last two poems were presented by girls individually. The first of these poems was on sadness. She says, “…me in a dark place.” “Dark place” might be referring to gloominess which might be caused by circumstances beyond the participant’s control. This might probably be a social issue that the participant is battling with hence she says, “*Why am I letting sadness take over my life? / I am not weak / I am strong.*” The last two lines in the poem, “*This is my life / I will live it and love it*” show self-motivation and determination to overcome whatever challenge that she is encountering. The last presenter’s poem was on HIV and AIDS. The participant refers to HIV as the killer that has no mercy. She recited a long poem of six stanzas. She even says that she is scared of calling HIV by name but will say “killer.” The poem says that the killer creeps in at night and breaks people’s hearts causing divisions in families. She commands the “killer” to go back where it came from because it only came to kill innocent people including the unborn babies. The participant calls the “killer” “shameless and merciless.” This may show the devastation that the participant may be experiencing as a result of the effects of HIV in the families and the communities as a whole.

Summary of main observations

1. Classroom atmosphere

   I observed that the classroom atmosphere was positive and relaxed during the intervention. This was evidenced by the enthusiasm that the learners showed as they presented their songs and poems. The atmosphere enabled even the learners who hardly participate in class to be active and to be so much involved in all that was happening. I realised that a free environment enables learners to engage with the classroom activities as they can be playful and learn at the same time.

2. Language

   The liberty given to learners to use any language that they are comfortable with helped them to have their conversations during discussion freely as they interacted amongst themselves. However, I have realised that despite the fact that learners were allowed to use a language of choice, the majority chose to use English. Groups one and two which performed on day one were the only ones that performed songs in vernacular languages. It could be that the learners realised that it was going to be difficult to translate the songs into English.

3. Group work versus individual performance

   All the learners who chose to participate in groups were among the first presenters. This may show that group presentation helps in boosting learners' confidence. I observed that the themes of either the poems or the songs sung also determined the nature of the presentation, that is, whether it was a group or individual presentation. The groups' activities were mainly on general themes like poverty, praise of famous figures, encouragement and African identity. Individual poems were emotional, focusing on love poems of various types, though often taking the form of traditional praise poetry. Dramatized and performance poetry done in groups proved true the African proverb which says two ants do not fail to pull a grasshopper. This is evident in the presentations where I observed that the majority of learners participated either in pairs or in groups.

4. Creativity in poetry and song compilation

   Most of the participants showed creativity and originality in their work. For example, the poem dedicated to grandmother sounds like a heart outpouring which might be the reason why the participant did an individual presentation. The same applies to the poem which is dedicated to a mother whom the poet refers to as a "queen mother". Even though many did not bring artefacts as per expectation, the ones that were brought are relevant to the poems presented.

In conclusion of the intervention observation, I noted that participants used rhyme, different typography and there is an element of transcribing oral poetry into the page as evidenced by not keeping to line divisions and most poems end with "Thank you."

4. Intervention stage 2: Oral poetry performance of classroom set poems

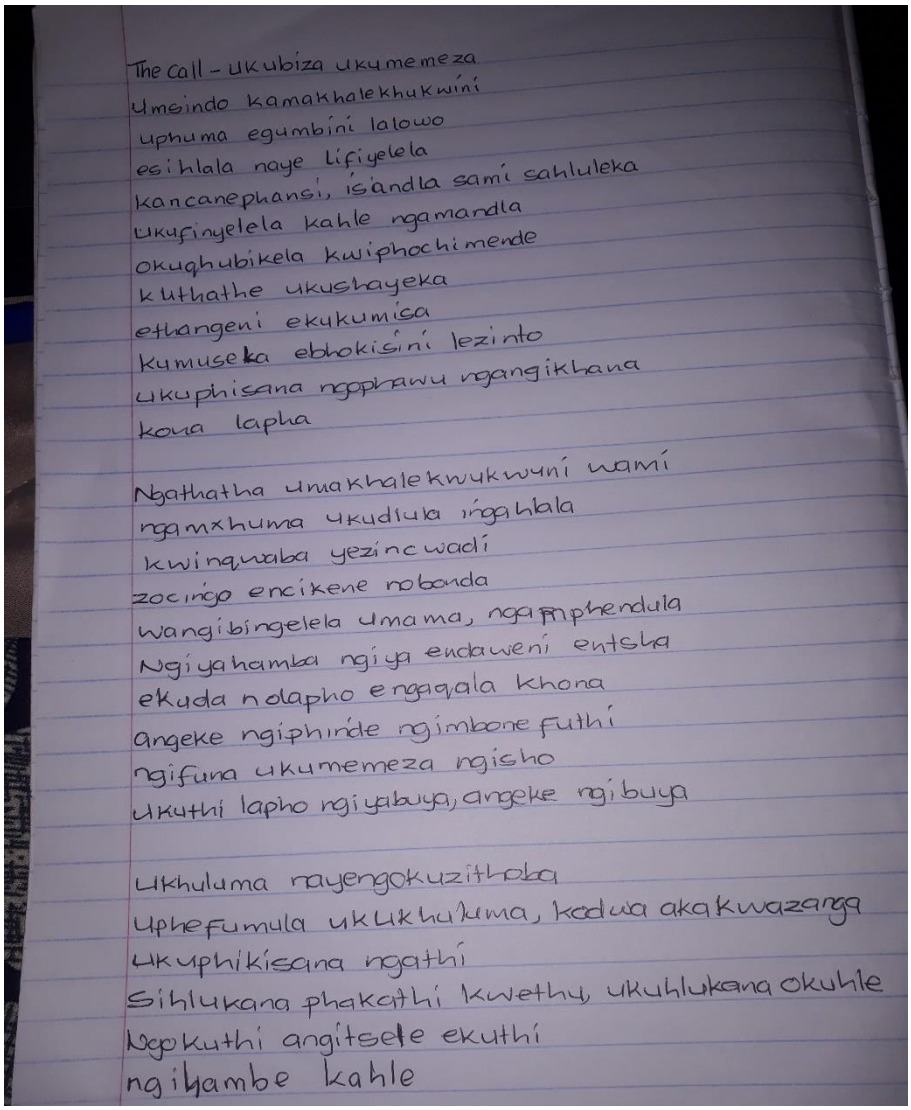
After the first intervention lessons, I observed that the poetry classroom had some changes. Learners started reciting poems daily before the beginning of a lesson. The new mood confirmed to me that the learners were starting to enjoy classroom poetry. I then told them to get into groups and work together on two prescribed poems, one by William Wordsworth and the other by Gabeba Bederoon. I thought it was good to work with one Western poem and one South African poem so that I may have balanced assessment. Learners formed 7 groups with 6 learners in each group and one group had 7 learners. Three groups worked with the poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" while four groups worked with "The call".

The four groups which presented "The call" were the first presenters. I had to do this so that the learners would move from something that they can relate to before they work with "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" which they had been finding difficult as evidenced by their marks as earlier stated. The second poem which was presented by three groups on the second and last day of the invention sessions was the poem titled, "Composed upon Westminster Bridge".

Gabeba Baderoon is a South African poet. Her poem "The call" is written in simple English and the poem's theme has to do with migration which is what many people in Africa do in search of greener pastures (poem's full text in appendix 6 page 112-126). Learners of English FAL can relate well with this theme. The first group started by singing a song in IsiZulu in honour of mothers (DariaMusic, 2010). The presenters danced excitedly. They chanted "*Here come our mothers with apples and bananas, here come our mothers with cookies and sweets things, here come our mothers with clothes.*" The whole class joined in the singing, showing that the song is popular among the learners in the class that was selected for this research. The idea of a mother coming with apples and bananas may suggest that the mother is the provider in the family. The mother also comes with sweet things and cookies suggesting that the mother has a crucial role in the family. After the song, two learners recited their prescribed poem "The call". The other participants were humming in the background. This also created a genre somewhere between poetry and song and opened a shared space both intertextual and intermodal. Later, the group presented their poems which they had translated into IsiZulu. This is an important aspect of translanguaging which

Canagarajah (2011) and Makalela (2015) define as a shuttling between languages with learners using their home languages to understand the additional language content. Learners became innovative and extra careful as they had to come up with words that could help them not to distort the original meaning of the poem. Their linguistic competence in their home language became a resource to help them in their creative decisions in crafting their translations.

Figure 2: Learners' translation of Baderoon's poem "The call"



The second group dramatized the poem. One learner acted the mother, one acted the daughter, one acted the flatmate and three other learners acted as spectators. The daughter carried her language out of the flat leaving the flatmate just looking at her. She walked slowly with her bags in her hands. Suddenly, the phone rang and she rushed to unpack her bag to bring out the phone. The mother had called. She told her

mother that she was moving to a further place than where she used to stay. However, she shows that she is worried that she may not be able to see her mother again and she is losing her centre. On the other end she could also sense that her mother was tense. The participants showed that they both had something to say to each other but they could not let it out. I observed the silence in the classroom which meant that this was an emotional moment where probably they were all thinking about the day that they may be forced by circumstances to go to faraway places where they may not be able to see their mothers. Some may have been thinking about their late mothers as well because I also noticed one girl among the presenters with tears rolling down her cheeks. This reverberates with Lazar (1993) that another benefit of poetry is that of stimulating imagination of learners and increasing their emotional awareness. It also shows that the multimodal nature of this performance does not only make learners to engage with poetry but it can also acts as a springboard for the development of learners' language proficiency and creative engagement.

The third and fourth groups shared the lines and all participants recited some lines of the poem. They also had their phones in their hands but their actions were less dramatic as compared to group two of the day. However, the repeated recitation of the poem using different voices may be effective in helping some learners to understand the poem. The hand gestures and other movements that the participants did may also add meaning and I observed that all groups had their own different ways of making meaning of the poem. Learners in the class displayed Black (2009)'s argument that a multimodal approach helps learners to "develop an engaged enjoyment and appreciation of poetry" as well as "creative and critical thinking" (p.28) during their lessons.

The second poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" was presented on the last day of the presentations. I realised that all the three groups struggled to present the poem unlike the presenters of "The call". Learners struggled to connect with the content of the poem hence they were unable to be more creative. However, one group managed to bring to class pictures of Westminster Bridge which they showed the class. After showing the class the pictures learners played the "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" song which they retrieved from YouTube composed by Tobydarling (2016). The whole class was excited and started dancing to the song, in support of Khansir (2012) who observed that poetry can promote creativity and a more

positive learning environment. Despite the complexity of the archaic language in Wordsworth's work, learners took the ambiguity of the poem as a challenge which invited them to explore language in a non-threatening manner by employing unique explications rather than finding a right answer (Kazemek, 1985). It is also time that teachers improve their ICT (Information communication technologies) so that they do not lag behind the learners' competences. Dymoke and Hughs (2009) are convinced of the "powerful dynamic and multimodal nature of poetry which is … a key justification for its inclusion in a 21st century curriculum" (p.93).

At the end of the presentations, the whole class started singing Daria's song. This to me showed that learners of English FAL particularly in the classroom which was selected for this research prefer to learn poetry in a relaxed, playful and multimodal environment.

Summary of main observations

1. Rigidity of learners during Western poetry presentations

   I observed that some learners of English FAL in the class that was selected for this research did not feel relaxed when they were doing Western poetry. The uncomfortable silence in the classroom may mean that learners were scared of failing to understand the poem, and trying to understand everything that was being said. It might also mean that they were confused and could not follow the presentation hence there were no gestures to show that they were together with the presenters and engaging fully with the poem.

2. Effectiveness of multimodality and multilingualism

   Echoing Black (2009) who said that a multimodal approach helps teachers to "develop an engaged enjoyment and appreciation of poetry" as well as "creative and critical thinking" (p.28) during their lessons, I observed that side-lining multimodality and multilingualism in the English FAL classroom is as a good as sounding a death knell to classroom poetry. Despite the fact that Western poetry like "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" is so distant to the learners of English FAL's personal experiences, I realised that with many modes in place like the pictures and music learners' morale was boosted. The inclusion of music in the classroom created a relaxed environment conducive for learning an additional language. The acceptance of multilingualism in the English FAL classroom enabled learners to realise that English is just a language like any of the languages that

they speak. I realised that giving all languages spoken by learners an equal opportunity in the English FAL class helps learners to appreciate the targeted language. The inclusion of indigenous poetry in the English FAL classroom helped learners to be free to do translanguaging in a more informal environment which valued all cultures and languages as well as the learners' out of school literacy practices. I also observed that learners in this class used their phones to access information like the pictures on Westminster Bridge, something that I did not anticipate.

My observation however is that learners, despite the fact that they managed to recite the prescribed poems, were not as free as when they presented their own poems and they were also not very much enthusiastic except during the time they listened to music. As they explained the pictures they all relied on the information that they got from class but I could realise that the pictures helped them to understand the poem and this I could see from the way the audience nodded their heads. With the music, my assumption which may be subject to criticism, is that learners got excited because it was music and not necessarily that they were listening to the poem.

Themes emerging from observation of the intervention lessons (stages 1 and 2)

1. Consciousness of African identity

   The praise poems that some of the participants performed, for example the poems titled, "I am an African" and "Africa", are evidence that the learners are conscious of their African roots and they are proud of their identity. The artefacts that were brought also show how proud the participants are about their identity. For the mere fact that "The call" is South African-based, I saw that learners related more to the poem compared to "Composed upon Westminster Bridge".

2. Praise for Nelson Mandela

   Praise for Nelson Mandela repeatedly emerged. Probably many participants came up with praise poems for Nelson Mandela due to the reason that the intervention lessons coincided with the month during which Nelson Mandela's centenary birthday was celebrated. The number of poems which praised Mandela shows that Nelson Mandela played a crucial role in the liberation of South Africa from apartheid and his legacy lives for the current generation. The *Izibongo* seem to live among the African communities even in the 21st century as the poetry is passed from one generation to the other, as what Gunner and Gwala (1991) refer to as a

story and poetry “bank”. It is important to note that praising a prominent person is still a meaningful social act for the learners who participated in this research.

3. Social issues

   Social issues such as poverty, family responsibility and HIV and AIDS are addressed in the poems. I observed that the participants who sang about poverty were very enthusiastic, probably to show that poverty is nothing to worry about. Poverty is an issue among many African countries but what matters the most among African people is humanity which is shown through kindness and working together.

4. Love

   One of the themes that emerged prominently is the theme of love. The participants exhibited the indigeneity of the IsiZulu *Izibongo* love praises. The poem dedicated to the grandmother described the grandmother as a heroine who sacrifices her own health to ensure that she takes care of the family’s needs through working up early to go and work, the job that she does not like but she has no choice. Similarly, the poem for the mother talks about the mother as a queen, a metaphor explaining that the mother is special and should be treated as royalty. The mother has taught the poet to love and never to hurt. These praises may also show us the crucial role that is played by the female caregivers in African families particularly in the community where the school which was selected for this research is based. Some of the poems are romantic praises and this shows the nature and ages of the poets. These are mainly teenagers who might be battling with adolescent crises. The theme of romantic love expressions and praises is eminent among the individual poets. I think probably this was a way for these teenagers to express their feelings either to secret admirers or to the individuals that they are already in love with.

5. Rebirth of classroom poetry through intervention

   I observed a new, rejuvenated and reenergised Grade 11 class during the intervention sessions. I realised that during the intervention period many learners in the classroom became very much involved in poetry to such an extent that they requested that we do poetry after school. Learners also demanded to have one learner to present a poem every day before the start of the lesson.

5. Reflective writing

After the intervention, I asked the learners in the class to do a reflective write up on their perceptions of poetry before and after the intervention. All the learners in the class wrote a reflective essay and some wrote paragraphs. I randomly picked 4 reflective write-up pieces to analyse. 4 learners' reflective pieces was a good number because it is 10% representation of the research population. I use the numbers 1-4 to identify the reflective writing participants. The full text of reflections 1-4 can be found in Appendix 5 (pages 105-111).

Participant 1 says, "I never thought that a thing that I did not want will be so interesting". Using the word "thing" for poetry may mean that according to this participant, poetry was not that important, it was something that he did not place value on because he did not want it. However, he mentions that the "thing" was in fact interesting showing a change of perception from negativity to positivity towards poetry. The participant elaborated, "I always did not like things like poetry because I thought that poetry was a thing for white people". This was the participant's perception of poetry which might mean that the way he was introduced to poetry made him not to identify with the genre and he distanced himself thinking that it does not belong to him. Probably the classroom pedagogy according to this participant gave an impression that he could not own poetry. However, he says that after the intervention, he realised that since he loves rap music there is no difference and he can actually write poems for his rap music. Participant 1 also says that when he presented the poem with his group during the intervention session it made him "confident to perform poems individually". This means that group work helped him to gain confidence and also to realise what he can do individually. In his conclusion, participant 1 says, "Today I love poetry… and I want to thank my English teacher for making me love poetry." This change of attitude towards poetry might suggest that the participant previously lacked information about the purpose of poetry and motivation as evidenced by the way the participant appreciates his English teacher.

Just like participant 1, participant 2 also did not like poetry and she says in her introduction that she started liking poetry after the English teacher told her how good poetry is. This participant shows that she was afraid of poetry. She says this about the intervention: "I was very scared when it was time for presentation". She says that she

thought she was not well prepared and she was scared of making mistakes together with her group which would make classmates to laugh at them. This shows that peers have an influence on one's self esteem. The participant says, "I was happy because we did not make any mistakes and I also feel confident and good. It made me to love poetry." According to this participant, being good at something may make one to have confidence and be motivated to love it. Ghosn (2002) describes literature as a change agent. He believes that poetry can change one's attitude. This also shows the importance of multimodality through performance which helped learners to change their attitude towards poetry just like it did in Newfield and Maungedzo (2006)'s study. The use of positive emotive words shows a change in the participant's perception towards poetry and in her conclusion she states, "I am not scared anymore poetry is my life". All the above echoes the fact that adolescence is a time of emotional development, therefore, poetry can help learners to discover themselves and explore their lives and help them with personal development and growth.

