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Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom

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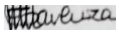
A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for a PhD in the School of Education.

Supervisor: Dr Naomi Nkealah

October 2023

Declaration

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



Grace Mavhiza 15 October 2023

Dedication

This research is in memory of my late mother Chipo Mudzingwa nee Magadzire. She believed in me and her words of encouragement have carried me through difficult times even when she was long gone to be with the Lord. I also dedicate this research to my father Hosiah Mudzingwa who encouraged me to pursue my dreams with hard work, dedication and persistence. Even when I felt overwhelmed and powerless, my father saw the best in me. He taught me to believe in myself and to never give up.

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Special thanks to my beloved husband Farai and our lovely daughter Eliana Matipaishe for encouraging me and believing in me. Thank you for understanding even when I could not be with you. I am grateful and I owe a lot of where I am to you.

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The translations of the Indigenous language poems into English could not have been this successful without the goodwill of a former colleague, Erik Themba Mothloung. I am appreciative of all the support.

Last, but not least, I say thank you to all the participants for their full cooperation that made them a big part of this study.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CEA	Centre for Evaluation and Assessment
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education Training
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HL	Home Language
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

Abstract

The aim of this study was to analyse the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English First Additional Language (FAL) poetry classroom. Despite the well-documented benefits of poetry (Femer, 2003; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Antika, 2017), this study identified the problem that poetry is not realising its potential as a subject in the schools in relation to the identity development of adolescents. The school is a place where adolescents spend much of their time and there are many factors which shape adolescents' identities within the school context. This qualitative study focused on pedagogy and canon among these many factors. The study was designed as a dual case study and set up within the interpretivism paradigm which allowed different interpretations of the data about the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' development. The complexity of the study meant a dual focused theoretical framework. Thus, the study used a combination of the theories of identity development by Erik Erikson (1963; 1968) and critical pedagogy by Paulo Freire (1970). Purposive sampling was used to identify the cases for this study. The two schools selected happen to be within Ekurhuleni District. In one school the teacher applied traditional pedagogy while in the other school the teacher employed the modern pedagogy which included multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies. Qualitative data was collected using three tools, namely, participant observation, questionnaire, and reflective journals. Descriptive and thematic analyses of data were conducted, and the results show that there are limitations and affordances of both the traditional and modern pedagogies. In relation to the impact of the poetry pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom, key findings reveal that traditional pedagogy takes away adolescents' opportunities to explore their personal identities. In addition, the modern pedagogy is preferable among the Grade 11 English FAL poetry adolescents who participated in this study. The study concluded that the current Grade 11 English FAL poetry canon is alienated from the lives of adolescents who participated in this research. Learners yearn for new poetry which speaks to their daily experiences.

Keywords: Adolescents, Identity, Pedagogy, Canon, Multimodality, Multiliteracies.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

This study aimed to analyse the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English First Additional Language (FAL) poetry classroom. I chose to do research in the Grade 11 classes because this is the second year of Further Education Training band (FET) where learners are expected to be more focused as they prepare to go to matric. Having taught English FAL poetry in Grade 11 for 10 years, I have realised that learners become interested in their studies at this stage in life. In Grade 10, most learners are excited about getting into a new phase, which is the FET phase, and that excitement is often a distraction from their studies. Similarly, in Grade 12 most learners become anxious because of the final high school examinations. Most of the activities in Grade 12 are examination oriented as teachers do everything, including drilling learners towards memorisation, to ensure that learners get satisfactory results, because this also has an impact on the status of the school. This made Grade 11 the most appropriate grade to focus on for this study. Grade 11 teachers are often keen to equip learners with knowledge and skills which prepare them for Grade 12 where they will not have much time to enjoy poetry since they have to study hard to get good grades that will give them university entry or access to employment. Learners usually use their Grade 11 report cards to apply for university entry, making this grade a very crucial stage for adolescents to make decisions about their future careers. It was therefore fitting to conduct this research on the effects of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development with Grade 11 English FAL learners.

Different definitions of identity development have been given over time. Wu (2011) argues that identity is the way we view ourselves and are viewed by others and it is inextricably tied to the social contexts out of which it arises. Identity is constructed by the social practices that individuals engage in throughout their daily lives. According

to Tamimi Sa'd (2017), identity is defined at two levels which are personal and social. In his research on learners' identity reconstruction through foreign language learning, Tamimi Sa'd (2017, p. 16) found out that identity is a "multi-layered, many-sided notion". Johnstone (2008) asserts that most research on identity has been drawn towards ethnicity, gender, nationality, and race as the most important aspects of social identity. She notes however that identity can be defined in terms of one's performance which highlights one's responsibility towards their actions (Johnstone, 2008). Therefore, the personal is found to be complemented by the social. This mutual interconnection is a major part of defining adolescents' identity. For the purpose of this research and drawing from the above definitions, I define identity as the ability to form an authentic individual personality which enables a person to move with purpose and direction in life.

The German psychologist Erik Erikson proposed 8 stages of human psychosocial development: infancy, toddler, pre-school age, school age, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, and older adulthood (Erikson, 1963). Adolescence, which is the fifth stage, is described by Erikson as the stage of identity versus identity confusion (Erikson, 1963). Erikson (1963) understood the influence of social contexts on an individual's personality development. In essence, issues of identity development are continuously changing in conformity with societal changes. For example, traditional African societies used to be prescriptive on what was expected from an adolescent and schools were instrumental in grooming adolescents to meet this expectation, but in the 21st century there are liberal forms of education which are tolerant of diversity among learners, including their diversity in sexual, gender and linguistic identities.

The school is a place where adolescents spend much of their time. There are therefore many factors which shape their identities within the school context. These include extra-mural activities, peer relationships, and school governance. There are even other socio-economic and political issues which emanate from home and spill over into the school, thereby shaping adolescents' identities. Literature on the identity development of adolescents is abundant (see, for example, Cappello, 2006; Alvermann, 2011; Hooser, 2020), but surprisingly little focus has been placed on

adolescents' identity development in relation to pedagogy and canon, particularly in South Africa. In this study, I examined traditional pedagogy and the Grade 11 English FAL poetry canon as well as the new pedagogic ways of teaching which include multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies and how these ways of teaching affect adolescents' identity development in a diverse South African Grade 11 English FAL classroom. In South Africa, the distinction between English Home Language (HL) and English FAL came after protests against the oppressive apartheid policy which reinforced the dominance of Afrikaans over both English and Indigenous languages (Janks & Makalela, 2013). The most notable protest is the Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976 which can be viewed as the catalyst to the pursuit of a multilingual education in post-apartheid South Africa. The post-apartheid language policy allows learners to choose a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) which can even be an Indigenous language. However, this means that children who are not taught in English in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) need to then master the language to reach a competence level sufficient for academic success when they get to the Intermediate Phase (Hugo, 2016). Because English FAL learners need to master the language for academic purposes, reading proficiency becomes an integral part of their education. This is where poems play an important role as authentic texts that help in the development of a target language. Thus, looking at canon is important in this study because adolescents rapidly grow interest in reading, and good literature has the potential of making them grow into eminent scholars who are voracious readers. Similarly, the way adolescents are taught can have an impact on their identity development. It is either adolescents can turn out to be critical and active thinkers who are in charge of their own learning or they can be passive, depending on the pedagogy employed in the classroom, as noted by Freire (1970) and Dewey (2011).

Despite the fact that poems reflect human thinking and experiences, poetry is the genre of literature that is received with the least enthusiasm by both teachers and learners. Flemming (1992), Benton (1999), and Dymoke and Hughs (2009) agree that poetry in schools is both neglected and unpopular despite the benefits that poetry has. Poetry is especially beneficial for adolescent learners. As much as it is difficult to define poetry, Ollila and Jantas (2006, p. 3) define poetry as "any kind of verbal or written language that is structured rhythmically and is meant to tell a story, or express any

kind of emotion, idea or state of being." Since poetry is defined as an expression of emotions, ideas, and states of being in a particular kind of language, it follows that learning poetry is fundamental to the identity formation process of Grade 11 learners since it can influence them to express their emotions, ideas, and personalities in verbal and written forms. This aspect of expressing emotions, ideas, and states of being is especially important to note because Grade 11 learners are adolescents and adolescents are people who at this stage of life are faced with complexities of emotions as they try to identify who they are, who they can become and what their capabilities are.

During the adolescent years (16-20 years), some adolescents may strengthen qualities of already formed identities carried over from earlier experiences. However, some suffer identity confusion. Erickson (1968) notes that during adolescence, people become extremely self-conscious about themselves, and the way others see them, and this can result in self-discovery and experimentations. While some adolescents develop their identity in a healthy and age-appropriate way, others participate in dangerous behaviours that can have a negative impact on their lives. Therefore, it is at this critical point that poetry can play a crucial role in the shaping of adolescents' identities for the best. As argued by Norton (2019), poetry helps people to interpret the world the way they experience it. It is important to note that adolescence is a stage when people deal with life's complexities the way they think best. This may be a challenge, particularly for adolescents in the townships of South Africa. Adolescents in the townships sometimes lack role models and some come from broken families, hence they harbour bitterness which makes the majority to have disciplinary issues in the classroom. However, because of the communicative nature of poetry, one can argue that if the poetry speaks to their lives and if it is taught in ways that reach their hearts, adolescents can understand their emotions and express them in ways that will promote their emotional and intellectual maturity. In other words, poetry can give them the ability to talk about their hidden emotions, and that can provide them with much needed emotional relief.