Participant 3 says, "I didn't see the use of doing poetry. It was something that when the teacher gets in class and say today we are doing poetry; you just get bored". Like participant 1, participant 3 did not see the use or the purpose of poetry. She even got bored by the poetry lessons. This attitude might also suggest that probably, throughout the lesson this participant could not appreciate and be in a position to interpret the poems being taught, so she did not engage with the lesson at all. Just like participant 2, this participant was also scared of making mistakes during the intervention when they were supposed to present. She says that after the presentation she felt that it was good working in a group, sharing ideas and experiencing meanings of new words. The participant concludes that "poetry now makes me feel proud of myself and free". This may suggest that before then, this participant did not understand poetry.

The last reflective writing by participant 4 shares the same attitude with participants 1, 2 and 3. Participant 4 says, "My attitude towards poetry before presentations was very bad because I did not have any interest towards poetry. I thought poetry was just words". This reflects Newfield and Maungedzo (2006) who illustrate the shift from a traditional autonomous model of literacy, which is methodical and insists on learners cramming the literary devices, through an intervention that drew on the use of multimodal pedagogies to revitalise the genre of poetry. This participant is straight to the point that her attitude was bad, she had no interest and she thought poetry was

just words. Just words might be indicating that to this participant poetry was meaningless. This participant also said that during presentation she was scared and angry to do something that she did not like. This may imply that she probably got involved because peers were doing it and it shows an element of adolescent peer group identification and peer influence. However, the participant continues: “After presentation, I felt very brave, confident and proud of myself because I saw that I can do poetry on my own with or without anyone by my side”. This may give an impression that some learners in this class particularly 4 looked at poetry as something that was scary, incomprehensible and something that they could not relate with. This may confirm the argument that poetry is sometimes misconceived as a difficult genre (Fleming and Stevens, 2015).

In conclusion of the reflective write up analysis, I have realised that many of the learners’ attitudes towards poetry before the intervention were negative due to varied misconceptions that surrounded poetry in their lives. There is evidence that the intervention helped some learners to understand the purpose of poetry differently. Engaging with poetry individually and in groups may have helped some learners to demystify poetry.

6. Interviews

I had face-face interviews with four participants on separate days. Participants were reminded that their identities will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and they were also reminded that all the information that they were going to provide during the interviews was going to be used only for the purpose of the study and that all data collected will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. The participants were purposively selected from the same class chosen for the study, based on information collected by the class questionnaire. I selected two learners who were engaged with poetry at home and two others who were not engaged with poetry and also did not like poetry. I use the letters of the alphabet as pseudonyms for the interviewees.

Participant A said that she grew up in a family where poetry is taken seriously. The family gathers in a room to share their poems and on important family occasions like ritual ceremonies, where they welcome a new born baby into the family, funerals and birthdays, they perform poems particularly clan praises and songs. In 2013 the

participant started performing poetry outside her home for entertainment purposes through community clubs. Participant A stated that she started reciting Oswald Mtshali's poem entitled "An abandoned bundle" for entertainment. This may mean that this participant's home poetry background was influential and it boosted her confidence which is the reason why she was not scared of standing in front of an audience at that young age. It also shows that the poetry culture was well nurtured that in 2013 when she was doing Grade 7 she started writing her own poems. She said that she was challenged by the increase of sexual abuse among girls of her age which led her into writing poems under the theme "sexual abuse". She pointed out that "In fact, up to now most of my poetry is related to the society in which I live". This supports her definition of poetry as she said that poetry is another method of dealing with emotional uneasiness. She said that poetry is a way of revealing feelings or emotions. With this definition in mind, I asked participant A what she thought about the relationship between home and classroom poetry. She delightedly said that the classroom poetry does not show everything that relates to her societal issues while her home poetry touches on the basic societal issues. She said, "I think classroom poetry is about how other people see life but doesn't touch on the challenges that people face". This statement might imply that classroom poetry, according to participant A, feels like a spectator's opinion of her life experiences. This may suggest that participant A thinks that classroom poetry is distant and does not speak the reality of what actually transpires in her life and that of her community. I think the reason why this participant thinks this way is because of the texts that are prescribed to the English FAL classroom which are mainly focused on different cultural experiences.

However, when the same question about the relationship between home and classroom poetry was asked to participant B, she had a different opinion to participant A's opinion. Participant B had this to say, "They go hand in hand. Indigenous poetry is done in vernacular languages while classroom poetry is in English. They address same issues…They talk about the same things in different ways". What fascinated me the most about this statement is the issue of language. According to this participant what differentiates classroom poetry from indigenous poetry is language which contradicts my earlier definition by Smith (1999) who reminds us that "the word indigenous is a way of including the many diverse communities, language groups and nations, each with their own indentification within a single grouping" (p.6). This made

me think of probing further to know what the different ways are if indigenous poetry and classroom poetry address same issues. She elaborated that indigenous poetry comes from praise poetry and classroom poetry is more advanced, saying “I think classroom poetry is a more advanced way of doing poetry”. She further explained that classroom poetry is “advanced” because it emphasises the structures and poetic devices of Western tradition while indigenous poetry does not. This made me to think that probably the participant sees the indigenous poetry as primitive and classroom poetry as better because she said that she was first introduced to poetry at school and she went to a very good and well-resourced primary school. This can also reflect on the emphasis placed on Western poetry in the school curriculum. The participant might also have internalised the unspoken colonial ideology of the curriculum so that she now thinks classroom poetry is advanced implying that it is better. She said that she was introduced to poetry at a tender age and she instantly fell in love with the genre.

Both participant A and B had poetry exposure at a younger age but they were introduced to different forms and I can realise that each of them loves the poetry that they were introduced to first the most. In response to the question on attitude towards home poetry and classroom poetry, participant A said, “It is interesting to read someone else’s piece of work though I don’t see with the other person’s eye. My home poetry addresses day to day issues. It is more personal”. This might mean that according to participant A, her home poetry is more favourable to her because it speaks to her life and the realities of her community. On the other hand, participant B said, “I love classroom poetry, I went to a multiracial primary school and that had great influence on me”. This suggests that participant B was first introduced to classroom poetry which might probably was well introduced making her to love it despite the fact that there were no poetry practices at home. Participant A stated, “I treat classroom poetry and home poetry equally though I love my home poetry the most. I do classroom poetry so that I pass but not that it’s entertaining”. Contrary to participant A, Participant B had this to say, “I never focused on home poetry. I always focused on classroom poetry though recently I started writing a poem in IsiZulu after watching Gcina Mhlope’s live performance. Anyway, I think my strength is English classroom poetry”. There is evidence that because of her primary school education, participant B has in her sociolinguistic repertoire the kind of Anglo-normative English that is still valued most highly with the South African school system. Poetry raises self-awareness

among learners and also helps them to position themselves in the society. (Edmonds-Duff, 2009 & Bennett, 2016), suggest that poetry boosts teenager's self-esteem and that poetry combined with performance can be a vehicle used to help learners to be proud of who they are. Participant B has positioned herself in the class as a better person because of her linguistic abilities. Participant A also stands proud of her identity as someone who is good in addressing her personal needs through poetry.

To answer the question on what might be the challenges with classroom poetry, participant A, like participant B, pointed the figures of speech. Participant A said, "Learning of poetry in the classroom is methodological and many people do not use English as a language of communication daily making it very difficult. The challenge is understanding the figurative language". By "methodological", I think participant A was referring to the pedagogy of teaching classroom poetry which is systematic. Similarly, participant B also said that classroom poetry is more advanced and that makes "some learners to fail to understand the poems and the figures of speech". However, participant B added that to her these figures of speech are not a challenge because of her different sociolinguistic repertoires and funds of knowledge.

The two participants also gave different definitions of indigenous poetry. Participant A said, "Indigenous poetry is the poetry you find locally which addresses societal issues that includes personal issues and it is also entertaining". Participant A maintains that indigenous poetry is more relatable to her context and it is also entertaining. This may suggest that to her, classroom poetry is not enjoyable and her reason is that it is distant from her life experiences and her societal concerns. Participant B defined indigenous poetry as "Poetry in the past and it's about poetry which shows how people are proud about their heritage". Participant B might be looking at poetry as something that is ancient and is a reminder to the present of their cultural and traditional pride. Since participant B had earlier said that indigenous poetry is poetry that is in vernacular this may mean that the ancient poetry and heritage the participant was referring to is the black South African.

Participant A said that the inclusion of indigenous poetry in the classroom will help some learners to understand poetry because there are some interesting idiomatic expressions in the indigenous poetry which are not in the classroom poetry. She added, "I think including indigenous poetry in the classroom will make the classroom

poetry to be easily understood and probably interesting. It might help everyone to accept." This may suggest that according to participant A, some learners do not understand and do not have interest in classroom poetry as a result they do not "accept" or engage with the genre. Participant A's opinion favours epistemological access over formal access to knowledge. Similarly, participant B said that the inclusion of indigenous poetry can help some learners to feel proud of their history and be eager to learn poetry. If learners are taught something that they can relate to it might motivate them.

According to participant A, indigenous poetry helps people to speak out in poetic form if there is anything bothering them. She added, "Indigenous poetry makes one not to feel ashamed or small in any way. We have to voice out emotions equally. Poetry helps people to move away from emotional terror. It is therapeutic. It can stabilize somebody when they do not feel themselves*".* This supports Chapman (2007) who states that African poetry had a range of different purposes in traditional African society from expressing feelings to a secret admirer to appeasing the dead. Furthermore, as Gunner and Gwala (1991) add, every generation and gender had specific poetry that was relevant to them, for example women would reprimand a fellow woman for breaking social tarboos through poetry during a women's gathering. As discussed in Chapter 2, *imbongi* similarly used poetry to ridicule or criticise the chief*.* So participant A's view of the personal and social role of poetry is consistent with this tradition, implying that for her poetry still plays a crucial role for both individuals and society.

Participants A and B had interesting opinions regarding the prescribed poems. For participant A, the prescribed poems are "meant for academic purposes not for personal breakthrough or life education… it's all about passing not anything else, not daily personal experiences". Participant A's argument may be that there is nothing that enhances someone's personal life through the Grade 11 English FAL prescribed poetry. In other words, this is poetry that people just learn to pass examinations but not impacting on people's personal lives. Particpant B on the other hand said, "For some people classroom poetry is boring because of the bombastic words used. The language is of a higher standard which makes it difficult to understand". Here participant B positions herself as different from these "other people", again implying that she sees the Westernised poetry which she relates to as valuable cultural capital,

and links it to the mastery of English. This may suggest that poetry selection texts for English FAL learners needs to be looked into so that learners are taught what they can relate to and in the level of English that is suitable for non-native English speakers.

Regarding the use of different languages in an English classroom, both participants argued that in an English FAL classroom only English should be used so that learners of English FAL may be able to perfect their use of the language and also be able to answer questions during examination times. When I asked the participants what they thought could be done to help learners understand English classroom poetry, participant A stated that people should recite and dramatise poetry in the classroom. This reflects a preference for multimodal engagement with poetry which may link back to her immersion in traditional multimodal poetry practices out of school. She also added that many poetry lessons should be on the timetable so that there is more time for poetry to be performed. In contrast, participant B does not mention multimodality at all, instead, said that people should be taught the importance of poetry so that they may be able to appreciate the genre. According to participant B, some learners do not appreciate poetry because they do not understand the benefits of poetry.

Participants C and D were learners who did not like poetry in the English FAL classsroom, neither were they engaged with poetry practices at home. When I asked participant C why she did not like poetry she indicated that poetry is difficult for her and she does not understand it. In terms of indigenous poetry, Participant C added that, “I see other people performing poems even at functions like weddings, ritual ceremonies and funerals, but I can tell that this is something that I can not do. Actually, I like listening to the community poems that are done in my language but not me doing it”. The idea that participant C says that she cannot do what other people do at community functions shows that she might experience some fear and might be intimidated by the excellence of the performances which she suggests are beyond her capability. The fact that the participant loves just listening to the poems that are done in her language also may imply that the participant probably finds it easy to interpret her own language as compared to English.

In contrast, participant D highlighted the issue of time as the reason why he did not like poetry. He said, *“*Poetry requires a lot of time to understand what the poem is all about”. This may be refering to the issue of English FAL learners struggling to

understand and interpret classroom poetry.This may suggest that probably with more time allocated to poetry in the classroom it might help this participant. When I asked him about the poetry that is done in family gatherings in his own language, participant D laughed and said *"*That is not real poetry, that is *izibongo*". This indicates that this partcipant views traditional praise poetry and classroom poetry as different. According to him *izibongo* are not poetry, hence he further said that, "*izibongo* is dramatised and entertaining, also it is said in the local languages that are easy to understand". The idea that the participant treats *izibongo* as if they are not poetry shows that there might be some learners who think that the poetry they engage with in the English FAL classroom is not related to the indigenous poetry practices that they experience in their communities. This might be an indication of lack of knowledge of what poetry really is and also it may show that the education system seems to be divorced from the home experiences, making learners think that the literacy that they have outside school cannot be incorporated in the classroom. This perception may probably be there because of the book system which downplays the orature that black South African children are oriented to from a tender age. It may also be due to the still colonial state of the SA curriculum, which teaches learners to value Western cultural tradition above indegenous traditions.

When I asked the participants what they thought could be done to help them understand and like English classroom poetry, participant C said, "Probably learners or the teachers should perform the poems in the classroom maybe that might help us to understand and maybe it can also be fun". Similarly, participant D also said that learners should dramatise the classroom poems to make them understandable and he added that, "People can also try to dramatise some poems that they write or that are not in the poetry book even though they are not interesting so that we can have life in the classroom*"*. Dymoke (2009) similarly notes that language in conjuction with performance can help learners to create meaning of a text. By mentioning the words "fun" and "life", these participants may suggest that to them the English FAL poetry class is boring and dull. Participant D said, "If poems are performed in the classroom even though we do not have the experiences of what the poet is talking about and even if the language is not easy to understand, the actions might help us." This observation might suggest that this participant thinks that meaning can be received through actions if verbal meaning is obscure. This gives attention to the theorectical

framework which informs this study, that is multimodality and multiliteracies. There is evidence that in a multilingual classroom like the one which was chosen for this research, the use of different modes to convey meaning is essential for positive results to be achieved in an English FAL poetry classroom.

The next section elaborates on the themes that emerge from the interviews. However, several of these themes also appear in the other categories of data collection.

Themes emerging from the interviews

1. Differences between indigenous and English FAL classroom poetry

   There seems to be a common agreement among participants that indigenous poetry is different from English FAL classroom poetry. For participants A, C and D, the difference is that indigenous poetry is easy to understand and it is interesting. Participant A further argues that indigenous poetry addresses societal issues whereas classroom poetry does not. This view conflicts to some extent with my definition of poetry, set out on page 6 above. My definition looks at poetry as a group of words that can provoke a certain emotion which is shared by the poet and the audience regardless of whether the poem is performed or written. I think participant A's view reflects a traditional African understanding of poetry as more of a social genre with a social function.
2. The importance of out-of-school background

   Another theme which emerged from the interviews is the importance of background in determining the individual participants' attitudes towards different forms of poetry. The attestation from the participants shows that they tend to love the forms of poetry that they were first introduced to and those who were not introduced at an early stage struggle to accept poetry. This might imply that early literacy plays a major role in the future literacy potential and attitudes of learners where poetry is concerned. However, the kind of literacies and repertoires that are valued in SA school system and curriculum do not accommodate the indigenous literacies that many children of English FAL possess.
3. Classroom poetry pedagogy

   Participants raised classroom pedagogy as one area that needs attention. Three of the interview participants, just like the majority of the participants for the questionnaire and reflective writing, believe performance or dramatized poetry will

help many learners in the English FAL classroom to understand poetry. This emphasises on the importance of the multimodal theory of poetry teaching as supported by Newfield and Maungedzo (2006).

4. Negativity towards prescribed poetry

   The theme of negativity towards prescribed poems features in the interview data, as in all the other categories of data for my study. Participants show that some prescribed poems are not interesting and they are written in complex English which is difficult for learners of their calibre to comprehend. The interviewees also pointed out that the prescribed poetry is distant to their life experiences thereby making it difficult for the learners to relate to what the poem entails.

5. Poetry time allocation

   Participants also raised the issue of class time allocated to poetry. Several interviewees believe that more time is needed if learners are to understand and also to perform classroom poetry. This theme appears several times across the various categories of data such as, observation of performance poetry and reflective writing, suggesting strong validity for this finding.

6. Knowledge about poetry

   It seems some learners struggle to understand the purpose of poetry. This theme also appears across several data categories, namely the questionnaire, the reflective writing and the interview. Many learners of English FAL do not understand why they have to do poetry. Probably this might be because of the prescribed texts which are distant to some learners of English FAL's life experiences. Probably they do not see the relevance of studying something that they cannot relate to.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 4 presented the data and analysed it. There is evidence from the presented data that indigenous poetry has a role to play in the English FAL poetry classroom. The data also shows that poetry pedagogy has a definite impact on learners' appreciation of classroom poetry. The data which is presented in this chapter concerning prescribed texts shows negativity of learners of English FAL towards what has been prescribed for them to learn in the English FAL poetry classroom. The following chapter will discuss the data findings in relation to the literature that was reviewed in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and discussion of findings

Introduction

The inclusion of indigenous poetry in the English FAL poetry classroom might initially sound impractical and cumbersome but the findings stated in chapter 4 strongly suggest that in order to transform the SA English FAL poetry classroom, particularly at the school that was selected for this case study, the inclusion of indigenous poetry may help learners to appreciate classroom poetry better.

This chapter seeks to answer the main research question of this study: What is the impact of bringing indigenous poetry into the poetry classroom, in terms of how a group of South African Grade 11 FAL learners appreciate poetry? This is done through a discussion of the main findings from the secondary research questions and claims arising from them and, where applicable, links the literature to the research outcomes.

Table 6: Summary of the findings

Questionnaire	37% of the participants showed love for poetry while 63% showed a negative attitude towards poetry for the reasons that they do not understand poetry and poetry is not interesting to them.
Analysis of prescribed texts	Some of the prescribed poetry texts do not relate to the learners' experiences. 50% of the prescribed poetry for Grade 11 English FAL is Western poetry while 50% is local poetry.
Intervention stage 1: multimodal performance of indigenous poetry	Observation suggested that participants enjoyed their poetry performance. Several of them brought in artefacts drawn from their home cultures, which contributed to the messages they conveyed. Learners enjoyed interacting with their home poetry practices in the English FAL classroom.

Intervention stage 2: multimodal performance of prescribed poetry	Even though observation suggested the learners found Western poetry difficult to relate to and also to translate into vernacular languages, multimodality helped some learners to understand and to enjoy the poetry. I realised that some learners understand poetry even if it is distant to their life experiences if different modes of meaning making are employed.
Reflective writing	Participants showed a change of attitude towards poetry from negative to positive. Some participants noted that they have realised the purpose of doing poetry which they were ignorant of before the intervention.
Interviews	Participants suggested the change of classroom poetry pedagogy as a way to help learners understand classroom poetry. Participants noted that the complicated language in the prescribed poems and a focus on the identification of figures of speech make classroom poetry lifeless.

Sub-question 1: what poetry texts and practices do learners engage with outside of school?

37% of the learners who indicated that they engage with poetry outside school indicated different forms of poetry that they engage with. Even though Chapman (1982) points out that many black South African poets are engaged with Hip Hop poetry, from during the Soweto uprising, in the community where the school for this study was conducted, participants stated that they engage with different forms of poetry. Some are engaged with praise poetry, which is the indigenous form of African black poetry, while some also take up the *imbongi* responsibility of critiquing society and addressing social issues in a poetic form, for example, interview participant A who is engaged with poetry that addresses her societal issues. It is also interesting to note that Chapman's claim was not so far fetched because some participants indicated that they love rap music. The diffence between rap and Hip Hop seem to be contentious, with some arguing that rap is music while Hip Hop is a way of life. However, many of the young people who are engaged with rap music did not understand that there is a relationship between their music and poetry hence the study was crucial in helping some learners to come to a realisation that the two cannot be separated.

Sub-question 2: What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards their out-of-school poetry practices?

As mentioned above, the questionnaire indicated that only 37% of the learners in the class which was chosen for this study engage with poetry outside school. This indicates that the bigger number of learners in class, which is 63%, do not engage with poetry and have a negative attitude towards poetry. Scholars like Ritter (1995) and Chapman (2007) agree that *izithakazelo* (clan praises) and *amaculo* (songs) among the IsiZulu people are poetry forms that are still practiced even in the present day. I concur with them as I realised that for some participants, there is an element of ignorance as they do not associate these practices with poetry but they take such practices probably as entertainment forms that are part of their communities. Participant D in the interviews, for example, showed that he was shocked to realise that *izibongo* are poetry. Participant 1 for the reflective writing stated that "*I always did not like things like poetry because I thought that poetry was a thing for white people"*. This perception shows a distorted understanding of what poetry is by this participant. There is strong evidence that the schooling system reinforces this ignorance, and the learners' perception of a gap between indigenous poetry and classroom poetry. The English FAL poetry curriculum is too westernised, and so are the teaching methods, to the extent that Participant D thought that poetry is not for his culture. This learner's perception of poetry echo Chapman (2007) who records that written poetry was restricted to the educated intellectuals who were privileged enough to unravel the fineness of the written word.

Other learners are ignorant of indigneous African poetic forms also, for various reasons. Some learners grow up in homes where caregivers are so busy that they do not have time with their children to pass on the indigenous knowledge system that they know. Other children are growing up in child-headed families leaving no elderly person to impart indigenous knowledge to the children. However, when there are community activities some poetic forms are practiced in the forms of hip hop for teenage gatherings such as weekend parties and *izithakazelo* at political rallies, weddings or community celebrations. The problem is that some learners could not associate these different African traditional forms of poetry with classroom poetry and this makes me to think that the number of learners who are angaged with poetry practices could be higher than 37%.

In contrast, the participants who are engaged with poetry indicated that out-of-school poetry is entertaining. They indicated that they prefer oral and dramatic poetry which also includes musical poetry. These participants show that they have knowledge of indigenous African poetry practices which, as earlier mentioned in Chapter 1, is a social orientation given to most children at a tender age. Participant A for the interviews, and Participants 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11 for the questionnaire, say that they enjoy their home poetry the most, and Participants 4, 6, 8, 9, and 11 say they enjoy musical poetry, which may refer back to the *amaculo* (songs) that Ritter (1995) and Chapman (2007) suggest are still prevalent among black societies. Participants C and D for the interviews highlighted that they were not good with poetry but they enjoyed watching and listening to the *imbongi* in their communities and other poets when they perform at family or community gatherings. From all this, I can conclude that indigenous poetry is still vibrant among the black communities especially in the class which was selected for this study. However, the challenge is that some learners do not understand that what they do in the communities is poetry.

Sub-question 3: What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the prescribed poems taught to them before the intervention?

Because some learners find classroom poetry difficult, they struggle to see the point of studying poetry in the English classroom. For example, Participant 18 says, *"I don't see if it is important to do or for it to be part of my life. And I don't really understand the reason of doing poetry."* I suggest that a significant cause of this lack of understanding of classroom poetry is the pedagogy, among other issues, which does not allow learners to see the purpose of classroom poetry. Benton (1999) and Flemming (1992) agree that the teaching methods employed in the classroom can easily kill the poetry vibe. All the interview participants stated that classroom poetry is less interesting than home poetry, and largely because of the difficulty of language. Participants A and B mentioned the issue of figures of speech. A study by Jocson (2005) claims that many teachers of English focus on the technical aspects rather than the meaning of poetry. They make learners master the stiff figures of speech such as metaphors, oxymoron and iambic pentameters making the teaching and learning of poetry not only boring but laborious. Ofsted (2007) added that this kills classroom poetry. I think the CAPS assessment programme is partly responsible for this lack of enthusiasm for classroom poetry, because even though the policy allows creativity in

the English FAL poetry classroom, the assessment programme pulls the teacher back to focus on teaching for assessment and side-lines classroom enjoyment, and so engagement.

Sub-question 4: What are the learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the study of poetry in the English FAL classroom after intervention?

One of the main findings is that learners in the class that was selected for the study did not like their prescribed poems, hence some suggested that they write their own poems. The reason for this dislike is that prescribed poems are complicated and the English they use is more "advanced", according to what Participant B said during interviews. Participant A said that prescribed poems are taught in a "methodological" way which according to her is meant for academic purposes and not for entertainment. However, Participant D said that if prescribed poems are performed, learners may be able to deduce the meaning from actions even though in most cases they do not have experiences of what most prescribed poems entail. The finding that prescribed poems are considered difficult by some learners in the class where the study was conducted echoes the earlier findings by Brindley (1980, in Finch, 2003, p.29) who points out that canonical English poems "often deal with geographical or social settings alien to the students' experiences," which limits understanding greatly for non-native speakers of English. Janks and Paton (1990 p.221) also comment grimly that the study of "elitist British high culture protects us from having to focus on the terrifying problems of the world in which we live". Hence some participants suggested writing their own poems for the curriculum. I concur with Brindley, Janks and Paton that the nature of the prescribed poems is the reason why learners find poetry to be difficult. Learners find that the curriculum's expectations are divorced from their life experiences, and this makes it harder for learners to bridge the gap between home practices and classroom expectations.

However, to address this problem Chapman (2007) suggests that choosing poems that are relevant to the learners' real-life experiences, emotions or dreams is of great importance. In addition, if the language of the text is simple this may facilitate the comprehensibility of the poetry text (Slater & Collie , 1991), because it helps learners to cope with the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material. Furthermore, I think that this perception of learners of prescribed poems can

also be addressed through the acceptance of multiliteracies and multimodality which, according to Fairclough (2000), encourage mobility, fluidity and a knowledgeable society that promotes multiple forms of semiotic systems. This suggests the inclusion of indigenous poetry practices that some learners of English FAL are familiar with.

Sub-question 5: What impact do home poetry practices have on the English FAL poetry classroom?

I found out that home poetry practices definitely can have an influence on the English FAL classroom. Questionnaire Participant 11 noted that "*At home there is a room where everyone expresses their feelings and write a poem. Sometimes we meet together in the room and share our feelings and emotions. Then we come up with stanzas and make some pictures then we make a poem."* This may suggest that if poetry is taken as a social norm where there is a bridge from home to school, learners of English FAL might find classroom poetry easier to understand considering that among many African children poetry practices are learnt from birth. Pushpa and Savaedi (2014) acknowledge that poetry expands cultural knowledge and this cultural awareness can strike sparks of critical response. This may entail that home poetry which is widely known for its traditional form, maintenance and establishment of cultural identities may help learners of English FAL to be critical thinkers and also help them to appreciate poems from different cultures, bearing in mind that South Africa is a multilingual nation. Therefore, there is need for a two-way communication between home practices and English FAL classroom poetry curriculum and pedagogy.

Sub-question 6: What are the effects of including indigenous poetry in the English FAL poetry classroom?

Changes in learners' appreciation of classroom poetry are one of the most important findings that I noted in this study. The inclusion of indigenous poetry practices during the intervention changed the learners' attitudes towards poetry. Most of the learners who viewed poetry as boring like participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 whose reflective writing work was analysed for this study indicated that they did not know that poetry could be so interesting. This echoes Colie and Slater (1991) and Khansir (2012) who state that poetry offers a rich, varied repertoire and a source of great enjoyment for both learners and teachers. This also reverberates my observation that during intervention with indigenous poetry the classroom was rejuvenated and the environment was positive

allowing even the quietest learners to participate jovially. The inclusion of indigenous poetry in the FAL classroom also helped learners to express their emotions freely and in the languages that they understand more. I found out that learners had time to interact with peers in the languages that learners were comfortable with. They were motivated and creative making the learning and teaching enjoyable. Home poetry practices were viewed by the participants who were engaged with it as interesting and also relatable. This might mean that if these practices are brought into the English FAL classroom learners will start enjoying the English FAL classroom poetry. Inclusion of indigenous poetry also helped learners to appreciate and to be proud of their identities as they brought in their artefacts which are drawn from cultural practices in the different parts of the local African community.

After presenting and discussing the findings of the study, I went through a process of reflection on what might still be missing in the study and I realised that there is need for curriculum designers to work with the communities for which they are designing the curriculum so that there is a relationship between the curriculum and the learners' life experiences. I observed that classroom intervention can have a micro impact but curriculum intervention will have a macro impact which will help teachers and learners of English FAL to realise learners' success in appreciating English FAL classroom poetry.

In conclusion, the aim of this study was to investigate the impact of bringing indigenous poetry into the English FAL poetry classroom, in terms of how a group of South African Grade 11 English FAL learners appreciate poetry. The findings mentioned earlier reveal that indigenous poetry practices might be a great source of positive change in the FAL learners' ability to appreciate classroom poetry. It should also be noted that indigenous poetry and its associated practices are intertwined with other factors like better teaching strategies, classroom and social environment, language, learners' backgrounds and the nature of early literacy to which learners are exposed which are some of the variables that influence appreciation of classroom poetry.

CHAPTER 6

Implications, recommendations and conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate changes in the appreciation of classroom poetry if indigenous poetry is brought into the English FAL classroom. In particular, this study focused on the Grade 11 English FAL learners at a township school in Gauteng. The study was guided by the research question: What are the changes in English FAL learners' appreciation of classroom poetry if indigenous poetry is brought into the English FAL classroom?

Implications and recommendations

The findings of this study have implications for the curriculum and the teaching pedagogy for English FAL poetry for Grade 11 learners in the township school selected for the study, in Gauteng, and also more widely in South Africa. Results from questionnaires, poetry texts analysis, intervention lessons, interviews and reflective write up show that most of the learners of English FAL in the school where the research was carried out do not appreciate classroom poetry because they do not relate to the contents of the poems that are prescribed to them, and because they find the language of the poems too difficult. They pointed out that the poems are so distant from their life experiences. Some learners who are involved in indigenous poetry outside school noted the differences between classroom poetry and their indigenous poetry. Some of the reasons are that classroom poetry does not address the social challenges that the learners face on a daily basis whereas their indigenous poetry is therapeutic because it engages with their social issues. They also indicated that classroom poetry is boring, which also relates to the pedagogy employed in the classroom. Hence the following recommendations are made to respond to the challenges that lead to the learners' failure to engage with and appreciate English FAL classroom poetry:

- Curriculum designers should consider prescribing more indigenous poetry in the Grade 11 English FAL curriculum.
- New upcoming poets of indigenous South African poetry should be encouraged to publish material that can be included in the Grade 11 English FAL curriculum.
- The South African government should prioritise training English FAL poetry teachers in the poetry pedagogies that help learners of English FAL to appreciate classroom poetry through infusing indigenous poetry practices.
- Caregivers and teachers should work together to help learners of English FAL to embrace their indigenous poetry practices and to be proud of their heritage as future custodians of their cultural practices.

Conclusion

The results presented in chapter 4 and the main findings discussed in chapter 5 support the following main conclusions;

- Including indigenous poetry in the English FAL poetry classroom can help learners to deal with hidden emotions such as shame, love, disappointment and sadness, to mention but a few.
- The inclusion of indigenous poetry practices in the English FAL classroom affords spaces for learners to connect in real ways with life dilemmas that they face as young adults and also to relate to the content and enjoy what they learn as they can see its relevance in their lives.
- Indigenous poetry practices help learners of English FAL to connect their out-of-school practices to the new knowledge they form in the English FAL poetry classroom, echoing the significance of the multiliteracies pedagogy of social practices by the New London Group (1996).
- Performance poetry is the chosen form of poetry among English FAL learners.
- This study and others (Archer & Newfield, 2014; Benton, 1999; New London Group, 1996; Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006) conclude that a multiliteracies and multimodal approach to teaching poetry in the English FAL classroom gives learners an opportunity to create meaning rather than focusing on fixed poetry interpretations. Therefore, the inclusion of indigenous poetry in the English FAL classroom is the most appropriate way of helping learners to appreciate

classroom poetry and to be more involved in the English FAL poetry classroom activities.

To sum it all up, I do not wish to be controversial in this final paragraph of my thesis, however, it is important to raise critical questions which in the context of South Africa's English FAL poetry classroom need to be asked, namely, is the imprint of Western supremacy in the English FAL curriculum too deep to neutralise? Is the book system of teaching poetry replaceable in the current CAPS-driven education system? If so, what chances do South African English FAL learners have to author their own lives and to enjoy what they learn in the English FAL poetry classroom and relate to the content they learn? There are too many questions and only a few responses.