Poetry can help an individual to relieve stress by expressing their emotions in a safe way. This can be done through writing one's own poetry or sharing the emotions of a writer or speaker of a poem through commenting on the poem. Vala et al. (2012) assert that learners sometimes forget that poetry is the expression of the inexpressible, which means that poetry is a means by which one can express feelings that one would not normally express in speech. Effectively, poetry becomes a powerful expression of identity by adolescents. However, according to Vasudenvan and Campano (2009), adolescents are at risk of hiding their emotions when in schools because often the sense of self that they experience in their out-of-school lives is constricted in school. When these adolescents look at the nature of the poetry that they are expected to study in school, they get bored, lost, and see no value in learning poetry with which they cannot identify (Vasudenvan & Campano, 2009). This suggests that the canon and the pedagogy employed in the poetry classroom suppress their emotional expressions.

Adolescents in the 21st century are exposed to a wide range of technological instruments such as google communities, social networks, cloud based processors and e-readers. Because of these inventions, the 21st century adolescents' experiences of expressing emotions out of school are different from their experiences of doing so in the Grade 11 poetry classroom. Adolescents are living with several technological innovations which previous generations did not experience (Chasar, 2020). In addition, Andrews, Prozesky and Fouche (2020) note that adolescents bring to the English classroom their histories, identities, and ethnic backgrounds, but they find the kinds of classroom practices that limit literacy and confine learning to sets of pre-defined myopic educational objectives. The 21st century adolescents are exposed to electronic devices which help them to express their identities and their lived experiences. They use smartphones daily and these devices undoubtedly influence the adolescents' identity construction during this critical development stage. However, these out-of-school literacies are not tapped into in the schooling system and in the English FAL poetry classroom specifically. In other words, the literacies that adolescents bring to the classroom are not incorporated in the schooling system (Andrews et al, 2020). For example, in the poetry classroom learners are introduced to a prescriptive canon which limits their own thinking. As a result of failing to comprehend this poetry which the

adolescents feel alienated to, they develop negative attitudes towards the genre, and they end up performing badly in poetry assessments. However, if adolescents are given the platform to decide what they want to learn and how they should learn it during the poetry lessons, they can engage and express a range of emotions unapologetically. Therefore, to address this crisis, English FAL teachers should afford learners spaces for individualised interpretations of the texts and to do so in ways that provide insights into adolescents' own lives. To accommodate and enhance the development of adolescents' identity, a new way of teaching and learning should be advocated for, and in this study, I focused on multiliteracies, multimodality and new literacies as alternatives to the traditional pedagogy and prescriptive canon. This study therefore sought to answer the question: what is the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

1.2 Problem statement

Based on the background presented above, this study has found the problem that poetry is not realising its potential as a subject in the schools in relation to the identity formation of adolescents. There are different art forms such as drama and music that develop learners' identities, but this study focused on poetry because poetry has the potential to help adolescents to understand and appreciate the world that they live in as they reflect on poetry's deep meanings and relevance to contemporary life. Furthermore, the abstract nature of poetry can support learners' expression of painful emotions that they might feel uncomfortable to express directly. However, despite all the benefits of poetry as outlined by Kasten and Yildirim (2015) and Antika (2017), poetry is not seriously considered in some schools. There are several reasons why this problem exists. The first is curriculum related. Some guidelines on teaching poetry are outlined by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Grades 10-12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011). One of the approaches stated in the CAPS document is for teachers to restrain their own interpretations of literary texts and allow learners to produce knowledge. However, this same document emphasises the need for mastery of figures of speech, structure of poems, motifs, choice of words, symbolism and imagery which all gesture towards a technical way of analysing poetry. Even though the CAPS

document encourages creativity in the poetry classroom, the approaches to teaching poetry outlined by the DBE in the CAPS document are not comprehensive enough to help teachers develop effective methods of teaching poetry. In some cases, they are rather contradictory, as shown in the example above. This leaves the teacher in a state of confusion, and eventually the teacher resorts to what they feel is appropriate for their class. It might be because of these inconsistencies in the CAPS document that teachers in different contexts teach the same poems differently.

The other challenge with the curriculum is that literature is allocated only four periods per week in government schools and in Grade 11 learners study two genres. This means that there are two periods per week allocated for the poetry class and two periods of 30 minutes each boils down to only one hour per week. This time is too limited, considering that the English teacher is also expected to follow the strenuous Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) which is assesment driven. Some teachers opt for the traditional pedagogy because of time constraints. The traditional pedagogy is teacher-centred, less time consuming for teachers, and encourages line-by-line analysis of poems in preparation for assessments (tests and examinations). However, it does not help adolescents to develop their identities in terms of tapping into their lived experiences to express their emotions and what they feel about the poems in relation to their cultures, religions and social backgrounds. The other important aspects of identity development among adolescents include age, gender, sexuality, race, and class. Because the traditional pedagogy is more teacher-centred than learner-centred, it does not create many opportunities for learners to explore and express these other aspects of their identities. These aspects therefore make the pedagogy of the poetry teacher an issue of concern. The traditional pedagogy that some teachers are still using in the English poetry classroom, according to Chiariello (2017), pushes some adolescents to the periphery as they feel alienated, and it makes it harder for such learners to gain power and control over their own lives. It must be emphasised that there are two problems here in relation to pedagogy. On the one hand, the teacher is faced with difficult poetry, which is hard to explain, and so the teacher relies heavily on study guides and kills all possibility of creativity in teaching the poetry. On the other hand, the adolescents who are struggling with identity in terms of finding their place in the world see no value in the poetry that the teacher is trying to impose on them.

Besides problems of curriculum and pedagogy outlined above, another problem is the canon. The term canon is used here in its simple meaning of being privileged or being given special status by a dominant culture (Abu-Shomar, 2013). The poetry canon for Grade 11 English FAL in 2021 espoused a dominant culture that is neither gender-sensitive nor contemporary. There were 10 prescribed poems, with 6 that were South African and 4 that were Western. While the poems suggest that the curriculum designers had improved in the indigenisation of the curriculum, the problem that still existed is that the canon was still not Africanised as there were no prescribed poems from other African countries. This justifies the call for curriculum decolonisation. Inasmuch as classical poetry is important, poetry from other African countries can help South African learners to understand their own continent. The other challenge is that the poems prescribed for the year 2021 were predominantly male authored. While there was one Coloured female author, there was no Black female representation in the canon. Lastly, the poems prescribed for 2021 Grade 11 English FAL were old and most of the themes did not relate to or meet the needs of 21st century adolescent learners.

Every literary canon exists in the context of the people's overall experiences and aesthetic values. This means that what constitutes the adolescents' experiences should form a significant part of the canonical choice for Grade 11 poetry. It should also determine the poetry that should be prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL learners. Adolescents struggle with complexities of emotions, as explained in the introduction above. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) of the US Department of State reported in 2020 that in South Africa, township communities were plagued by criminal practices such as rape, robbery, murder and carjacking, as well as social issues such as unemployment, overcrowded housing, domestic violence, homophobia, xenophobia, teenage pregnancy and poverty (OSAC, 2020). The media is awash with traumatic incidents happening in the townships in relation to crime and social issues. This information is received by adolescents through modern technology such as smartphones. The problem then is that adolescents face the identity-versus-role-confusion period in their lives. This is a period which Erikson (1963) describes as

a stage of pyshchological development when success leads to an ability to feel independent, be in control and to stay true to one's self, while failure leads to confusion, insecurity and a weak sense of self. Because adolescents are in this identity-versus-role-confusion period in their lives, they try to make sense of everything that is happening around them, and school is one of the spaces which enables them to do this. However, these adolescents get into the English FAL poetry classroom where the canon is to a greater extent silent about their day-to-day experiences. The canon they find is focused on exuming dead poetry so that living adolescents can learn sophisticated English. As a result, some adolescents yield to despair, while others are left to make certain decisions in solitude. These decisions include giving up on poetry after they have failed to comprehend it and adopting the attitude that poetry is difficult and worthless. From the perspective of Erikson (1968), this is a negative effect on their identity development.

There is brilliant poetry by young South African poets like Bothale Boikanyo (the winner of the 2012 *SA's Got Talent* competition), Kyle Louw (an internationally recognised spoken word poet), and Koleka Putuma (who won the 2016 PEN student writing prize) that adolescents find appealing. Examples are plentiful but it suffices to mention these few. Even though Black (2009) argues that the late 20th or early 21st century poetry can be relevant to today's adolescents than contemporary poetry, it is important to note that relevance also depends on the diverse identities, cultures and backgrounds of poets. The Grade 11 English FAL poetry is mostly old, white, and male-authored. The poetry canonical works present a significant challenge to Grade 11 English FAL learners because they do not address the needs and realities of these adolescents. These learners feel that they cannot relate to the poetry because it is so foreign to the nature of the poetry that they are introduced to at home and the modern technology surrounding them which also shapes their identities. Essentially, the learners' real-life contexts do not merge with academic practices.

It is argued here that adolescents need poetry that speaks to their situations to help them develop their identities – their sense of self. Citron et al. (2019) argue that the evocation of emotions can transpire only if one is subjected to the idiomatic and

proverbial expressions of one's culture. That being the case, I argue that African poets should define the canon that should be in the Grade 11 English FAL curriculum. Adolescents might not be in awe as the poet William Wordsworth might have expected them to be after reading "Composed upon Westminster Bridge". Adolescents have their own notions of beauty and therefore their canon should be rooted in their own experiences. The Grade 11 poetry should address their anxieties, fears, aspirations and hopes. The current poetry canon fails to do this.