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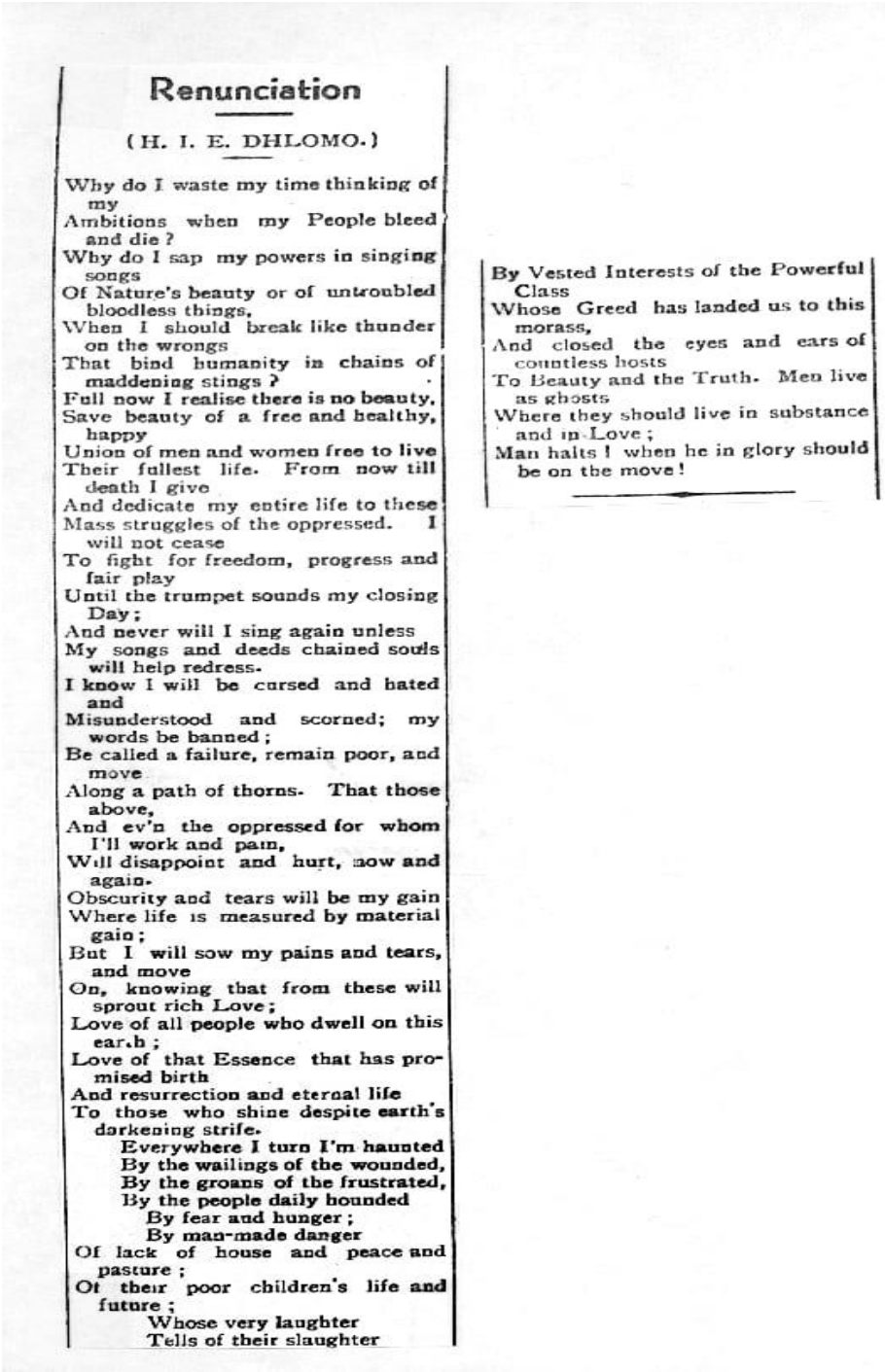
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Appendix 1: Poems

Renunciation by H.I.E. Dhlomo



Renunciation

(H. I. E. DHLOMO.)

Why do I waste my time thinking of my
Ambitions when my People bleed and die?
Why do I sap my powers in singing songs
Of Nature's beauty or of untroubled bloodless things,
When I should break like thunder on the wrongs
That bind humanity in chains of maddening stings?
Full now I realise there is no beauty,
Save beauty of a free and healthy, happy
Union of men and women free to live
Their fullest life. From now till death I give
And dedicate my entire life to these
Mass struggles of the oppressed. I will not cease
To fight for freedom, progress and fair play
Until the trumpet sounds my closing Day;
And never will I sing again unless
My songs and deeds chained souls will help redress.
I know I will be cursed and hated and
Misunderstood and scorned; my words be banned;
Be called a failure, remain poor, and move
Along a path of thorns. That those above,
And ev'n the oppressed for whom I'll work and pain,
Will disappoint and hurt, now and again.
Obscurity and tears will be my gain
Where life is measured by material gain;
But I will sow my pains and tears, and move
On, knowing that from these will sprout rich Love;
Love of all people who dwell on this earth;
Love of that Essence that has promised birth
And resurrection and eternal life
To those who shine despite earth's darkening strife.
Everywhere I turn I'm haunted
By the wailings of the wounded,
By the groans of the frustrated,
By the people daily hounded
By fear and hunger;
By man-made danger
Of lack of house and peace and pasture;
Of their poor children's life and future;
Whose very laughter
Tells of their slaughter
By Vested Interests of the Powerful Class
Whose Greed has landed us to this morass,
And closed the eyes and ears of countless hosts
To Beauty and the Truth. Men live as ghosts
Where they should live in substance and in Love;
Man halts! when he in glory should be on the move!

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

Fill in the questionnaire to the best of your ability

1. Please state your age…….and your gender…….
2. What is your home language……
3. Do you engage in poetry practices at home?

Yes

No

4. Specify the poetry practices that you engage with at home if your answer above is **yes.** If your responds is **No** explain the reason(s)----------
---

Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
5. I find classroom poetry similar to my home poetry.			
6. I enjoy home poetry more than classroom poetry.			
7. I enjoy classroom poetry more than home poetry.			
8. The inclusion of indigenous poetry may help me understand classroom poetry.			
9. There is a relationship between indigenous poetry and classroom poetry.			

10. What do you think could be done to make classroom poetry more understandable and enjoyable?

Appendix 3: Observation schedule

Grade 11: Poetry intervention observation schedule

Date:

Number of Participants:

Gender:

Area of observation	Observations	Comments on what is observed
Language		
Artefacts:		
Performance		
Group/Individual presentation		

Additional comments

……

……

……

……

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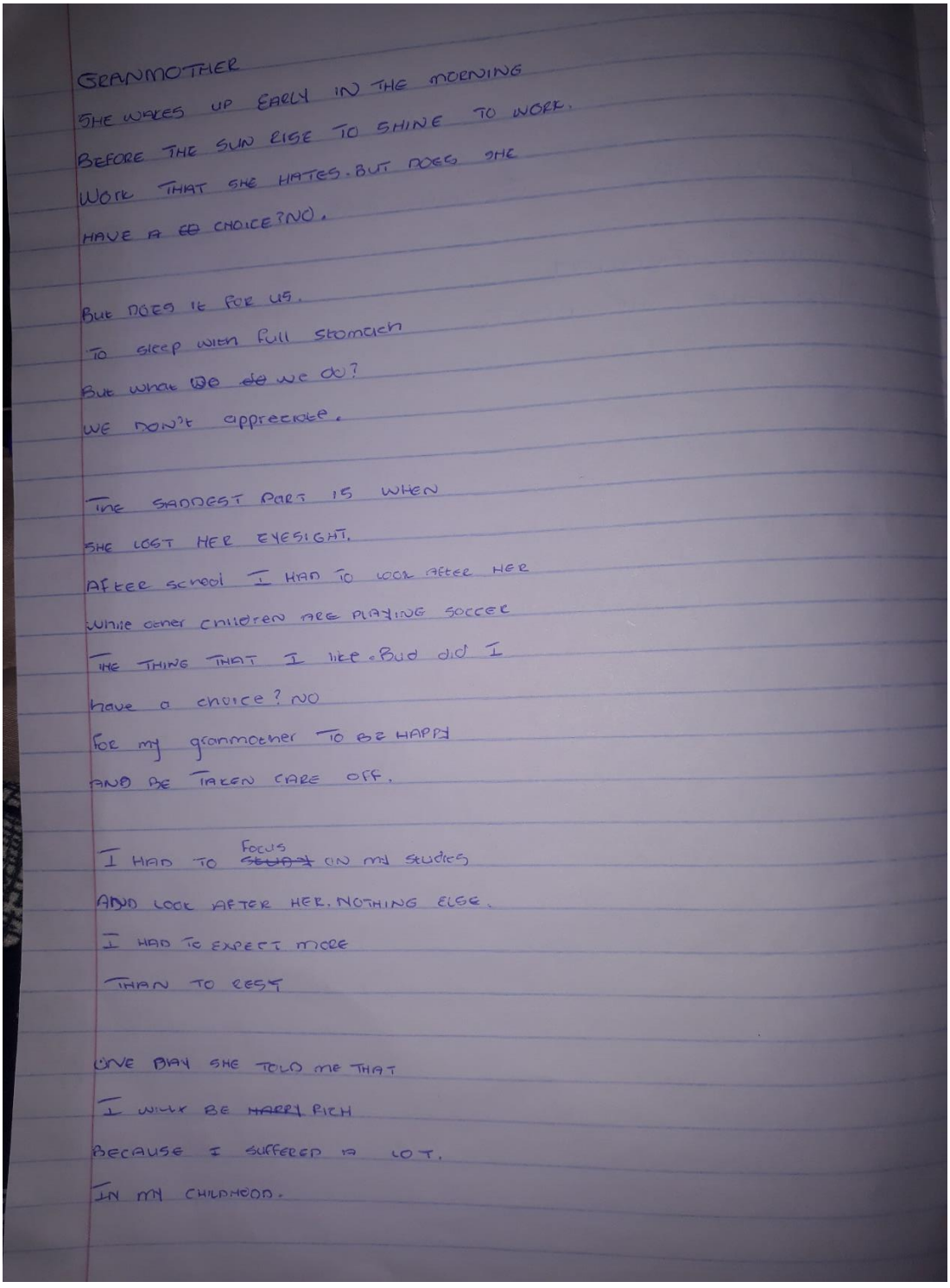
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Poem in grandmother's honour



GRANMOTHER

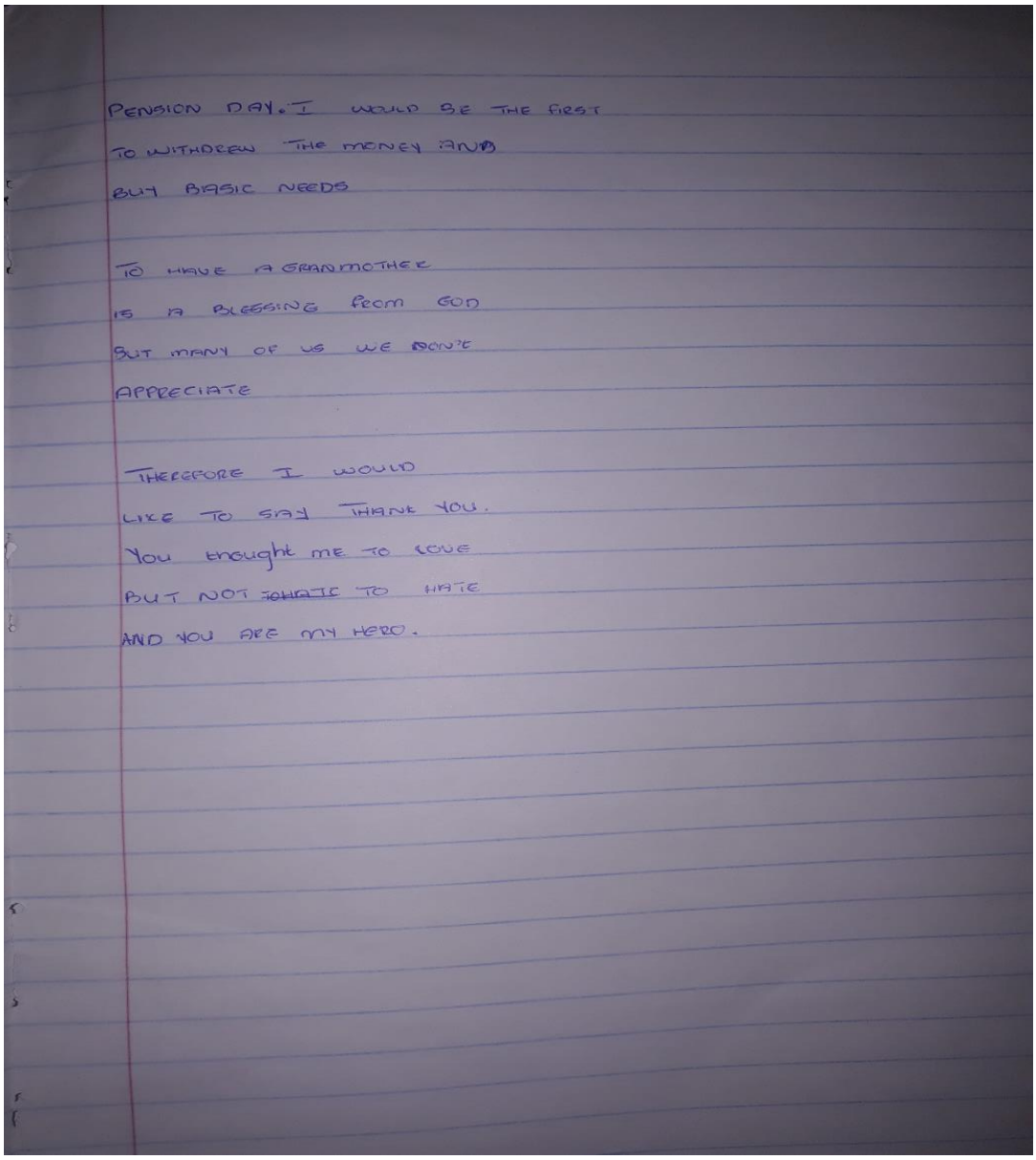
SHE WAKES UP EARLY IN THE MORNING
BEFORE THE SUN RISE TO SHINE TO WORK.
WORK THAT SHE HATES. BUT DOES SHE
HAVE A ~~EE~~ CHOICE? NO.

BUT DOES IT FOR US.
TO SLEEP WITH FULL STOMACH
BUT WHAT ~~DO~~ ~~do~~ WE DO?
WE DON'T APPRECIATE.

THE SADDEST PART IS WHEN
SHE LOST HER EYESIGHT.
AFTER SCHOOL I HAD TO LOOK AFTER HER
WHILE OTHER CHILDREN ARE PLAYING SOCCER
THE THING THAT I LIKE. BUT DID I
HAVE A CHOICE? NO
FOR MY GRANMOTHER TO BE HAPPY
AND BE TAKEN CARE OFF.

I HAD TO ~~STUDY~~ FOCUS ON MY STUDIES
AND LOOK AFTER HER. NOTHING ELSE.
I HAD TO EXPECT MORE
THAN TO REST

ONE DAY SHE TOLD ME THAT
I WILL BE ~~MARRY~~ RICH
BECAUSE I SUFFERED SO LOT.
IN MY CHILDHOOD.

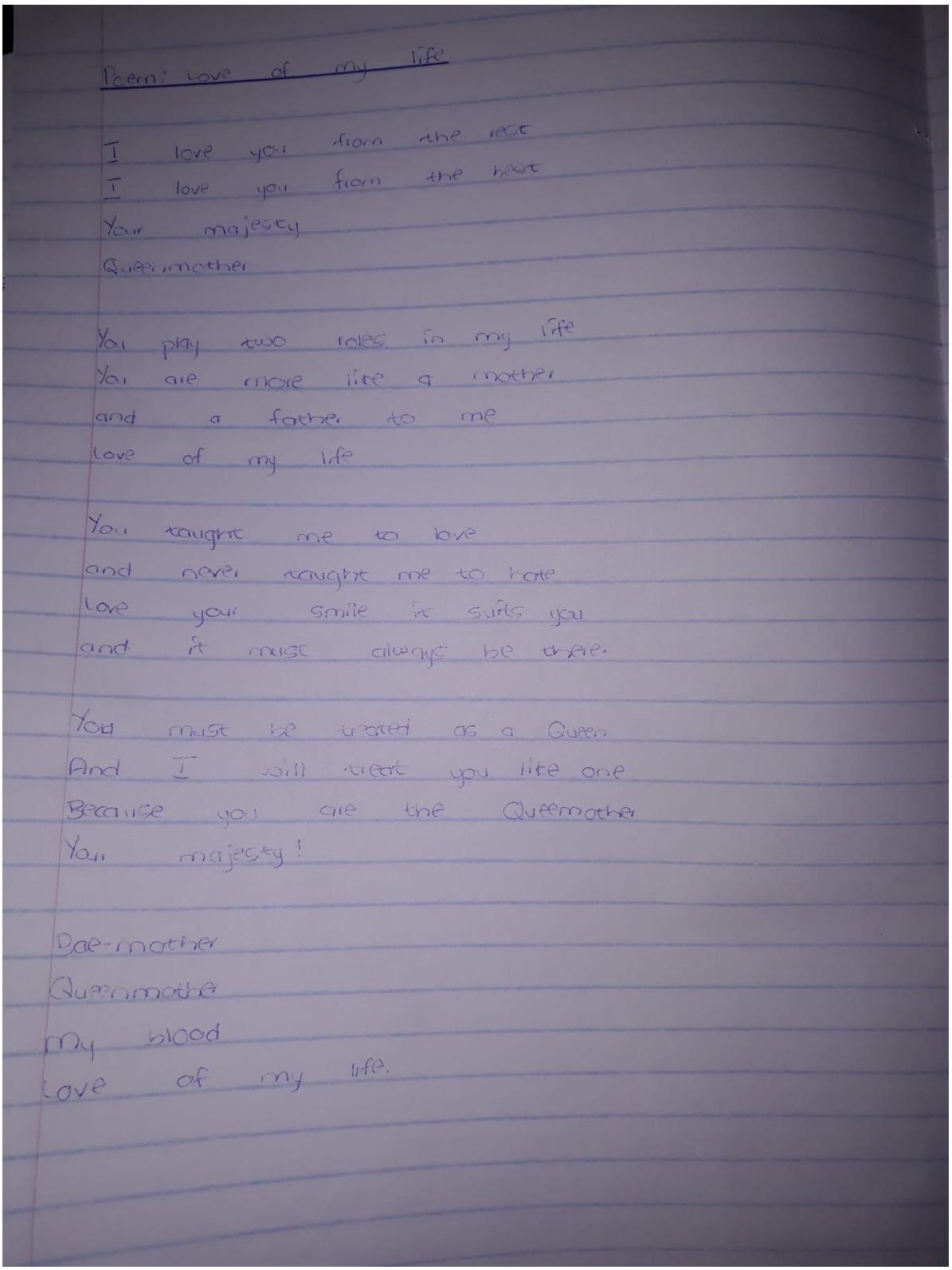


PENSION DAY. I WOULD BE THE FIRST
TO WITHDREW THE MONEY AND
BUY BASIC NEEDS

TO HAVE A GRANMOTHER
IS A BLESSING FROM GOD
BUT MANY OF US WE DON'T
APPRECIATE

THEREFORE I WOULD
LIKE TO SAY THANK YOU.
YOU ENOUGHT ME TO LOVE
BUT NOT ~~TO~~HATE TO HATE
AND YOU ARE MY HERO.

Poem in honour of a mother



Poem: Love of my life

I love you from the rest
I love you from the best
Your majesty
Queenmother

You play two roles in my life
You are more like a mother
and a father to me
Love of my life

You taught me to love
and never taught me to hate
Love your smile it suits you
and it must always be there.

You must be treated as a Queen
And I will treat you like one
Because you are the Queenmother
Your majesty!

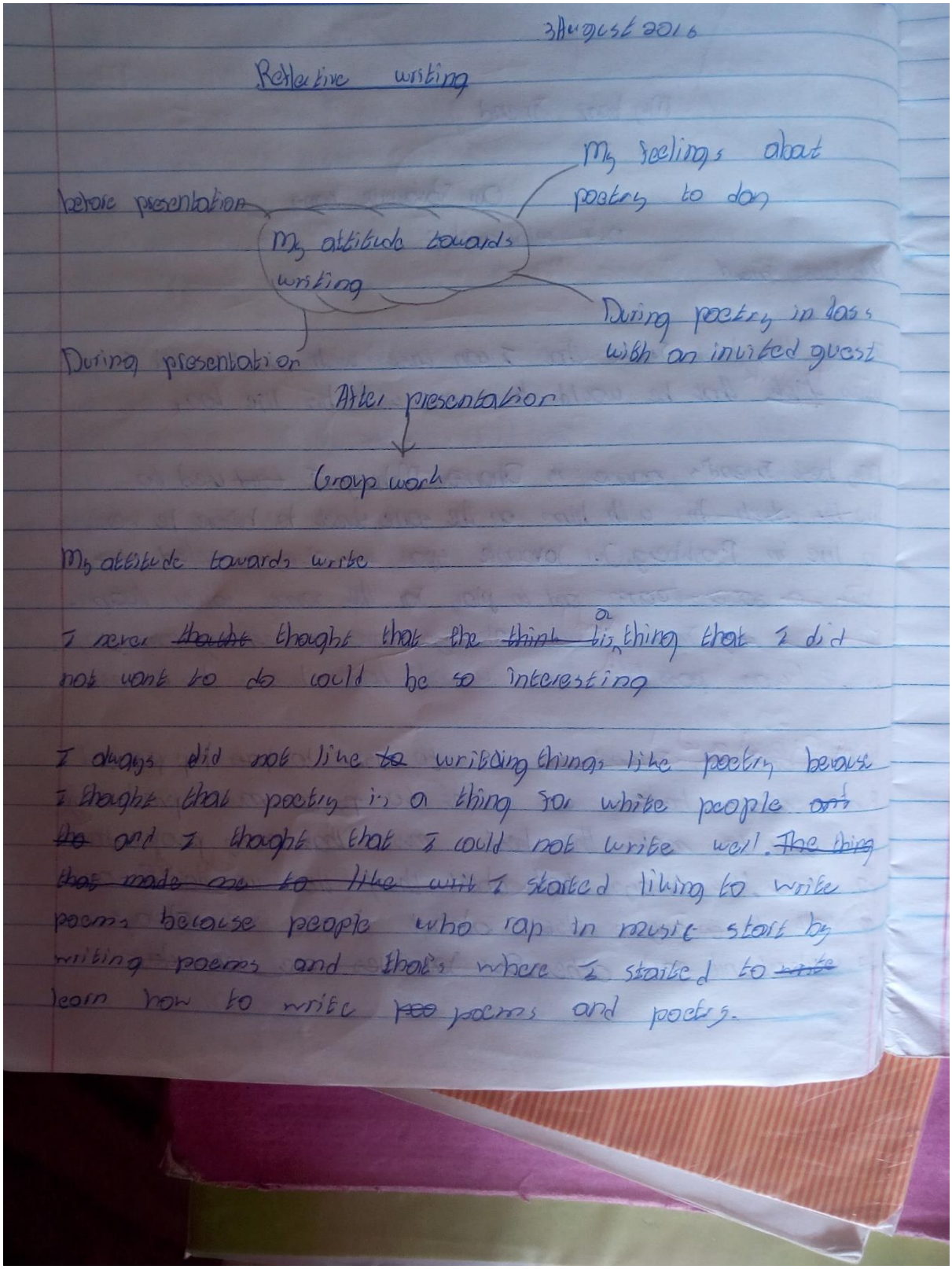
Dae-mother
Queenmother
My blood
Love of my life.

Appendix 4: Interviews

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When were you introduced to poetry and what form(s) of poetry were you introduced to at home before you started school?
2. What do you understand by poetry?
3. What do you think might be the relationship between your home poetry experiences and your classroom poetry?
4. What do you think might be the challenges in the classroom poetry learning?
5. What is your attitude towards your home poetry and classroom poetry?
6. What do you understand by indigenous poetry?
7. How do you think the inclusion of indigenous poetry in the classroom might help you understand classroom poetry?
8. What role is played by your indigenous poetry experiences?
9. What is your opinion about the poetry texts prescribed for you in English FAL?
10. How is poetry taught in your English FAL classroom, what do you suggest might be done to help you understand and enjoy your classroom poetry?

Appendix 5: Reflective write up



3 August 2016

Reflective writing

My attitude towards writing

Before presentation

My feelings about poetry to day

During poetry in class with an invited guest

During presentation

After presentation

Group work

My attitude towards write

I never ~~thought~~ thought that the ~~thing~~ ~~is~~ a thing that I did not want to do could be so interesting

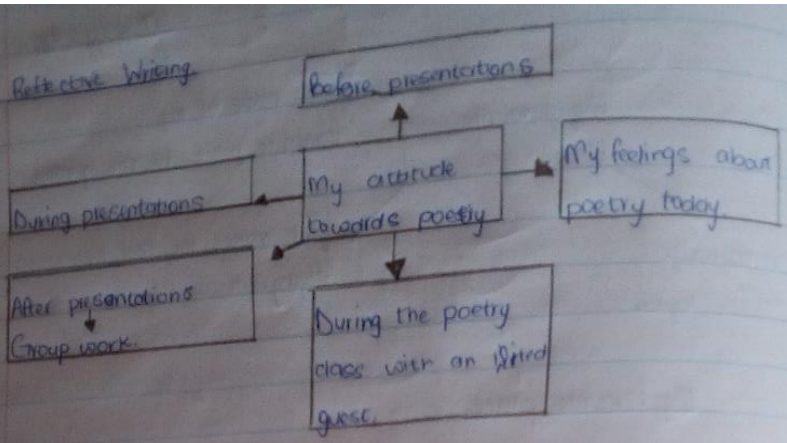
I always did not like ~~to~~ writing things like poetry because I thought that poetry is a thing for white people ~~and~~ ~~to~~ and I thought that I could not write well. ~~The thing that made me to like writ~~ I started liking to write poems because people who rap in music start by writing poems and that's where I started to ~~write~~ learn how to write ~~poo~~ poems and poetry.

Yesterday my English teacher invited a guest that helped me to understand that poetry is the best thing in this work and it helped ~~t~~ me to understant that ~~wri~~ writing is like life. When the guest read ~~m~~ his poems ~~I~~ I felt like I was in heaven and it was like ~~op~~ God was talking to me. The guest made me remember that last week when I presented my poetry in English with my group it made me that I can ~~better~~ better and in made me very confident to perform ~~alop~~ ~~individually~~ poems individully

Today ~~I~~ I love poetry and poems because my other dream is to be a song writer and I want to ~~thank~~ thank my English teacher for making me love poetry

186 words

Reflective Writing



My attitude towards poetry.

Before presentations I never liked or enjoyed poetry, because poetry it's one of the writing that is complicated to read, write and perform. I thought I will never enjoy the poetry class.

During presentations I was not confident enough because I do not understand poetry and I also thought that my group members did not make the presentation well. So I did the presentations and then after presentations I did some out of the box and noticed that poetry is not that complicated as like I thought. The saddest part is that I do not have enough confident to stand in front of class and present the poem like it should be presentated, I know how to do it but I need to work on my confident.

During the poetry class with an invited guest. The guest was so awesome, that his poems touched my heart and I was like poetry it not ever complicated. The guest we had is so confident and his poems had a lesson. And he even told us how to poem.

My feelings about poetry today, I'm good with now I'm going to

My attitude towards poetry

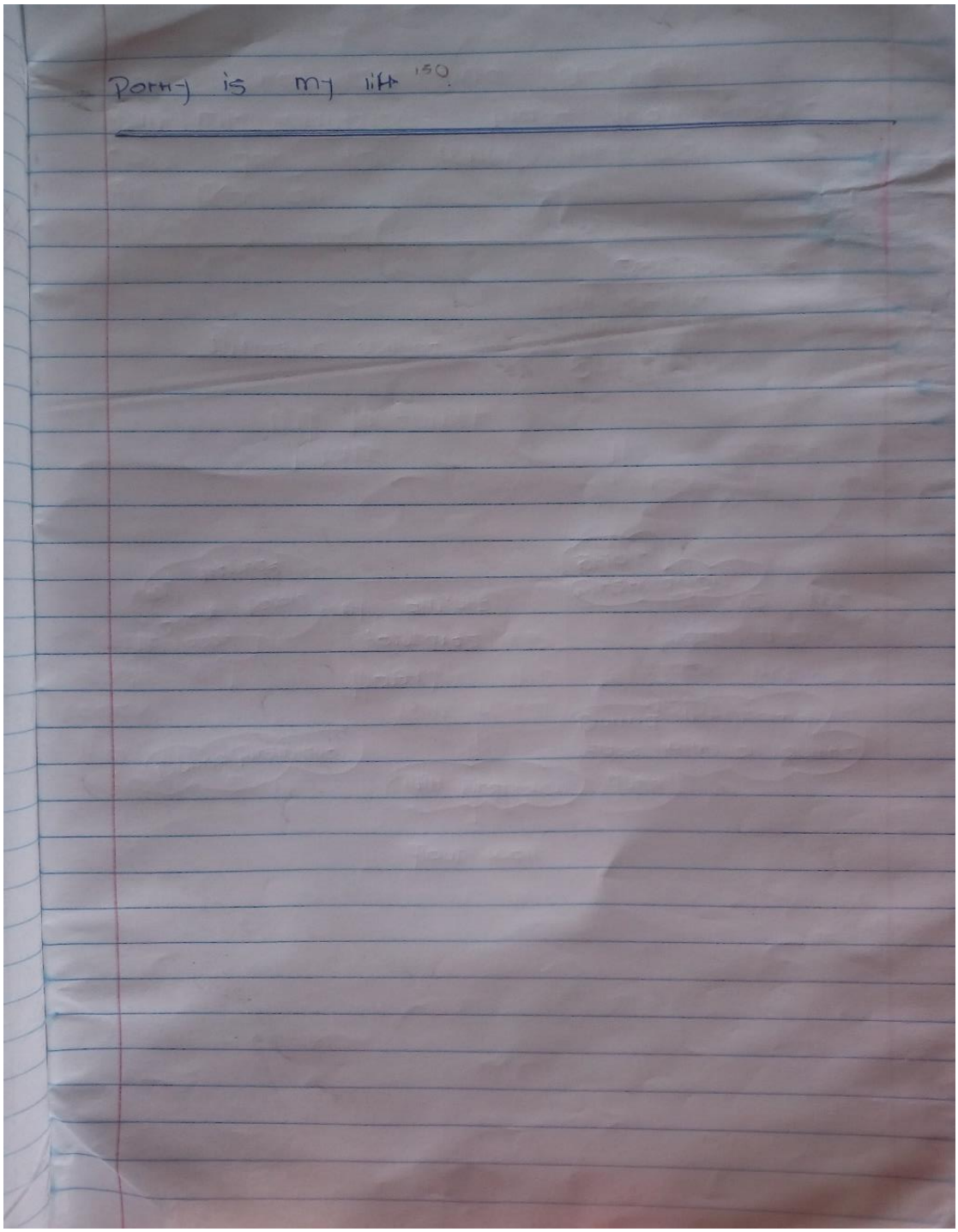
Poetry is

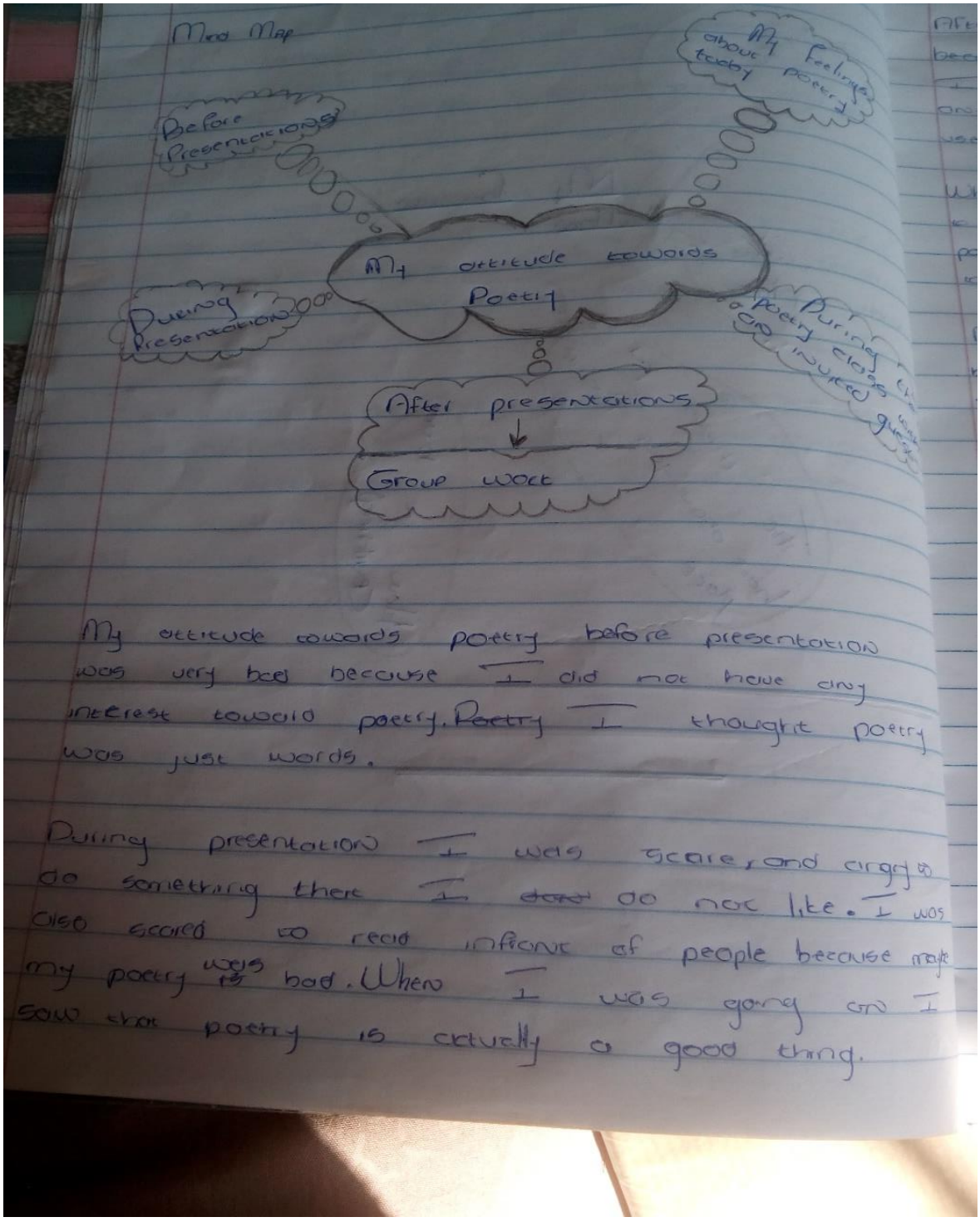
My attitude towards poetry at first time before Presentation on Poetry I did not like poetry. but when my teacher said that poetry is good and when time goes I might like it. After some time my teacher told about poetry I started to it like it.

I was very so scared when it was time for Presentation. I fill like I could go home and be Prepared because I was very unprepared. When it was our group's turn our very very scared. when I preform a poem in front of the class I make Sure that I don't make any Mistakes because I have to Start Now to do well and make sure I understand After Presentation I was happy because did not make some mistake and I also felt Confident and Good. It made me love poetry.

My teacher invited Some guest and I was so happy because I want to learn more about poetry. This guest Preformed wonderful poetry poems and he made me felt to love Poem more and more he made me felt to write my own poems and he made write what ever is in my mind my So that I can be good Poetry.