Language in the canonical poetry is the other problem. The CAPS document states that "the main reason for reading literature in the classroom is to develop in learners a sensitivity to a special use of language that is more refined, literary, figurative, symbolic and deeply meaningful than much of what else they may read" (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 16). However, most of the adolescents who are learning English as FAL were introduced to English only in Grade 4 as per the South African language policy (Mthombeni & Ogunnubi, 2021). In the townships where this study was carried out, all nine Indigenous South African languages are spoken. English is the tenth language spoken in these communities but it is mostly spoken in the classroom setup. This positions English as far from being a second language. Therefore, adolescents will find it hard to understand the English in the current canon of poetry in the Grade 11 English FAL curriculum. They should see a part of their living realities in poetry written in the English that they understand, to avoid negative attitudes towards poetry which may result from having difficulty to comprehend the archaic and sometimes sophisticated English in the classical poetry.

Negativity towards poetry among African learners of English FAL, which is another fundamental problem, is disturbing because most of them not only were introduced to poetry practices at a tender age but they are exposed to poetry through the technologies that they are using on a daily basis. Moreover, the traditional African community used poetry and song to accompany the activities of daily life, to give utterances to joy and sorrow, to orient a child to the community, to make comments on life, and simply to entertain (Johnson, 2012). The same is happening among adolescents in today's world. Adolescents are listening to Hip Hop or Rap music, which

is poetic, and through this genre they try to identify with groups of celebrities such as the South African popular rappers Cassper Nyovest and Kwesta. This shows that poetry is a part of the life of an African child from birth to adolescence. In an interview with practicing oral poets in Grahamstown, South Africa, McGiffin (2017) noted that the poets said poetry reminds them of their history, heritage, and identity. Through this poetic practice, a child identifies with his or her cultural norms, beliefs, and social expectations. These identity attributes are carried over into adolescence. However, the moment adolescents get into the institutionalised system of education, such poetic experiences which deal with social and personal identities seem to be overshadowed by the formal education system which has a prescribed canon and expects adolescents to consume the knowledge through a stipulated way so that they can get good marks and proceed to the next grade. Cherry (2021) talks about cognitive dissonance. She postulates that people tend to seek consistency in their attitudes and perceptions, but if there is inconsistency, people behave differently to show their feelings of unease or discomfort (Cherry, 2021). In line with this view, I note that because the institutionalised poetry is distanced from learners' experiences, adolescents develop passive resistance.

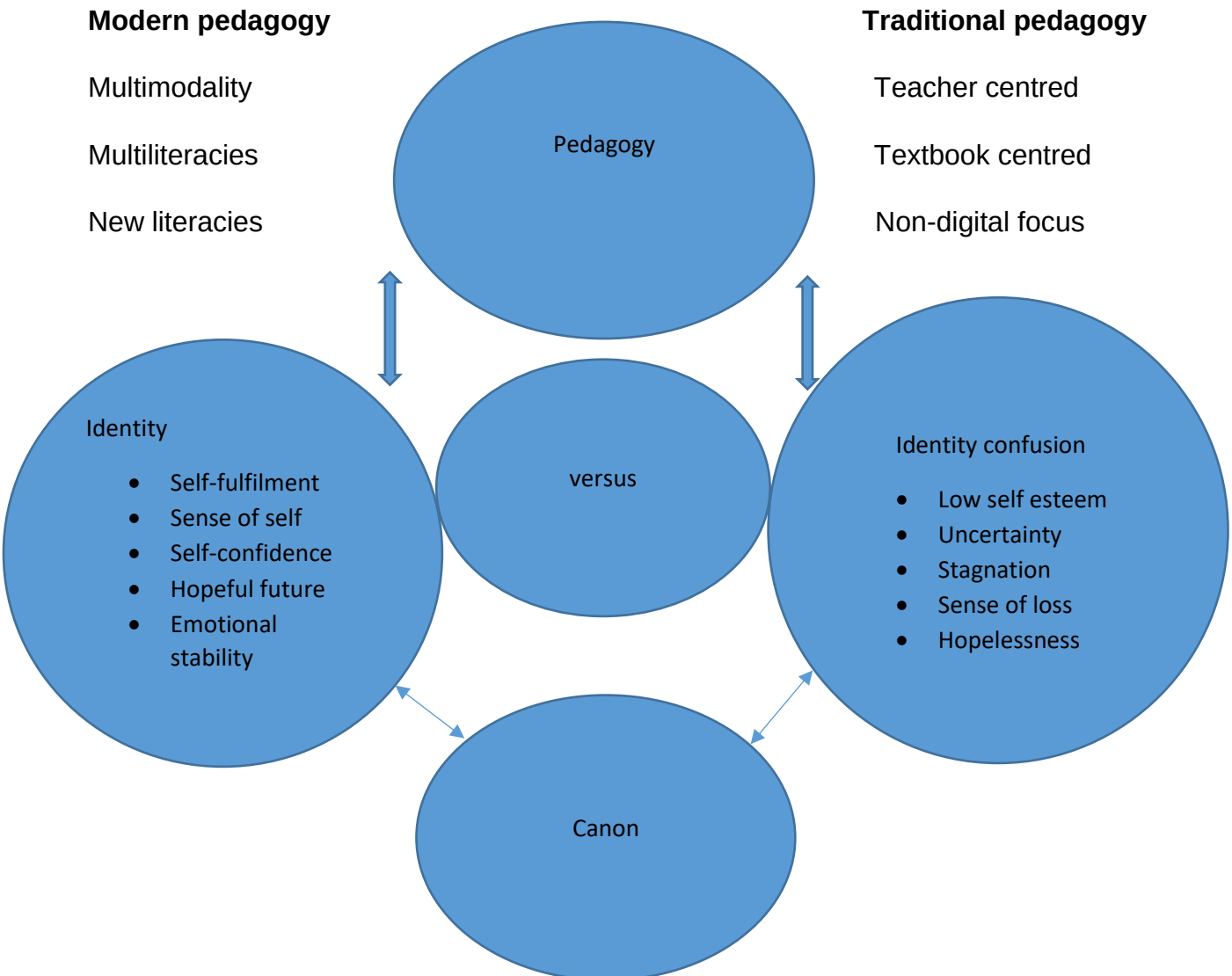
Adolescents tend to consider classroom poetry incomprehensible (Creely, 2019) because of its inaccessible language. They also feel that it is distanced from real life, because of different contexts that the 21st century English FAL adolescents are experiencing. Both learners and teachers in the English poetry classroom are going through punitive standardised tests because of CAPS. As a result, adolescents struggle to experience a range of human emotions during poetry lessons and consequently become passive, as Creely (2019) explains. Teachers end up using the traditional teacher-centred approach, creating an environment which does not foster adolescents' identity development.

1.3 Hypothesis

The problems highlighted in the previous section may affect adolescents' perceptions about the world and societal norms, and may negatively impact their development of a sense of self. This means that if these problems are addressed holistically, then

there is an exceptionally good chance that poetry can become a powerful tool in enhancing adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom. The assumption, therefore, is that there is a correlation between identity development, pedagogy and canon. To make it clear, assumptions in research are fundamental beliefs that serve as starting points for further investigation. Drawing a hypothesis from this assumption, reference is given to Latief (2009) who identifies at least three kinds of hypothesis. These are theoretical hypothesis, statistical hypothesis and empirical hypothesis. Crafting a hypothesis is often unavoidable when embarking on a research study. A study can be quantitative or qualitative; the difference lies in the function of the hypothesis. Accordingly, this qualitative study used theoretical hypothesis which Latief (2009, p.2) defines as "a prediction of the relationship between research variables based on theory or logical common sense." This is illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 1: The study's hypothesis



My hypothesis, as illustrated above, is that when modern pedagogy involving multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies is employed in teaching poetry in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom, learners will experience identity development. By contrast, the practice of traditional pedagogy which is characterised by the dominance of the teacher and the textbook as well as the absence of digital technology will lead to identity confusion for adolescents. In addition, canon is directly implicated in adolescents' identity development. Figure 1 shows that even with a modern pedagogy, an irrelevant canon can negatively impact learners' identity development. Therefore, a relevant canon has the potential to successfully foster adolescents' identity development.

1.4 Aims of the research

The aim of this research was to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. In other words, the study sought to find out how poetry pedagogy and canon in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom affects learners' identity formation. Such effects could be positive in terms of encouraging learners' self-expression or negative in terms of destroying their self-esteem. To effectively understand the effects, the study was conducted in two different contexts: one in which traditional pedagogy and prescribed canon dominated the English FAL poetry classroom and the other in which a modern pedagogy which applies multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies was implemented. The research sought to establish the limitations and affordances of the two different approaches and the specific ways in which the different approaches limit or extend opportunities for expression that support identity formation for adolescents in the English FAL poetry classroom. The findings from this study were to offer insights into pedagogies in the poetry classroom and alternatives to the poetry canon that could assist adolescent learners in South Africa to develop their identities.

1.5 Research questions

This study was guided by the research questions below.

Primary research question:

What is the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

Secondary research questions:

1a) What instructional practices characterise traditional pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

1b) What instructional practices characterise multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

2a) How does the traditional pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?

2b) How does the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?

3a) What challenges to identity formation do learners experience with the current cannon of poetry being taught in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

3b) How do learners' own poetry help them to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities?