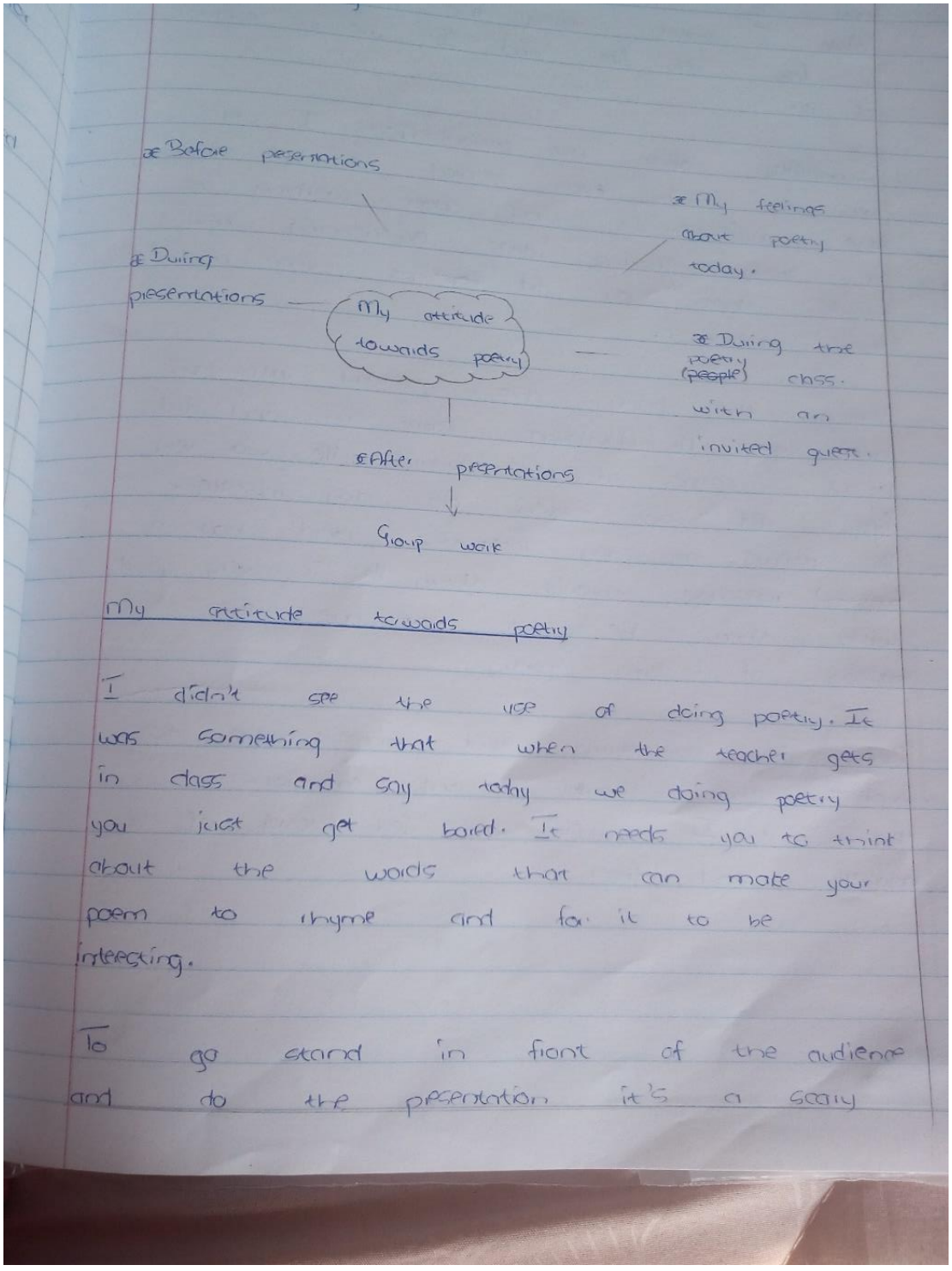
Today I feeling good about poetry I love Poet more and more I am not scared any more


Parth-) is my life 150.



My attitude towards poetry before presentation was very bad because I did not have any interest toward poetry. Poetry I thought poetry was just words.

During presentation I was scare, and angry to do something there I ~~don't~~ do not like. I was also scared to read infront of people because maybe my poetry was bad. When I was going on I saw that poetry is actually a good thing.

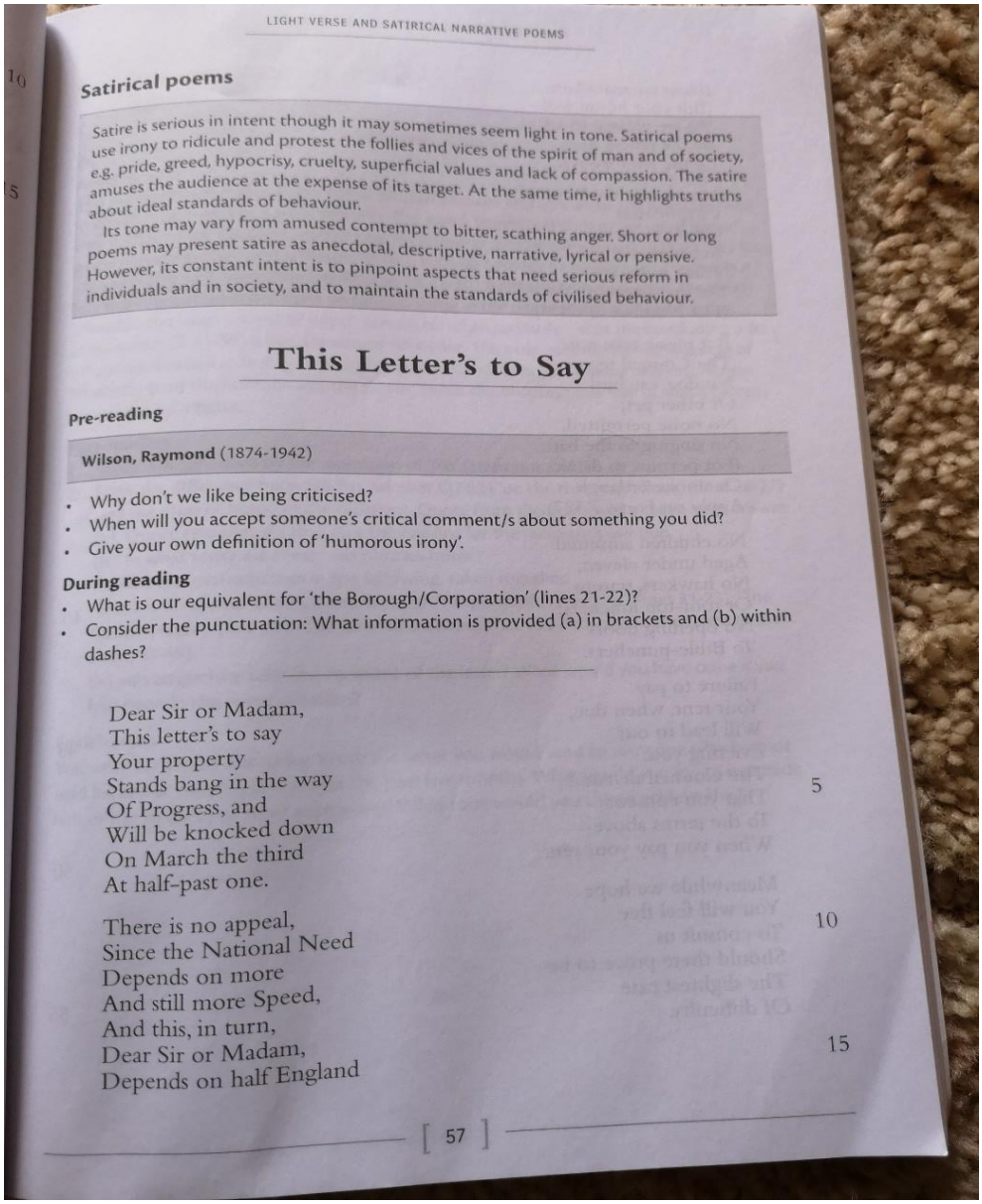


My attitude towards poetry

I didn't see the use of doing poetry. It was something that when the teacher gets in class and say today we doing poetry you just get bored. It needs you to think about the words that can make your poem to rhyme and for it to be interesting.

To go stand in front of the audience and do the presentation, it's a scary

Appendix 6: Grade 11 prescribed poetry texts



LIGHT VERSE AND SATIRICAL NARRATIVE POEMS

Satirical poems

Satire is serious in intent though it may sometimes seem light in tone. Satirical poems use irony to ridicule and protest the follies and vices of the spirit of man and of society, e.g. pride, greed, hypocrisy, cruelty, superficial values and lack of compassion. The satire amuses the audience at the expense of its target. At the same time, it highlights truths about ideal standards of behaviour.

Its tone may vary from amused contempt to bitter, scathing anger. Short or long poems may present satire as anecdotal, descriptive, narrative, lyrical or pensive. However, its constant intent is to pinpoint aspects that need serious reform in individuals and in society, and to maintain the standards of civilised behaviour.

This Letter's to Say

Pre-reading

Wilson, Raymond (1874-1942)

- Why don't we like being criticised?
- When will you accept someone's critical comment/s about something you did?
- Give your own definition of 'humorous irony'.

During reading

- What is our equivalent for 'the Borough/Corporation' (lines 21-22)?
- Consider the punctuation: What information is provided (a) in brackets and (b) within dashes?

Dear Sir or Madam,
This letter's to say
Your property
Stands bang in the way
Of Progress, and
Will be knocked down
On March the third
At half-past one.

There is no appeal,
Since the National Need
Depends on more
And still more Speed,
And this, in turn,
Dear Sir or Madam,
Depends on half England

[57]

Being tar-macadam.
(But your house will –
We are pleased to say –
Be the fastest lane
Of the Motorway).

Meanwhile the Borough
Corporation
Offer you new
Accommodation
Three miles away
On the thirteenth floor
(Flat Number Q 6824).

But please take note,
The Council regret:
No dog, cat, bird
Or other pet;
No noise permitted,
No singing in the bath
(For permits to drink
Or smoke or laugh
Apply on Form Z327).

No children admitted
Aged under eleven;
No hawkers, tramps
Or roof-top lunchers;
No opening doors
To Bible-punchers.

Failure to pay
Your rent, when due,
Will lead to our
Evicting you.
The Council demand
That you consent
To the terms above
When you pay your rent.

Meanwhile we hope
You will feel free
To consult us
Should there prove to be
The slightest case
Of difficulty.

With kind regards;
Yours faithfully …

Raymond Wilson

Analysis note

This satirical poem makes ironic fun of official attitudes and officialese, the language used in official letters, here to a local resident. The poem begins and ends in the usual formal way. It informs the recipient bluntly that his property is to be demolished to make way for a new motorway. The tone is matter-of-fact, with no apology or suggestion of regret, but the writer's remark about 'the fastest lane' (ll. 17-20) is absurdly inconsiderate. The writer lists so many absurd restrictions on tenants living in the replacement accommodation offered in the letter – most of which cannot be taken seriously – that the concluding offer of assistance (ll. 51-56) is equally absurd nonsense. The poet uses the formal language of official notification in listing several nonsensical conditions for tenancy. This technique reinforces both the humour and the theme about the unacceptable way in which citizens are treated by officials.

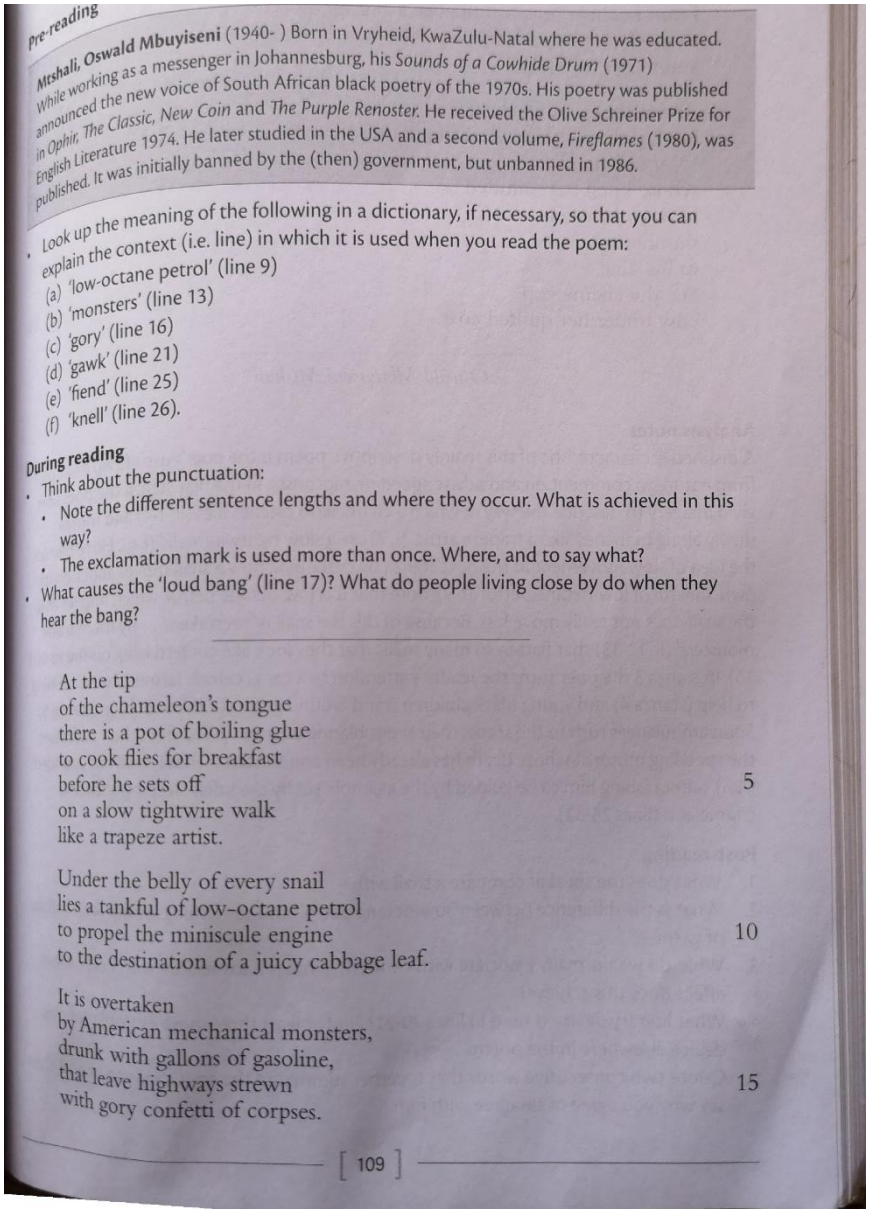
Post-reading

1. What is emphasised by the repetition of 'No' (stanzas 4 and 5)?
2. State the difference between flat number Q 6824 'on the thirteenth floor' (lines 26-27) and the present home of the recipient. Quote from the poem and explain your answer.
3. (a) Quote two phrases that give the reasons for the recipient's eviction.
   (b) In what sense are these two phrases ironic?
4. Explain the contradiction in the following, taken together:
   'There is no appeal' (line 9); 'the Borough/Corporation/Offer you' (lines 21-23); 'The Council regret' (line 29); 'The Council demand/That you consent/To the terms above' (lines 47-49).
5. Do you empathise with the recipient of the letter? What would you have done if you had been in the same situation?

Enrichment

You work for a local authority. Write the letter you would send to someone who has not paid his or her municipal taxes for the past five months. What would you say to persuade him or her to do so as soon as possible? What tone would you use to achieve this?

At a snail's pace please



Pre-reading

Mtshali, Oswald Mbuyiseni (1940-) Born in Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal where he was educated. While working as a messenger in Johannesburg, his *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* (1971) announced the new voice of South African black poetry of the 1970s. His poetry was published in *Ophir, The Classic, New Coin* and *The Purple Renoster.* He received the Olive Schreiner Prize for English Literature 1974. He later studied in the USA and a second volume, *Fireflames* (1980), was published. It was initially banned by the (then) government, but unbanned in 1986.

- Look up the meaning of the following in a dictionary, if necessary, so that you can explain the context (i.e. line) in which it is used when you read the poem:
  (a) 'low-octane petrol' (line 9)
  (b) 'monsters' (line 13)
  (c) 'gory' (line 16)
  (d) 'gawk' (line 21)
  (e) 'fiend' (line 25)
  (f) 'knell' (line 26).

During reading

- Think about the punctuation:
  - Note the different sentence lengths and where they occur. What is achieved in this way?
  - The exclamation mark is used more than once. Where, and to say what?
- What causes the 'loud bang' (line 17)? What do people living close by do when they hear the bang?

At the tip
of the chameleon's tongue
there is a pot of boiling glue
to cook flies for breakfast
before he sets off
on a slow tightwire walk
like a trapeze artist.

Under the belly of every snail
lies a tankful of low-octane petrol
to propel the miniscule engine
to the destination of a juicy cabbage leaf.

It is overtaken
by American mechanical monsters,
drunk with gallons of gasoline,
that leave highways strewn
with gory confetti of corpses.

[109]

The loud Bang!
brings brawny farmers
running from homesteads to render help.

From beehive huts tumble black bumpkins
to gawk at twisted wrecks coated with fresh blood
amid cries of 'Help!'

Ambulances sound shrill sirens,
tearing the silky shawl of the night's silence.
O! speed fiend
whose knell has sounded,
look at the snail
slumbering
in his shell.
See the chameleon
cosy under her quilted coat.

Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali

Analysis notes

A distinctive characteristic of this mainly descriptive poem is the poet's use of two exa... from nature to comment on and advise speeding motorists. In the first stanza the poet... vivid imagery to describe the way in which a chameleon catches flies (ll. 1-4) and moves... slowly along branches 'like a trapeze artist' (l. 7) on 'a slow tightwire walk' (l. 6). He rein... the idea of slow movement in the next stanza by describing how a snail moves about... own 'tankful of low-octane petrol' (l. 9); note that it is low-octane petrol, which implies... the snail does not really move fast. Because of this the snail is 'overtaken/ ... by mecha... monsters' (ll. 12-13) that flatten so many snails that they look like confetti lying on the... 16). In stanza 3 the poet turns the reader's attention to a car accident: farmers come r... to help (stanza 4) and young black children stand around gazing at the wreckage (stan... Soon ambulances rush to the scene, their sirens blaring (stanza 7). The poet then addr... the speeding motorist whose death has already been announced ('whose knell has so... l. 26), admonishing him to be guided by the example set by the safely sleeping snail an... chameleon (lines 25-32).

Post-reading

1. What does the speaker compare a snail with?
2. What is the difference between 'low-octane petrol' and something 'drunk with ... of gasoline'?
3. What do we normally associate with confetti? What is it associated with here? W...
4. What literary device is used in ... effect does this achieve?
5. ... device elsewhe...

Enrichment

Write a formal ... traffic light at a ... something abo...

Shantytown

Pre-reading

- Working together as a group, develop a description of a shantytown:
  - Each group member writes a sentence describing a shantytown. Then combine ideas in a descriptive paragraph, beginning with a key sentence. Every group gets a turn to read their paragraph to the rest of the class, to compare your de
  - What could you do, if you lived in a shantytown, to make your environment as pleasant as possible?

During reading

- What is the tone of the poem?
- What is repeated in the poem?
- Where is Jabavu situated?

High on the veld upon that plain
And far from streets and lights and cars
And bare of trees, and bare of grass,
Jabavu sleeps beneath the stars.

Jabavu sleeps.
The children cough.
Cold creeps up, the hard night cold,
The earth is tight within its grasp,
The highveld cold without soft rain,
Dry as the sand, rough as a rasp
The frost rimmed night invades the shacks.
Through dusty ground
Through rocky ground
Through freezing ground, the night cold creeps.
In cotton blankets, rags and sacks
Beneath the stars Jabavu sleeps.

One day Jabavu will awake
To greet a new and shining day;
The sound of coughing will become
The children's laughter as they play
In parks with flowers where dust now swirls
In strong-walled homes with warmth and light.
But for tonight Jabavu sleeps.
Jabavu sleeps. The stars are bright.

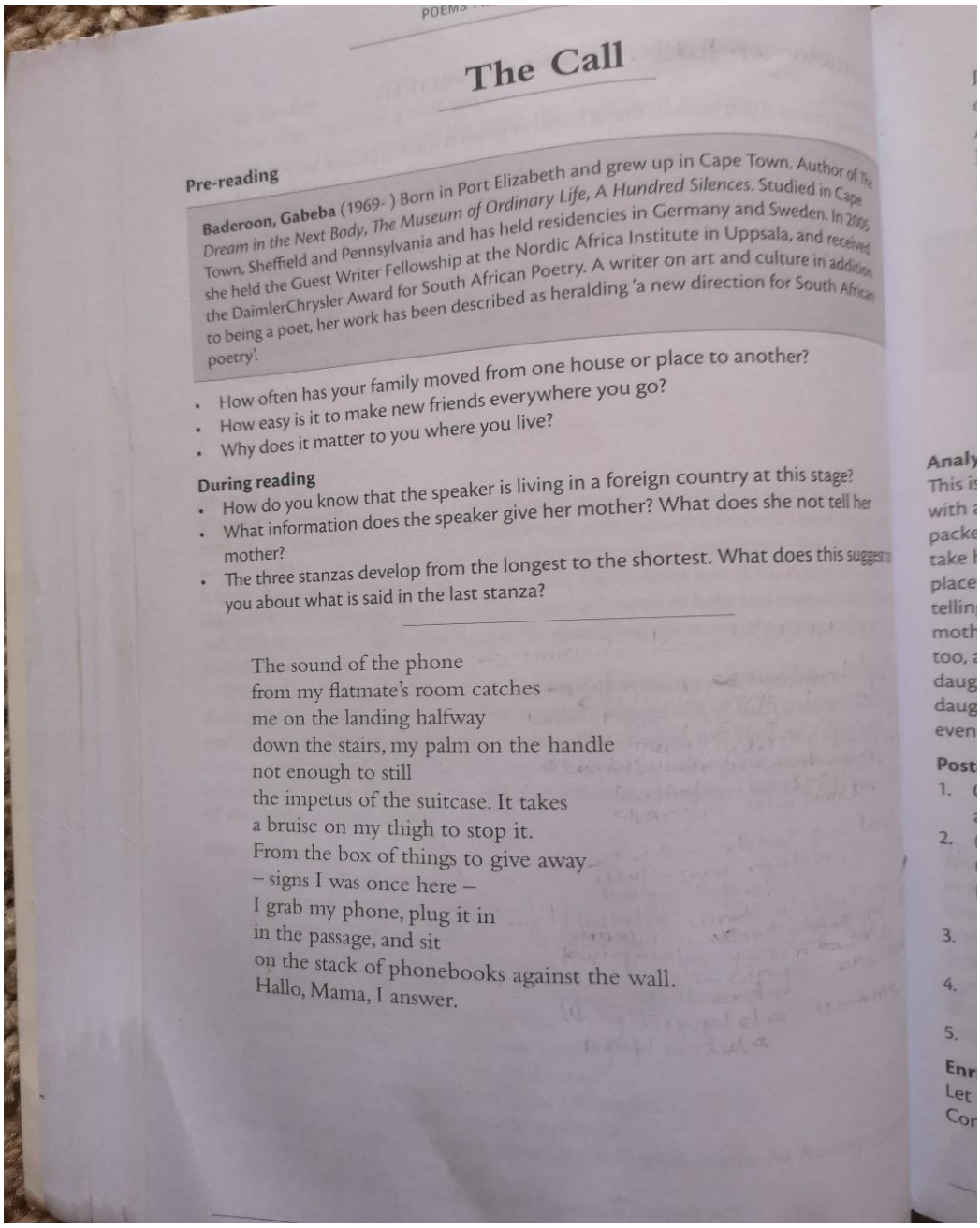
Anonymous

Analysis notes

In this satirical poem the poet describes what life in a shantytown is like, to make a scathing attack on the apartheid system. Jabavu is a shantytown situated far from the and exposed to the elements ('bare of trees, bare of grass', l. 3). The poet uses repetiti extensively in the next stanza to underline the harsh conditions of life there. For exa 'Through dusty ground/Through rocky ground/Through freezing ground' (ll. 12-14) reinforce this fact. The second stanza begins and ends with 'Jabavu sleeps'. Rhyming words such as 'sleeps' (l. 5) and 'creeps' (l. 7) as well as 'night' (l. 7) and 'tight' (l. 8) li meaning. The tone changes completely in the third stanza: it promises a better life time in the future, when Jabavu will waken to 'a new and shining day' (l. 17) and co will change to happy laughter (ll. 19-20) as its people play in parks. The three short sentences in the last two lines of the poem emphasis both the present situation a promise (bright stars) of the future.

Post-reading

1. Quote from the poem to support the following:
   (a) The shantytown is not situated near a town or city.
   (b) The shantytown does not have gardens or parks.
   (c) The people living there are poor.



The Call

Pre-reading

Baderoon, Gabeba (1969-) Born in Port Elizabeth and grew up in Cape Town. Author of *The Dream in the Next Body*, *The Museum of Ordinary Life*, *A Hundred Silences*. Studied in Cape Town, Sheffield and Pennsylvania and has held residencies in Germany and Sweden. In 2006 she held the Guest Writer Fellowship at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, and received the DaimlerChrysler Award for South African Poetry. A writer on art and culture in addition to being a poet, her work has been described as heralding 'a new direction for South African poetry'.

- How often has your family moved from one house or place to another?
- How easy is it to make new friends everywhere you go?
- Why does it matter to you where you live?

During reading

- How do you know that the speaker is living in a foreign country at this stage?
- What information does the speaker give her mother? What does she not tell her mother?
- The three stanzas develop from the longest to the shortest. What does this suggest to you about what is said in the last stanza?

The sound of the phone
from my flatmate's room catches
me on the landing halfway
down the stairs, my palm on the handle
not enough to still
the impetus of the suitcase. It takes
a bruise on my thigh to stop it.
From the box of things to give away
– signs I was once here –
I grab my phone, plug it in
in the passage, and sit
on the stack of phonebooks against the wall.
Hallo, Mama, I answer.

I am leaving for a new place,
each further from where I started.
Across the seven-hour time difference I fear
I will never see her again.
I want to say out loud I am losing
a centre to which I can return,
but do not.

She speaks too in a way flattened
by what is not said, coming only so close
to the parting between us by telling me
to leave safely.

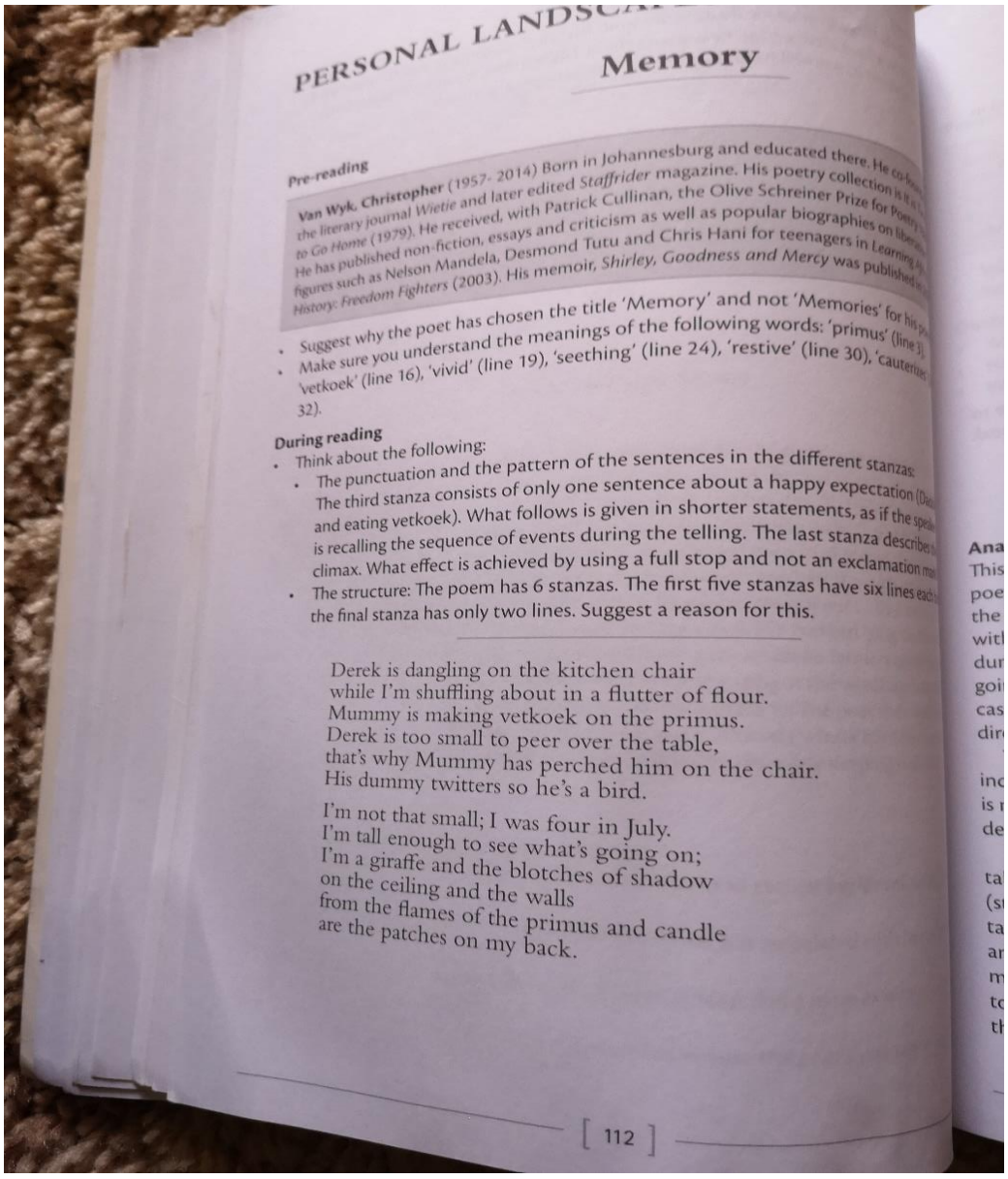
Gabeba Baderoon

Analysis notes

This is a narrative poem about a young woman who is about to leave the flat she has shared with a friend and move to another place some distance away. With all her things already packed, she receives a phone call (stanza 1). She unpacks her telephone and sits down to take her mother's call (stanza 2). She informs her mother that she is moving to another place even farther away. Realising that she might never see her mother again, she thinks of telling her that she might return at some stage in the future, but does not (stanza 3). Her mother's flat tone of voice indicates how disappointed she is by the news. However, she too, avoids talking about their possibly never seeing each other again, and merely tells her daughter to travel safely (stanza 4). The poem depicts the emotional distance between the daughter and her mother without going into the reasons for it. It very simply shows how even a short telephone call may convey an emotional, unspoken message.

Post-reading

1. Quote from the poem to prove that this is not the first time the speaker is moving to another place.
2. (a) Why does the speaker think she will never see her mother again?
   (b) Do you think [illegible] Explain your answer.



PERSONAL LANDSC

Memory

Pre-reading

Van Wyk, Christopher (1957- 2014) Born in Johannesburg and educated there. He co-fou... the literary journal *Wietie* and later edited *Staffrider* magazine. His poetry collection is ti... *to Go Home* (1979). He received, with Patrick Cullinan, the Olive Schreiner Prize for Poetry ... He has published non-fiction, essays and criticism as well as popular biographies on liberat... figures such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Chris Hani for teenagers in *Learning A... History: Freedom Fighters* (2003). His memoir, *Shirley, Goodness and Mercy* was published ...

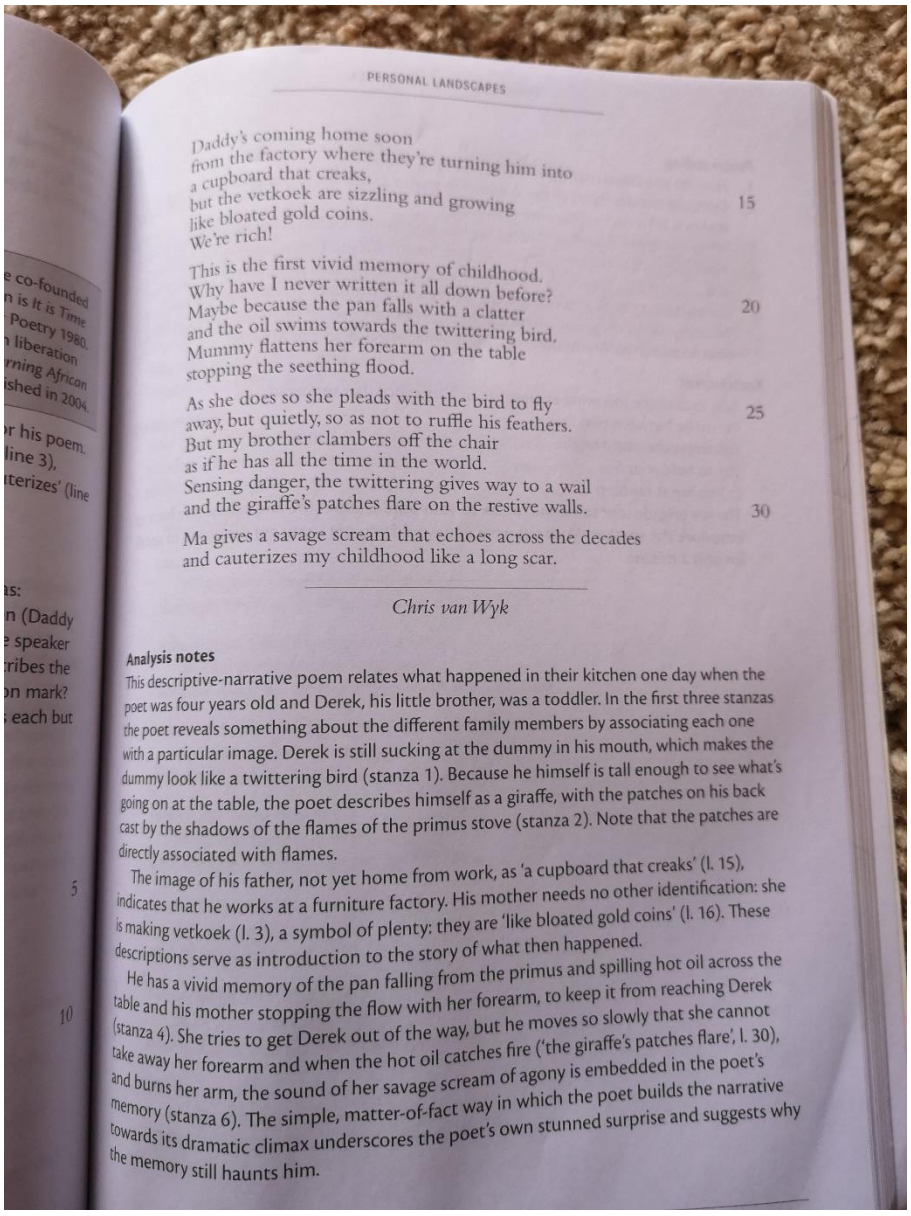
- Suggest why the poet has chosen the title 'Memory' and not 'Memories' for his po...
- Make sure you understand the meanings of the following words: 'primus' (line 3), 'vetkoek' (line 16), 'vivid' (line 19), 'seething' (line 24), 'restive' (line 30), 'cauterize... 32).