1.6 Research objectives

The general objective of this study was to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. The following specific objectives guided the study:

1a) To identify the instructional practices that characterise traditional pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom.

1b) To identify the instructional practices that characterise multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom.

2a) To establish the effects of traditional pedagogy on learners' sense of identity.

2b) To establish the effects of multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy on learners' sense of identity.

3a) To determine the challenges to identity formation which learners experience with the current canon of poetry being taught in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom.

3b) To ascertain how learners' own poetry helps them to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities.

1.7 Rationale for the study

Prior to the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, many schools practised a traditional, highly authoritarian and teacher-centred approach to teaching (Hay & Monnapula-Mapesela, 2009). This teaching approach did not only deny learners opportunities to explore their identities (Ogunniyi & Mushayikwa, 2015), but it also stripped off their humanity in the way that is captured in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970). Zinn and Rodgers (2012, p. 87) note that "students' humanity – its existence and expansion – is at the heart of a humanising pedagogy…. The purposes of education are to extend this humanity through opportunities for creativity, imagination, and interaction with others and the world". Having realised the lack of this purpose and in order to redress the past inequalities and promote learning for all citizens, the South African DBE proposed an approach to education that was known as Outcomes Based Education (OBE), a curriculum which was thought to be learner-centred but failed to yield the desired results (Lombard & Grosser, 2008). Some scholars like Schmidt (2017) argue that the problem was not with the OBE per se but with the implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, CAPS was introduced in 2012 to mitigate the shortfalls that OBE had. The CAPS curriculum is the one currently being used in schools in South Africa, as of 2023.

Despite all the curriculum changes that have been made in less than three decades, there are still some challenges in the English FAL poetry pedagogy and canon. Adolescents are still pedestrians in the English FAL classroom even though they are living with several technological innovations which previous generations did not experience (Chasar, 2020). Adolescents come to the English FAL poetry class with a vast array of literacies that remain untapped by teachers. Chaser (2020) explains that

adolescents can speak a heritage language at home, converse in English with friends at school, receive text messages on a cellular phone, and peruse multimodal websites – all on the same day. These are literacies that can be tapped into in the poetry classroom but which are being underutilised.

Throughout my 10 years of teaching Grade 11 English FAL in a South African township school, I have noted that learners achieve better marks in other genres compared to poetry. This suggests that they find the prescribed poetry difficult to understand, hence they get low marks. Grade 11 learners do not show enthusiasm about poetry lessons and one of the reasons for this is the language in some poems which learners consider to be difficult. As an English teacher, I have also noticed that many of the poems prescribed for Grade 11 learners do not speak to the adolescents' lives. Having noted that adolescents are at a stage where they are struggling with complexities of emotions, poetry becomes a valuable tool for helping them develop their identities because it offers opportunities for self-expression in culturally meaningful ways (Tenure, 2009). Today, the English FAL poetry classroom in township schools is populated by passive learners, and the majority of people may think that it is all because the adolescents do not value education. While there may be several reasons for this passivity of adolescents, including problems at home, it is also possible that the learners may be responding to the teaching methods employed in the poetry class and to the canon to which they cannot relate. Therefore, this research is necessary to determine exactly how poetry pedagogy and canon affect learners in terms of their identity formation. Unless we can establish the limitations and affordances of the canon and the different approaches to teaching it, it will not be possible to address the identity challenges that adolescents face with regard to learning poetry. Unless we can establish the basis for adolescents' negative attitudes towards poetry in the English FAL classroom, we will not be using poetry to its full potential to promote identity development. Lastly, since current (traditional) pedagogy is not supporting adolescents to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities, it is of utmost necessity to explore an alternative pedagogy which does this.

1.8 Definition of terms

This section defines the key terms that I have used in this study. These terms are: adolescence; canon; identity; multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy; pedagogy; and traditional pedagogy. Some of the broad terms will be expanded on in the next chapter. To start with, Norton (2013, p. 3) defines identity as "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future". Similarly, Erikson's (1968) concept of identity looks at how social influences contribute to adolescents' personality. This includes the knowledge that one is a member of a group, one's feelings about group membership, and knowledge of the group status compared to other groups. On their part, Hardman and Harrison (2016, p. 244) looks at identity as a person's ability to have a "clear and consistent sense of who he or she is, what he or she believes and values, what he or she is going to do with his or her life, and where he or she fits in the society." Tapping from the three definitions given here, I use the term identity in this study to refer to the way a person relates to the world, their ability to develop self-awareness, their knowledge of the social influences around them, their beliefs, values and aspirations, and their understanding of group status.

The other term that is central to this study is adolescence. Defining this term is a difficult task as many schools of thought have distinct stages which classify as adolescence. According to Erikson (1968), adolescence is divided into three phases which are early adolescence (11-13 years), adolescence (14-17 years) and young adulthood (18-25 years). Adolescence is a critical developmental period which is understood as the years between puberty and the establishment of social independence (Steinberg, 2002). In this study, Grade 11 learners are considered as adolescents and their age range is 16-20 years. To arrive at this age range, I worked with the age that learners are expected to start Grade 1 in South Africa. The DBE recommends that a child starts Grade 1 at the age of 6 years; so it is expected that a Grade 11 learner will be 17 years. However, some learners start school earlier at 5 years and therefore such learners will be 16 years in Grade 11. Some also start school later than expected due to financial constraints or other challenges, while some repeat

classes. Therefore, it is appropriate to place the age range of Grade 11 learners at 16-20 years.

Multiliteracy is a term coined by the New London Group (1996) as an approach to respond to new technologies in the way language is used in different cultures. Kalantzis and Cope (2022) elaborate on this definition when they speak about the variability of meaning making in diverse cultures, focusing on language patterns other than the national language. The other patterns include culture, gender, life experience, subject matter and social domain (Kalantzis & Cope, 2022). The definitions stated here indicate that multiliteracy goes beyond the ability to read and write. Borrowing from these definitions, my working definition for the term includes learners' competence in oral articulation, gestural interpretation, comprehending and embracing multiculturalism, as well as showing respect for diversity through effective interaction. Multiliteracies therefore refers 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. The digital technology that forms part of multiliteracies points to new forms of literacy. The new literacies that are commonly used by adolescents include social media where they receive and share poetry which shapes their identities. A discussion of meaning making cannot be concluded without talking about multimodality. Kress (2009) defines multimodality in theory and practice as ways which look at the many different semiotic modes that people use to communicate with each other and to express themselves. As outlined by Kress (2009), these various modes can be visual, print, gestural, dramatic or oral.

The terms, multiliteracies, new literacies and multimodality all speak to pedagogy. In simple terms, pedagogy refers to the technique that we use to teach or the approach and philosophy behind teaching and learning. The use of these terms coined by the New London Group (1996) means employing the modern pedagogy. This is a shift from the traditional pedagagy which denotes the pre-technology education context in which the teacher is the source of knowledge and the learners are considered as the receivers of information. The difference between these two forms of pedagogy is that in the modern class learners are co-creators of knowledge, while in the traditional class

learners are passive recipients of knowledge. Pedagogy is informed by the content that is meant to be understood in the classroom and in this study canon is the key term that captures content. Canon is defined by Pryor (2022) as a classification of literature, a selection of literary works classified as skillful, influential and important to a particular place at a given time.

The terms defined above will be ellaborated on in Chapter 2 where they will be contextualised and operationalised.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

Delimitation is defined by Theofanidid and Fountouki (2019, p. 157) as “the limitations consciously set by the authors themselves.” Therefore, for this study to achieve its aim, some bounderies had to be set. The study focused only on two Grade 11 English FAL poetry classrooms and excluded English Home language poetry classes. The schools where the research was conducted are located in two neighbouring townships in the Ekhurhuleni district of the Gauteng province in South Africa. The schools were public secondary schools and they offered only English FAL during the time when the study was carried out. Additionally, having taught English FAL for 10 years in the District, it became my area of interest due to the problems around poetry teaching. The study did not include schools from other districts, former model C schools or private schools. This therefore limits my ability to generalise the findings to all English FAL poetry classrooms across South Africa.

1.10 Significance of the study

This study intended to illuminate the limitations and affordances of the two pedagogies under study (modern pedagogy and traditional pedagogy) with respect to how they enable or constrain adolescent learners to develop and assert their identities. This research is significant because it informs English FAL poetry teachers and curriculum designers that adolescents enter the classroom with their own identities, literacies, and

cultures which need to be tapped into by teachers in order to make poetry teaching meaningful to adolescents. The study explains that adolescents represent the cultures they come from and for them to participate freely in the classroom, they need to feel comfortable and know that their literacies are valuable. However, adolescents seem to get confused when they are faced with the culture of prescribed texts and the stiff methods of learning. English FAL poetry curriculum designers pay little attention towards the identities of adolescents. This leads to adolescents withdrawing from classroom poetry, hence existing understandings and general perceptions that learners do not like poetry. This is the reason this study remains true to the notion that young people have the right to author their lived experiences, and such should have an influence on policy and education. When Eagleton (1996, p. 39) noted that "poetry is an emotive rather than referential language," he meant that poetry organises our feelings in satisfying ways and such a feeling is difficult to transfer to another person. The English FAL prescribed poetry defies Eagleton's view. This is worsened by the pedagogy which is teacher-centred. Therefore, research on identity in the English FAL classroom is important because adolescents are beginning their social development and constructing their personal identities (Erikson, 1963; 1968), and thus teachers' choice of pedagogy has a profound effect on their identity development.

1.11 Organisation of the thesis

The following shows how the thesis has been organised.

Chapter 1: In this chapter, an overview of the scope of the study is presented. The chapter introduces the research topic and highlights the research problem, aims of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, rationale for the study, and significance of the study. In essence, the chapter charts the direction of the study and makes it clear that the study focuses on finding out the ways in which poetry pedagogy and canon affect adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. The key terms of the study are also identified and defined in this chapter.

Chapter 2: This chapter introduces the relevant existing literature on the subject of adolescents' identity development and poetry teaching. The chapter focuses on literature that highlights the complexity of identity, the benefits of poetry, the pedagogies employed in poetry classrooms, implications of canon on adolescents' identity development, issues of modern technology among adolescents, and the relevance of this literature to the study. The chapter also identifies the gap in the literature on how poetry pedagogy and canon influence learners' identity development.

Chapter 3: This chapter outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the analysis of the data collected in this study. It explains Erikson's (1963; 1968) identity development theory, focusing on concepts such as identity versus role confusion, ego identity and identity stagnation. Using Erikson's work, it explains adolescence as a stage in the human life cycle during which the individual must establish a sense of personal identity and avoid the dangers of role confusion. The chapter also highlights Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy as a theoretical lens employed in this study. Under critical pedagogy, it discusses the dehumanising nature of the traditional pedagogy and prescriptive canon, as well as their implications for adolescents' identity development. Lastly, the chapter presents the conceptual framework derived from the two theories.

Chapter 4: The study's research method, research design, research paradigm, sampling processes, research participants, research sites, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods are outlined in this 4th chapter. Matters of reliability, validity and credibility also form part of the contents of this chapter. Ethical considerations are equally discussed, with focus on anonymity of participants, their informed consent as well as their right to withdraw from the study.

Chapter 5: This chapter presents and analyses the data from lesson observations. These lesson observations are for both School A and School B. Descriptive analysis of the lesson observation data is undertaken, after which common themes emerging

from the data are discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings from the data analysed.

Chapter 6: As in Chapter 5, this chapter focuses on one data set. Data from questionnaires completed by participants is presented and thematically analysed in this chapter. Similarly, the chapter concludes with the discussion of the findings.

Chapter 7: In this chapter, the participants' journal entries are presented and analysed thematically. A total of 18 journals from learners (6 from School A and 12 from School B) are analysed in this chapter. As with Chapters 5 and 6, a discussion of findings follows the data analysis.

Chapter 8: This chapter presents a cross-data discussion of findings. This means that key findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are discussed thematically and in relation to the chosen theories and the literature reviewed.

Chapter 9: This chapter presents the conclusion to this thesis, looking at how the findings have answered the research questions. The chapter also highlights the limitations of the study, the study's contribution to knowledge and personal insights from the study. It concludes with suggestions for further research and recommendations.

1.12 Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted the background to the study, problem statement, research aims, research questions, research objectives and rationale for the study. The chapter has illuminated the extent to which poetry can inspire learners to be creative or leave them in despair. This is what prompted me to explore the limitations and affordances of canon and pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom and the impact thereof on adolescents' identity development. The gap in

this area of study has been identified and the questions to guide the research have been carefully stated. An elaboration of poetry's position in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom has been given to create a path from which the exploration of the impact of canon and pedagogy on adolescents' identity development will be mapped. Lastly, the chapter has provided an outline of the contents of each chapter in this thesis. The next chapter presents a review of literature relevant to the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. The emerging body of literature on adolecents' identity development and poetry is scattered across academic disciplines. A few studies have been done on classroom poetry teaching generally (Black, 2009; Dymoke & Hughs, 2009; Creely, 2019; Andrews et al, 2020), and on multimodality and translanguaging in teaching poetry in South African English FAL classrooms (Jewitt, 2005; Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006; d'Abdon, Byrne & Newfield, 2020; Mavhiza & Prozesky, 2020). Some researchers have concentrated on English FAL teaching and learning in general (Khansir, 2012; Antika, 2017). Other studies have explored adolescents' identity through the digital age (Gorinachaz, 2019; Chasar, 2020; Schall, 2020). With all of this, there is not much research focusing on adolescents' identity development in poetry classrooms in South African township schools. Even though there is some literature to prove that my research area has been internationally and locally written about, none is an in-depth study on adolescents' identity development through poetry, focusing on the pedagogy and canon in the Grade 11 poetry classroom in South African township schools. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature on this subject, implying that any study or research in this area is valuable.

In an effort to establish the importance of improving poetry pedagogy and highlighting some gaps in the poetry canon, this literature review focuses on several areas of research such as the benefits of poetry education, cultural diversity and learning environment, adolescents' self-relevance in the curriculum, poetry pedagogy, canon, and adolescents' identity through poetry. My hypothesis is that cognisance of adolescents' socio-cultural issues and the incorporation of multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies in the teaching of English FAL poetry may help

adolescents who are going through the rough patch of identity versus role confusion to identify who they are and what their capabilities are.

2.2 English FAL education in South Africa

English is spoken by only 9.6% of South African citizens as home language (Hugo, 2016). This means that the majority of South African learners receive education in an additional language from Grades 4-12. Language is a powerful tool that is used to convey meaning. Most important to note is that language is not just a linguistic vehicle for communication but it also represents one's identity. As a communication tool, language serves two roles: language as empowerment and language as disempowerment. According to Alexander (2012), this implies that if one is proficient in a language, then they command power and have easy access to information, while limited or lack of proficiency may lead to cognitive, social and economic disempowerment. Education uses language to produce and reproduce the society it wants. The division between English HL and English FAL in South Africa is an indication of language inequality. Educationally, additional language learners at Grades 4-12 do not have equal epistemic access to learning due to the LoLT in schools being English. As discussed in Chapter 1, the language debate in South Africa is complex because of its political history. While the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) intended to bring the marginalised Indigenous languages to the fore (Department of Education, 1997), the system needs further interrogation. Alexander (2012) notes that by dividing language into home and additional languages, the CAPS already begins to exclude educationally and socially those learners it claims to serve. Those learners are denied meaningful learning when compared to their counterparts who are taught English as home language. In the English FAL poetry classroom, canon becomes an added disadvantage.

2.3 The benefits of poetry education

Studying poetry helps build and develop the intellectual faculties of learners, as several scholars have argued. Pushpa and Savaedi (2014), Kasten and Yildirim (2015)

and Antika (2017) note 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. Furthermore, Femer (2003) asserts that poetry can function as authentic texts which convey the aesthetic, historic, and social realities of the target language culture. Rosenblatt (1998), in a discussion about the reader’s engagement with a text and its meaning, describes idiosyncratic elements such as social, cultural, and educational histories that individuals carry with them when reading a text. In turn, these shared experiences between the text and the reader help readers to agree or disagree, and thus there is the experience of “evocation” as each person’s view affects how he or she makes meaning (Rosenblatt 1998, p. 887). Most important to note, though, is that it is through engagement that readers connect to author and text and construct an understanding of the text that is their own (Rosenblatt, 1998), which is an awareness of their personal perspective or voice. Yet, as Benton (1999) reminds us, there persists a universality of experience and meaning that poetry highlights despite the personal ways in which it can be understood. At its heart, poetry is a language, and Vygotsky (1978) recognises that language is inextricably linked to social and human interaction. For him, it is the tool for moving from interpersonal thinking to intrapersonal cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the role of society and literature in identity development and self-discovery is crucial.

Articulating a different perspective from Rosenblatt (1998) and Vygotsky (1978) who prioritise the connection between the reader and the text, Benton (1999) argues that poetry is the printed voice of the poet, a narrative account of his or her own ideas, feelings and impressions, and connecting to the voice of the poet is one way that students can develop their own perspectives on identity and the surrounding world. Thus, poetry instruction is critically important because it serves as a medium for self-examination, providing adolescents with the opportunity and ability to express themselves by engaging with text and developing personal identity. However, this depends on the reader’s comprehension of the text. In addition, the way poetry is taught plays a pivotal role in whether adolescents can develop these authentic connections with poetry texts. Adolescents are now more habitually reading text that

combine image, sound, and words, which are normally found in digital spaces that are bound up in social practices (Bayers & Imms, 2016). This makes it urgent for schools to move from the traditional pedagogy and incorporate multiliteracies and multimodality. As Chasar (2020) notes, identity development is strongly linked to the convergence of social and literacy practices.

The imaginative richness of poetry is another benefit that scholars and teachers can undoubtedly enjoy. This imaginativeness is believed to benefit learners by creating moral guidance or even instruction (Armstrong, 2019). Beyond learners, poetry has value for humanity at large because it forms the "soul and character" of life and inspires "the emotion so helpful in making principles operative" (Benton, 1999, p. 521). However, for one to make these principles operative, there is need for the comprehension of the language in the poetry, for Rorty (2017, p.129) notes that reason "can only follow paths that the imagination has first broken." The problem though is that poetry's ability to create images is treated disparagingly by teachers who refer to it as 'daydreaming', instead of using it as a learning tool in the classroom (Armstrong, 2019). Armstrong (2019, p. 3) states: "We've forgotten about introducing incredible kids to an amazing world, and instead we're requiring them to master soulless objectives." This implies that poetry must be soulful in order to appeal to young minds. Poetry has the capacity to create a world where lived realities can be linked by carefully constructed thought. The big question is: are these realities being created in the South African English FAL classrooms? Responses to this question are especially important because if people fail to develop the ability to construct thought into appropriate language or to understand the power behind well-constructed language, they may fall prey to those who do. In line with this view, Lloyd and Abdulatief (2019) note with shock the colonial and patriarchal bias in many of the prescribed poems for Grade 11 English FAL. For the year 2021, 10 poems were prescribed for Grade 11 English FAL, and all poets were above fifty years of age, with the majority being dead. Only three out of these 10 poems were written by Black South African men. Black women poets from South Africa and the rest of Africa were significantly absent as only one coloured female poet was featured. This sends a clear message to the English FAL learners about the poetic voices that matter in the curriculum and are worth learning about in

the classroom. It shows that the canon enforces male hegemony in poetry and it goes against practices of gender equity that the new South Africa is promoting.