During reading

- Think about the following:
  - The punctuation and the pattern of the sentences in the different stanzas: The third stanza consists of only one sentence about a happy expectation (Dere... and eating vetkoek). What follows is given in shorter statements, as if the speak... is recalling the sequence of events during the telling. The last stanza describes t... climax. What effect is achieved by using a full stop and not an exclamation ma...
  - The structure: The poem has 6 stanzas. The first five stanzas have six lines each ... the final stanza has only two lines. Suggest a reason for this.

Derek is dangling on the kitchen chair
while I'm shuffling about in a flutter of flour.
Mummy is making vetkoek on the primus.
Derek is too small to peer over the table,
that's why Mummy has perched him on the chair.
His dummy twitters so he's a bird.

I'm not that small; I was four in July.
I'm tall enough to see what's going on;
I'm a giraffe and the blotches of shadow
on the ceiling and the walls
from the flames of the primus and candle
are the patches on my back.



Daddy's coming home soon
from the factory where they're turning him into
a cupboard that creaks,
but the vetkoek are sizzling and growing
like bloated gold coins.
We're rich!

This is the first vivid memory of childhood.
Why have I never written it all down before?
Maybe because the pan falls with a clatter
and the oil swims towards the twittering bird.
Mummy flattens her forearm on the table
stopping the seething flood.

As she does so she pleads with the bird to fly
away, but quietly, so as not to ruffle his feathers.
But my brother clambers off the chair
as if he has all the time in the world.
Sensing danger, the twittering gives way to a wail
and the giraffe's patches flare on the restive walls.

Ma gives a savage scream that echoes across the decades
and cauterizes my childhood like a long scar.

Chris van Wyk

Analysis notes

This descriptive-narrative poem relates what happened in their kitchen one day when the poet was four years old and Derek, his little brother, was a toddler. In the first three stanzas the poet reveals something about the different family members by associating each one with a particular image. Derek is still sucking at the dummy in his mouth, which makes the dummy look like a twittering bird (stanza 1). Because he himself is tall enough to see what's going on at the table, the poet describes himself as a giraffe, with the patches on his back cast by the shadows of the flames of the primus stove (stanza 2). Note that the patches are directly associated with flames.

The image of his father, not yet home from work, as 'a cupboard that creaks' (l. 15), indicates that he works at a furniture factory. His mother needs no other identification: she is making vetkoek (l. 3), a symbol of plenty: they are 'like bloated gold coins' (l. 16). These descriptions serve as introduction to the story of what then happened.

He has a vivid memory of the pan falling from the primus and spilling hot oil across the table and his mother stopping the flow with her forearm, to keep it from reaching Derek (stanza 4). She tries to get Derek out of the way, but he moves so slowly that she cannot take away her forearm and when the hot oil catches fire ('the giraffe's patches flare', l. 30), and burns her arm, the sound of her savage scream of agony is embedded in the poet's memory (stanza 6). The simple, matter-of-fact way in which the poet builds the narrative towards its dramatic climax underscores the poet's own stunned surprise and suggests why the memory still haunts him.

The Chimney Sweeper

Pre-reading

Blake, William (1757-1827) Born in London and educated at home by his mother. At 14 he was apprenticed to an engraver. At 21 he was accepted into the Royal Academy for the Arts. *Poetical Sketches* (1783) was followed by *Songs of Innocence* (1789) to which he added *Songs of Experience* (1794) to contrast the world of childhood innocence with the adult experience of corruption. He wrote and engraved a major prose work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (engraved, 1790-3). He wrote two mythological works, *Milton* and *Jerusalem: the Emanation of the Giant Albion* (written and etched 1804 to 1820).

- What is the difference between a chore and a job?
- Who does most of the chores at your home?
- What kinds of chores do you do at home? How often do you do them?
- Do the houses where you live have chimneys?
- Do you think it would be easy to clean a chimney from the inside?

During reading

- Note how punctuation is used to create a lively narrative.
- Follow the way in which the use of pronouns moves the action from the speaker to little Tom to 'you' to 'they'.

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry 'weep! weep! weep! weep!'
So your chimneys I sweep, & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd: so I said
'Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
'You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

William Blake

Analysis notes

This anecdotal poem describes, in the words of the speaker, a chimney-sweeper's life. He mentions that his father sold him as a very young boy after his mother died, and briefly describes what life is like now: 'So your chimneys I sweep, & in soot I sleep' (l. 4). The rest of the poem deals with little Tom Dacre who represents all the other young boys. It is as if the speaker tries to distance himself from his own suffering by describing little Tom's plight and fear. The poet has thus introduced two very young chimney-sweepers; it seems that the speaker is slightly older than little Tom and is able to console his young work-mate (stanza 2). The rest of the poem relates little Tom's dream, which in itself is anecdotal (stanzas 3-5) – though it gives the two boys the courage to face the new day's drudgery (last stanza). Note the symbolic imagery of 'coffins of black' (l. 12) and 'a river' and 'the Sun' (l. 16). There is a naiveté in the simple language: it is a child speaking. Yet the last line (24) is ambiguous: the implied threat of some harm suggests their fear of falling down a chimney or the statement could be the speaker repeating a severe warning from their owner/employer. At this point the poem is no longer just an account of an incident (Tom's dream), but has a deeper meaning as a comment on social conditions and the mores of a society that allows the exploitation of children.

Post-reading

1. Explain why the speaker became a chimney sweeper.
2. Why is being clean and 'in the Sun' (line 16) associated with 'leaping' and 'laughing' (line 15)?

Philosophical poems come in varied shapes and sizes. They may be short and contain a pithy statement or contrast to make a point about common values. They may use metaphor extensively to illustrate what gives meaning to life. They may use shorter or longer narrative to express views about society and social values. Whatever they describe, it has a direct bearing on the meditation and the speaker's conclusion about life, the world and values.

I Sit and Look Out

Pre-reading

Whitman, Walt (1819-1892) Born in West Hills on Long Island, New York, in the USA. His parents moved to Brooklyn where he was educated before leaving school in 1823 to become a printer's apprentice and later a teacher. He established the newspaper *The Long Islander.* He was also the editor for the *New York Aurora* and the *Brooklyn Eagle* but was forced to resign because of his radical editorials. In 1855 he borrowed a press from friends and printed the first edition of his *Leaves of Grass* with its distinctive everyday speech and American idiom. The second and third editions followed in 1856 and 1860 respectively. The American Civil War (1861-1865) affected him greatly and is reflected in *Drum-Taps* (1865). His *Sequel* (1865-6) includes an elegy to Abraham Lincoln. His final volume of poems and prose, *Good-Bye, My Fancy,* was published in 1891.

- What do you think this poem will be about?

During reading

- While reading, check to what extent your ideas are confirmed.

I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame;
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men, at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done;
I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate;
I see the wife misused by her husband – I see the treacherous seducer of young women;
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love, attempted to be hid – I see these sights on the earth;
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny – I see martyrs and prisoners;
I observe a famine at sea – I observe the sailors casting lots who shall be kill'd to preserve the lives of the rest;

I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon labor
the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;
All these – All the meanness and agony without end, I sitting, look out upo
See, hear, and am silent.

Walt Whitman

Analysis notes

In this philosophical poem the speaker makes a strong point about the many actions and attitudes that cause sorrow and shame in the world. His long list builds up towards a climax. First of all, he lists the wrongs committed by individuals at an interpersonal level (young men with guilt about their past deeds, l. 2; children misusing their mother, l. 3; an the abuse of wives and young women, l. 4). He then mentions feelings that cause hurt (in 5) and adds more general causes of suffering ('battle, pestilence, tyranny', l. 6) and which turn lead to death (martyrdom) and imprisonment. Next he mentions the dehumanising effect famine at sea has on sailors. His statement about the unacceptable behaviour of arrogant people towards workers, the poor and black people is the climax and points to society's lack of moral values. All the wrongs listed have a direct bearing on the poet's life view and values: as long as people are intolerant, abusive and violent, the suffering will continue. He underlines this point by acknowledging in the last line, that he is guilty of seeing and hearing 'the meanness and agony' (l. 9) of these things, but does not speak out about them – he sits and looks out, but does not speak out.

Post-reading

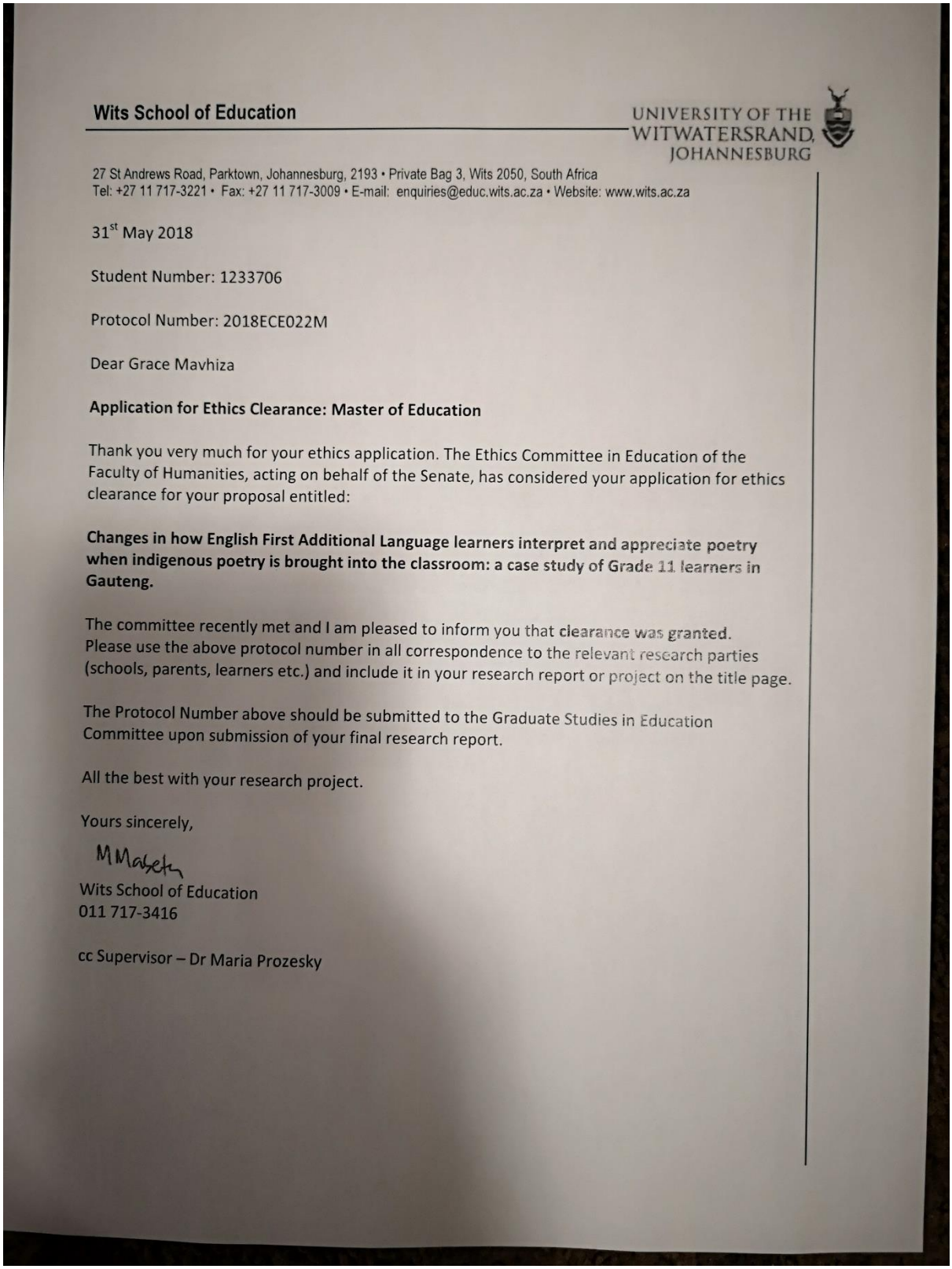
1. The first line introduces the theme. Quote the three key words that identify the them
2. The poem can be divided into four sections. Identify the four sections.
3. Identify which of the wrongs are done on a physical level and which on an emotiona level.
4. (a) Make a list of the synonymous words or phrases that are repeated in the poem
   (b) Explain how the use of repetition influences meaning.
5. 'The poem describes and comments on a world that is the complete opposite of *Ubuntu*.'

   Discuss, explaining your interpretation of this statement and commenting on its validity. Use examples to illustrate the points you make during the discussion.

Enrichment

1. Write a poem about something good you should have done, but did not do.
   OR
2. Role-play one of the following scenes:
   (a) A young man or woman trying to console a friend who has been abused.
   (b) A desperate old woman telling a welfare worker how her children have neglected her.

Appendix 7: Ethical considerations



Wits School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3221 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

31st May 2018

Student Number: 1233706

Protocol Number: 2018ECE022M

Dear Grace Mavhiza

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Changes in how English First Additional Language learners interpret and appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a case study of Grade 11 learners in Gauteng.

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted. Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

M Mabeta

Wits School of Education
011 717-3416

cc Supervisor – Dr Maria Prozesky

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**07 May 2018**
Validity of Research Approval:	**05 February 2018 – 28 September 2018** **2018/52**
Name of Researcher:	**Mavhiza G.**
Address of Researcher:	**1268 Hoogspring Avenue**
	Weltervreden Park
	1709
Telephone Number:	**083 276 5365**
Email address:	**1233706@students.wits.ac.za** **gmavhiza@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**Changes in how English First Additional Language learners interpret and appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a case study of Grade 11 in Gauteng.**
Type of qualification	
Number and type of schools:	**One Secondary School**
District/s/HO	**Ekurhuleni South**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

08/05/2018

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

pp. .....

Ms Faith Tshabalala
CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 08/05/2018

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Appendix 8: Information and consent letters



24 January 2018

Dear Principal

My name is Grace Mavhiza. I am a Masters Student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **Changes in how English Fal learners appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a case study of Grade 11 learners in Gauteng.**

My research involves questionnaire for a Grade 11 class in your school and interviewing 6 learners from the same class. Filling in of questionnaires will be done after school in the learners' classroom. I am inviting your school to participate in this research. The reason why I have chosen your school is because I am a teacher in your school and I am passionate about the success of the learners that I teach. I believe that this study may help some of the learners who are struggling with poetry.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.
All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

MAVHIZA GRACE
1268 Hoogspring Avenue, weltevreden Park
gmavhiza@gmail.com
0832765365

INFORMATION SHEETS FOR LEARNERS



24 January 2018

Dear Learner

My name is Grace Mavhiza and I am a student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **Changes in how English Fal learners' appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a case study of Grade 11 learners in Gauteng.**

My investigation involves questioners, Interviews and an intervention on poetry learning. Questionnaires will be filled in at home and interview will be done after school within the school premises.

Would you mind taking part in this study as a participant? I request your help with the interview and questionnaire. Remember, this is not a test, it is not for marks and it is voluntary, which means that you don't have to do it. Also, if you decide halfway through that you prefer to stop, this is completely your choice and will not affect you negatively in any way.

I will not be using your own name but I will make one up so no one can identify you. All information about you will be kept confidential in all my writing about the study. Also, all collected information will be stored safely and destroyed between 3-5 years after I have completed my project.

Your parents have also been given an information sheet and consent form, but at the end of the day it is your decision to join us in the study.

I look forward to working with you!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

GRACE MAVHIZA
1268 Hoogspring Avenue, Weltervreden Park
gmavhiza@gmail.com
0832765365

Learner Consent Form

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study called: **Changes in how English Fal learners' appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a case study of Grade 11 learners in Gauteng.**

My name is: GRACE MAVHIZA

Permission to review/collect documents/artifacts	**Circle one**
I agree that (SPECIFY DOCUMENT) can be used for this study only.	YES/NO
Permission to observe you in class	
I agree to be observed in class.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO
Permission for questionnaire/test	
I agree to fill in a question and answer sheet or write a test for this study.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

24 January 2018

Dear Parent

My name is GRACE MAVHIZA and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **Changes in how English Fal learners' appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a case study of Grade 11 learners in Gauteng.**

My research involves questioners, Interviews and an intervention on poetry learning. Questionnaires will be filled in at home and interview will be done after school within the school premises.

The reason why I have chosen your child's class is because I am their English teacher and I have worked with the learners for some time now. Would you mind if your child participates in the filling in of the questionnaire, the interview and audiotaping that I will be doing while collecting data for my study.

Your child will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. S/he will be reassured that s/he can withdraw her/his permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and your child will not be paid for this study.

Your child's name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. His/her individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely

MAVHIZA GRACE
1268 Hoogspring Avenue, Weltevreden Park
gmavhiza@gmail.com
0832765365



Parent's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child to participate in the research project called: **Changes in how English Fal learners' appreciate poetry when indigenous poetry is brought into the classroom: a case study of Grade 11 learners in Gauteng.**

I, _____ the parent of _____

Permission to review/collect documents/artifacts	**Circle one**
I agree that my child's Literature book can be used for this study only.	YES/NO

Permission to observe my child in class

I agree that my child may be observed in class.	YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree that my child may be audiotaped during interview or observations.	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I agree that my child may be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that he/she can stop the interview at any time and doesn't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Permission for questionnaire/test

I agree t my child may be fill in a question and answer sheet or write a test for this study.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my child's name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- he/she does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- he/she can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____