Godsell (2019) comments that the South African classrooms miss the voices of Africans speaking in their own idioms and writing their own present and past. Rorty (2017, p.129) warns about a poetry classroom with "no imagination, no words, no words, no moral or intellectual progress." The impact of reading literature that is divorced from one's culture is well articulated by the renowned late Zimbabwean writer and poet Chenjerai Hove who described his Zimbabwean colonial education as having

> …nothing about my own parents' farming routines, the birds of my own sky, the smell of my own land, the cries of the children as mothers sang African lullabies to them, and the folktales which sent ghosts reeling in our imagination. Nothing about the stories of witches and medicine men and women as they fought to control the gods and human beings. All became superstition as we succumbed to the new religion, never to return again or maybe to remain in some grey area of confusion. (quoted in Lloyd & Abdulatief, 2019, par. 8-9)

This is the same kind of confusion that adolescents in the South African classrooms are thrown into when they struggle to create imaginations with the poetry imposed on them through the curriculum. Rorty (2017), Armstrong (2019) and Godsell (2019) agree that imagination and language can be the base of all human advancement. This advancement can help adolescents to develop identities. Bila and Abodunrin (2020, p. 12) assert that the role of the teacher is not "to perpetuate racial, gender and ethnocentric misunderstanding." Rather, the teacher should help learners realise that their culture adds to their social consciousness, personal identity, critical thinking, and happiness. This means that with relevant poetry texts and appropriate ways of teaching, South African adolescents can have a voice in the English FAL classrooms which Bila and Abodunrin (2020, p. 4) describe as dominated by "Anglo-Saxon poetry, which has little relevance to their social environment and circumstances." The English FAL classroom needs poetry texts that inspire learners to have opinions about themselves and the world so that they can challenge their underdevelopment and powerlessness to foster their identities. Identity is noted by d'Abdon, Byrne and Newfield (2020) as a recurring concern among adolescent learners, which calls for the

opening up of spaces for discussions on text selection that supports a decolonised curriculum.

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”. It is this entertaining aspect of poetry and its ability to intellectually stimulate learners that makes it motivating (Tevdovska, 2016). 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 (Creely, 2019). Poetry should be taught as an experience rather than a technique. 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 (Creely, 2019). Carefully selected English poems offer various themes which are relevant to the interests and concerns of adolescents (Collie & Slater, 1991). Therefore, poetry can motivate adolescents to express their emotions, opinions, reactions, and feelings. The Department of Basic Education (2011, p. 16) states that through the teaching of poetry, “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.” This indicates that poetry moves learners to respond critically to what they read. Poetry helps the reader to make unusual connections between ideas or objects. Readers will step out of their real world and engage with the imaginary world which nobody else can see (Armstrong, 2019). They start seeing the world differently and enjoy engaging in their emotions in a new way. The application of ideas by Erikson (1968) in the English FAL poetry classroom will therefore help adolescents to connect with the poetry and find ways to overcome personal life challenges such as peer pressure, un-belongingness, and concerns with appearance. All these issues usually put adolescents into despair and influence their identity formation right into adulthood.

Pushpa and Savaedi (2014) note cultural enrichment as one of the benefits of poetry. They note that poetry introduces diverse 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. Similarly, Richards, Brown and Forde (2007, p. 64) 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, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement". Sharing poems in the classroom helps adolescents of all abilities to develop and use their voices. When learners are free to share their thoughts in class, engagement more readily ensues. d'Abdon (2016, p. 57) argues that poetry "knowledge production is situated in time and space and conditioned by social, historical, cultural, and political circumstances: it comes out from a peculiar context…" Thus, while engaging with borrowed knowledge is educating, it can put one in a position of powerlessness as knowledge production is characterised by power relations. Canon therefore should be carefully selected to provide relevant knowledge for marginalised peoples so that they can recover their histories and assert their identities. In this case, poetry can offer adolescents a means of self-empowerment.

Poetry also provides opportunities for self-discovery and development of a sense of social and personal identity. Adolescence is a critical stage where young people are still trying to find out who they are. However, Raghuram (2007) has pointed out that writing poetry and listening to good poetry are the best ways to grapple with internal turmoil. In addition, Creely (2019) discusses the indispensable role that poetry plays in the lives of learners, acting as a conduit for narrative expressions. Through narrative expression, stories are told about the human experience. This means that poetry opens an interesting cultural window for learners; learners may already be knowledgeable about the poets and poems that are part of their heritage but when poetry from other cultures is taught in a way they can comprehend it, they may be able to appreciate cultural diversity. Learners in a diverse community like South Africa can develop cultural capital as a skill as well as knowledge that they can draw on to give them an advantage in social life. Spoken word poetry, which is a type of performance art that blends elements of recitation with more dramatic aspects, can assist learners to embrace multiculturalism. d'Abdon (2016) notes the importance of spoken word poetry and asserts that when discussed in class, it helps learners not only to be better readers and speakers of English but to also become critical thinkers.

Poetry raises self-awareness among adolescents and helps them to position themselves in the society. Through writing and performing poems, learners may be conscious of their feelings and shape their character. Khatib (2011) and Creely (2019) 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. According to Mavhiza and Prozesky (2020), the performative aspect of poetry makes it appealing, livens the classroom and engages learners academically and personally. Poetry also has the ability to relate critically to learners' cultures. This means that poetry can help learners to overcome the challenges of identity crisis. Poetry helps learners to love and respect themselves when they speak about their own cultures. Encountering poetry that only talks about other cultures may make learners to think that their own cultures do not matter or are not worthy of being spoken about. Furthermore, the use of poetry in the classroom helps to stimulate the imagination of learners and increase their emotional awareness (Armstrong, 2019). English FAL learners' confidence can be boosted when they are asked to respond personally to taught poems or to 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 scholars mentioned above agree that poetry can help learners to discover themselves and explore possibilities in their lives. In other words, poetry helps with learners' personal development and growth. However, this can be achieved only if poetry is taught in ways that appeal to adolescent learners.

African communities have always believed in the healing aspects of poetry. Bila and Abodunrin (2020) state that Angifi Dladla, a South African writing teacher, poet and coach, had poetry lessons with people from all social classes. From the poetry sessions, Dladla realised the moral, spiritual, and emotional healing power of poetry. Bila and Abodunrin (2020) talk about children who perpetrated chaos in the East Rand during the 1980s to the extent that even the South African Police could not manage the crime levels. However, through Dladla's poetry sessions, these youngsters were

rehabilitated and reintegrated into their families and communities (Bila & Abodunrin, 2020). One can deduce from this case that poetry reflects the voice of the soul and enables the reader/listener to reflect, dream, reminisce, observe, and fantasize. If adolescents are exposed to relevant poetry, there is a big chance that they will relax and practice self-expression at a time when it is needed the most. Thus, one may argue that poetry has the potential to curb ill-behaviour when adolescents are given an opportunity to do an introspection through poetry, or ponder on the consequences of negative actions. McGiffin (2017), like Bila and Abodunrin (2020), iterates the healing aspects of poetry where it has the rare ability of moving people by touching them with words.

The literature explored in this section all point to the idea that poetry is a genre rich with scholarly attributes and 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 the diverse classrooms of South Africa. It is a vital creative and critical art form. Nevertheless, teachers are facing an uphill battle to teach poetry due to the prescribed canon and the pedagogy outlined in the curriculum which, according to Creely (2019), focuses on methodological poetry teaching, leaving out poetry enjoyment. The prescribed pedagogy has also made poetry to be taken as an afterthought, a supplement or something not worthy of studying at all. These factors may have a negative effect on adolescents' identity development in the English FAL poetry classroom. Another key factor that affects poetry education in South Africa is learners' cultural diversity and learning environments.

2.4 Cultural diversity and learning environments

Identity has become a major socio-political issue, occupying centre stage in literary and education discourses. Identity cannot be discussed at length without paying attention to culture. Therefore, this section becomes a vital part of this thesis.

In a diverse society like South Africa, issues of identity are highly contentious, particularly in education. At the heart of this discussion is the canon. Most of the South African township schools offer English FAL rather than English HL because of the language policy that was discussed in Chapter 1. Every learner comes to the classroom with a set of behaviours and characteristics which make them unique, and this has a bearing on the individual's academic performance. Ladson-Billings (2021) adds that learners do not come to school as blank slates but they come with cultural experiences which define their identities. The teacher then has the responsibility of making connections between the prior knowledge and what is to be taught. The classroom set up prepares learners for a group identity and the teacher has to be the cultural translator and build a bridge between the cultural experiences that the learner has before coming to the classroom and that which is introduced in the institution. Furthermore, Banks (2005, p. 13) note: "behaviour is shaped by group norms… the group equips individuals with the behaviour patterns they need in order to adapt". Learners thus identify with certain groups to experience a feeling of belonging. This does not exclude adolescents. Campbell (2004) points out that adolescents have a strong need to belong to groups because groups provide a source of motivation.

Adolescents may identify with certain groups based on their ethnicity, social class, or religion. These categories are some of the social constructions of identity that relate to culture; that is, they provide a sense of cultural identity. Taking cultural identity into consideration helps teachers to create learning environments that recognise the cultural contribution of adolescents. Savage (2005) comments that teachers must empower adolescents to succeed by providing them with a learning environment that respects their culture, embraces their diversity, and celebrates their differences. By so doing, teachers will be helping adolescents to develop their identities. However, Fritscher (2019) mentions the presence of "metrophobia" which is the fear of poetry. Fritscher (2019) observes that poetry can be daunting to both teachers and learners. This can be caused by the complex language in some of the canonical poems and both teachers and learners respond differently to such a challenge. On the one hand, Khatib (2011, p. 36) notes that students react to canonical poems with groans of disapproval and cries of anguish, which indicate that students are "unsure, lack confidence and don't know where to start". The same could be said for high school

learners in South Africa. On the other hand, teachers respond with inappropriate teaching methods and insensitivity in their approaches to poetry pedagogy (Creely, 2018). All these challenges can be addressed when adolescents start learning what they want and when poetry teachers have materials which they can play around with to make learning interesting and relevant to adolescents.

2.5 English FAL learners' challenges with poetry

Many English FAL learners, particularly in South African township schools, shy away from classroom poetry. There are many reasons for this behaviour. Bila and Abodunrin (2020, p. 4) point to the irrelevance of the poetry: "African children are often taught Anglo-Saxon poetry, which has little relevance to their social environment and circumstances". Because of this, South African learners who study English as an additional language struggle to make sense of the poems. Amber (2013) notes image in poetry as one of the problems. He elaborates that poetry has a tricky form, seductive in its lyrical language, but teasing and withholding (Amber, 2013). Poetry talks in riddles and closely guards its secrets, so decoding its meaning may pose a challenge to learners. For learners to be able to unravel poetic secrets, they need to have attained a higher level of cognitive competence in the additional language. English FAL learners in South Africa generally start to learn English in Grade 4 where it also becomes the medium of instruction. Thus, by the time they reach high school (Grades 8–12), their English competence level is still below that of learners who studied English HL from the beginning. The cryptic language in some of the canonical works makes these learners to struggle with poetry comprehension and this pushes them to the periphery educationally, as explained earlier in Chapter 1. Thus, d'Abdon (2016) notes the importance of the injection of large doses of spoken word poetry into the curriculum because it aligns with African poetry, which is steeped in orality. A related problem noted by Amber (2013) is that while the literary canon has diversified over the years, it still holds fast to a tradition of dead, white and old poems, something which d'Abdon (2016) refers to as the sanitisation of the curriculum. The idea of poet and reader identification is therefore difficult to foster when learners are separated from a poem not only by obstacles of technical form and language but also by a gulf of years and strange cultural context. Bila and Abodunrin (2020, p.10) argue that "students are not

potatoes in a bag, but individuals with unique personalities, unique life experiences and therefore unique needs that cry for individual attention, real growth and development". This implies that adolescents are humans who are eager to get knowledge and also contribute towards their own learning. However, their learning can only happen in a conducive learning environment which acknowledges their challenges with poetry and the need for an inclusive canon and pedagogy that allows learners to enjoy poetry while raising consciousness to develop their identities.

2.6 Poetry and Pedagogy

Poetry is a tool for authoring the self. Lewis, Enciso and Moje (2007) postulate that identities mediate and are mediated by the texts that adolescents encounter. In spite of the potentials of poetry mentioned above, the position of poetry within literature teaching is not an esteemed one, as learners in many countries tend to show negative attitudes towards poetry and consider it incomprehensible and distant from today's world (Vala et al., 2012; Rindal, Brevik & Wiland, 2019; Mtetwa, 2021). Some scholars like Akinkurolere et al. (2021, p. 27) explicitly note that "the poetry genre of literature is being perceived as the most difficult, boring and less engaging genre of literature". This shows that the issue of poetry and pedagogy is not only a concern in South Africa but it is a commonly shared problem across the globe. To add on to the issue of pedagogy, Ugwu (2022) points to the non-availability of qualified teachers and lack of resources in Nigeria. The issue of scarcity of resources is also noted by Newfield and Byrne (2020) as an issue affecting some underprivileged schools in South Africa. Lack of resources, unskilled and unqualified teachers and the nature of poems prescribed for English FAL learners all contribute towards an inappropriate pedagogy, which in turn causes learners to shy away from poetry. From outside Africa, Creely (2019) mentions the fear of poetry among teachers which leads to the killing of poetry enjoyment in the poetry classroom.

Both Creely (2019) and Ugwu (2022) argue that limitations in the teachers' knowledge of poetry and relevant skills can lead to inappropriate pedagogies being employed in the classroom, and that the assessment prescribed by the curriculum and

implemented by teachers can make poetry lessons mechanical and difficult for learners. The reluctant attitude of teachers towards poetry teaching is described by Creely (2019) as unfortunate, because for learning to occur teachers need to update their teaching strategies. The CAPS document (Department of Basic Education, 2011) affirms that literature teaching is difficult, and this does not exclude poetry. Along the same lines, Ugwu (2022) opines that some teachers of English FAL fear poetry because of examination specifications; therefore, their enjoyment of poetry is replaced by anxiety and uncertainty, which are inevitably passed on to learners. Learners then end up suggesting that the study of poetry is dull and pointless (Newfield & Bryne, 2020; Ugwu, 2022) because the teacher kills all creativity in the classroom, and this serves to contribute to learners' alienation from poetry. This means that assessment plays a significant role in influencing learners' perception of poetry. The way that poetry is assessed can influence the way it is taught and vice versa. Thus, if learners are negative towards the assessment, they would be equally negative towards the pedagogy.

2.6.1 Traditional poetry pedagogy

Traditional pedagogy has been a predominant way of teaching for many years. Going back to the colonial era in South Africa, this was the ideal approach intentionally used to make Black learners passive recipients of information. Losinski (2017) notes that the traditional pedagogy promotes the teacher's supremacy. The teacher deposits information, through direct instruction, on the students who "meekly store it in their brains in order to regurgitate it later for a lifeless assessment" (Lonsinski, 2017, p. 2). This agrees with Freire (1970) who notes that the traditional pedagogy does not favour active learning and refers to this as the banking system of education. Marsh and Willis (2007) describe the traditional pedagogy as a one-sided approach to learning; it is a teacher-centred model where the teacher presents himself/herself as the formal authority. With authority comes power. The teacher authoritatively relies on the textbook and workbooks to give instructions, focusing on the positive results from assessments. He/she is the expert who possesses all knowledge within the classroom. This means the learners are viewed as mere receivers of knowledge. Learners passively receive instructions and work on the teachers' rules, while the use of

technology is low. This approach to teaching has a number of limitations. Freire (1970) suggests that the banking system of education turns people into submissive servants who do not have critical thinking skills. Because the method is teacher-centred, the teacher controls the knowledge, the pace and the environment. In this process, learners' needs are not given priority.

2.6.2 Modern poetry pedagogy

Morden pedagogy refers to a contemporary comprehensive set of educational practices and strategies designed to meet the needs of the 21st century learner in an ever-evolving society. This pedagogy embraces innovative methodologies that prioritise active engagement, critical thinking and learner empowerment, and it is integrative in nature. The key common elements associated with modern pedagogy are incorporation of technology in the classroom, student-centred learning and project-based learning (Dmitrenko et al. (2015). This methodology encourages learners to delve into real-world problems and projects that are relevant to their lives. In order to immerse learners in these authentic tasks in the poetry classroom, the teacher does not focus only on the textbook and on the contents of the poem that he/she is looking at. Rather, the teacher has ways of bringing in other subjects to contextualise the poem, in order to make it understandable to the learners. Planning is done, making the learner the central target (Newfield & Byrne, 2020). Through this method, learners participate in the process of building their knowledge. Freire (1970) sees transformative learning, dialogical education and problem-solving education in this pedagogy. This is because there is dialogue in the classroom and learners are viewed as active members of the society (Freire, 1970) to which they can contribute. The teacher only leads the learners and guides them to focus on the objectives of the subject. The teacher applies innovative modern teaching methods. Teaching is driven by technology to accommodate 21st century adolescents whom Hugo (2016) refers to as the generation Y to Z generation. This helps the learners create opportunities for themselves, as technology is part of their identity.

2.7 Poetry and canon

The definition of canon has been given earlier in Chapter 1 as a collection of works that are considered representative of a period or genre (Abu-Shomar, 2013). Because the South African Grade 11 English FAL curriculum relies on the canon to teach literature, it is crucial that it includes works that are representative of the society. However, the selection of poetry texts seems to be far removed from the contexts of the South African learners. The poetry texts studied by the Grade 11 English FAL learners do not have to teach every learner's individual experiences and cultural heritage, but they can cover themes that are relevant to adolescents such as love, hatred, crime, teenage pregnancy, fear, death, peer pressure and family relationships. These themes can prompt adolescents to tell their own stories, thereby putting them in a position to assert their identities. By composing their own poems and responding to classroom poetry discussions with imagination, feelings, logic and conviction, adolescents may understand themselves and their environments better, and this will help them to shape their identities. Sadly, these methodologies are hardly employed in the poetry classrooms as Creely (2019) claims that many teachers of English FAL focus on the technical aspects rather than the meaning of poetry. These teachers 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 labourious. Thus, adolescents struggle to relate to the prescribed poems. The non-appearance of Black women's poetry among the prescribed poems compounds the problem as the curriculum alienates girls. The patriarchal system, as noted by Nkealah (2013) and Jacobs and Andrews (2021), is sustained by gender power imbalance and when this is extended to the curriculum, it leaves girls to think that poetry is for men. These elements of segregation in the canon makes English FAL poetry learners to struggle to find relevance in the prescribed poetry texts. The inclusion of contemporary young Black South African and African poets in the curriculum and the change to a gender-balanced curriculum might help adolescents to develop their identities in the English FAL poetry classroom.

Significantly, the prescribed poetry canon is marked by contradiction. Canon, as mentioned by d'Abdon (2016), should strive to empower learners by instilling in them

skills that make them better readers, writers, speakers and critical thinkers. However, the Grade 11 South African canon seems not to meet this expectation; rather, it pushes the learners to the periphery through the prescription of poems with cryptic words, foreign terms and strange cultures. The abundance of literary and historical references found in the canonical English FAL poetry limits understanding greatly for non-native speakers of English. Brindley (cited in Finch, 2003, p. 29) notes that canonical "poems often deal with geographical or social settings alien to the students' experiences". Some of the poems prescribed in the Grade 11 English FAL curriculum such as "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" by William Wordsworth and "This Letter's to Say" by Raymond Wilson prove this assertion true as they present geographical and social contexts very different from those of the learners. This means that the curriculum expectations and the learners' experiences are divorced, making it harder for learners to bridge the gap between home poetic practices and classroom expectations. As a result, learners conclude that poetry is difficult and impossible to understand. This perception is imprinted on their memories and because it is shared by teachers, it affects pedagogy (Mavhiza & Prozesky, 2020). Fleming and Stevens (2015) note that poetry is often misconceived as a difficult genre. Adolescents may be very poetic through Hip Hop music and in many out-of-school gatherings, but learning classical poetry may be challenging for them. Gibbons, Dail and Stallworth (2006, p. 53) note that many teachers have come to acknowledge that teaching poetry, and especially the classics, is "similar to the reality of trying to teach a pig to sing. It does not work, and it annoys the pig." Effectively, teaching canonical poetry can be a torture for both the teacher and the learners.

2.7.1 The poetry canon as colonial heritage

African poetry has been in existence since time immemorial. Genis (2019) talks about South African indigenous poetry which can be traced back to the San through their rock art and folklore. The San made sense of their world through poetic storytelling which "named rocks, insects, animals and gods of the sky and earth (Genis, 2019, p. 61). These poems had moral lessons about life and they were passed orally from one generation to the other. Up to this day, the South African communities name events and people in celebration of the *Imbongi* (praise poet) and storytellers (Ned, 2019).

For example, Zolani Mkiva earned the title *Imbongi Yesizwe* (Poet of the Nation) after honouring the former President Nelson Mandela with praises in poetry form. Unfortunately, this heritage is lost in the CAPS. In spite of its rich history, the CAPS is mum about indigenous poetry forms. Thus, d'Abdon (2016) notes issues of power relations within the curriculum and concludes that leaving poetry on the page is promoting the legacy of a colonial project. In support of this argument d'Abdon, Byrne and Newfield (2020, p. 2) reiterate that the 21st century South African curriculum was "designed in order to advance a European agenda and perpetuate white male supremacy". This echoes what has been discussed earlier in Chapter 1 that the English FAL text selection is problematic mainly because it is shaped by Eurocentric epistemologies.

2.7.2 Decolonising the canon

Several South African academics have voiced their opposition to a Western-centric education system (Mbembe, 2015; d'Abdon, 2016; Naiker, 2016; d'Abdon, Byrne & Newfield, 2020). The term decolonisation has been used to refer to different things in academic circles since the beginning of the decolonisation campaign, for example, access to tertiary, infrastructure and public spaces (Mbembe, 2015). However, for this study, the term is used in the context of the Grade 11 English FAL canon to refer to the process of transforming the canon to re-centre African Indigenous art forms. Because traditional African learning was characterised by orality as a method of teaching, information was stored in the oral archives of communities and passed from one generation to the other. John and Visser (2017, p. 28) note that a "vast store of traditional African expressions, verses and storytelling forms to this day are in unwritten form." Within this context, d'Abdon (2016) notes the absence of spoken word poetry in the curriculum as disempowering. Hence, d'Abdon (2016) specifically looks at spoken word poetry as a tool for decolonising the curriculum because it has the potential to restore the balance which is presently absent. In his argument, d'Abdon (2016) further asserts that African contemporary poems should be taught alongside conventional Western poetry and this shift of gaze will bring African issues into the domain of South African poetry. On their part, Mvenene (2017) proposes the teaching of *Izibongo* (praise poetry) as a way of immersing learners in historical realities, an

approach that may help learners to develop their identities. All these ideas point to the infusion of Indigenous poetry into the curriculum as a step towards achieving the goal of decolonising the curriculum. Mavhiza and Prozesky (2020) suggest the selection of poetry texts and topics with learners' and teachers' contexts in mind. The following quotation in d'Abdon, Byrne and Newfield (2020, p. 3) by poet Diana Ferrus summarises the discussion on canon decolonisation: "We don't need the Canon. We don't need the gatekeepers. We don't even need the gates. We are climbing anyway. We want to know who we are." This means that identity is a crucial concept in human development and Africanising the canon will help learners to learn about their past which can be performed in the present.

2.8 Culture, poetry and adolescent identity

Culture, poetry and adolescents' identity are inextricably linked. Culture is enmeshed with language and, and most importantly for adolescents, language is a powerful tool for forming identity (Jocson, 2006). Poetry is an especially influential form of art in adolescence, as it speaks to the adolescent's complex inner emotions and experiences in a powerful and engaging way (Godsell, 2019), allowing them to explore and expand their perspectives. In addition to the literature that concerns poetry's role in the development of language, the literature on the role of poetry in the development of artistic skills (creativity, confidence, problem solving, collaboration) also demonstrates that poetry can provide students with an avenue for individual expression and an opportunity to develop a sense of personal identity (Jocson, 2006). Although teaching poetry has lucrative benefits for the emotional and identity development of adolescents, adolescents' voices have been ignored in an adult dominated world (Jocson, 2006). When poetry is taught well and the selection of texts is relevant, adolescents can easily connect the purpose of the poetry and the appropriateness of various discourses to their identity, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between the poetry texts and identity (d'Abdon, Byrne & Newfield (2020). This view is supported by Jocson (2006) who argues that writing and reciting poetry can furnish adolescents with a haven that allows them to accept themselves and share their individual experiences with peers. Through mediums like Hip Hop and the spoken word, "poetry interventions in and out of classrooms have innovated ways of engaging

adolescent youths' interest in poetry related activities" (Jocson, 2006, p. 70). The use of spoken word poetry in and outside of the classroom is an important approach that encourages the articulation of learners' voices and the development of their identities. Although commonly implemented beyond classroom walls, Low (2006, p. 5) argues that

> spoken-word holds important lessons for curriculum on how contemporary youth communicate, express themselves, make meaning through practices constituting what might be thought of as a counter-literacy outside the formal practices of literacy, pedagogy and curriculum and evolving out of exclusion, necessity, and improvident pleasure.

The importance of spoken word poetry in contemporary South Africa has been well documented by d'Abdon (2016) who acknowledges that literature and popular culture cannot be disregarded in the curriculum. The new South Africa is certainly a site where we can see daily evidence of the way that learners of all racial backgrounds are changing and adapting to new and distinct roles in relation to their situations. The children born post 1994 live in an essentially urbanised world; old ties of culture, tradition and authority are fast dissolving. Worthington and Cowden (2017) comment on the way African adolescents in particular face the problem of cultural alienation as they have to absorb Western middle-class mores and aesthetics because the educational system is geared to Western modes of thought. Their own cultures and traditions are rapidly being eroded. A more optimistic assessment of the situation is offered by Pieterse and Meintjies (2004, p. 59) when they speak of a "rapid and intense crosspollination of musical, dress and other aesthetic styles of popular culture". They recognise that values and traditions are indeed fluid and that South African "youth identity is under construction." These ideas are however impeded in the poetry canon which is largely one-directional toward Eurocentricism. McCarthy et al. (2005, p. 160), speaking from an international perspective, concur, stating that "culture and identity are the products of human encounters, the inventories of cross-cultural appropriation and hybridity". He criticises the hegemonic approach to education which keeps the "Eurocentric…core…in place" but which makes gestures in the direction of "minority and subaltern groups" by tacking onto the curriculum "selective non-conflictual items" from their culture, thus attempting to be inclusive and make general gestures of the correct political nature while claiming to be representative of all groups and identities

(McCarthy et al., 2005, p. 163). In line with this view and as discussed in the previous section, the South African poetry curriculum requires a complete revamp as a means of correcting the perpetuation of the supremacy of one group over another, so that the marginalised Indigenous groups can restore their identities and see relevance of their cultures in the poetry classroom.

2.9 Multimodal pedagogy in the poetry classroom

A multimodal pedagogy is a type of educational approach that connects different learning modalities, such as visual, auditory, tactile and digital, to teach learners new concepts and skills (Newfield & d'Abdon, 2015; Svärdemo & Akerfeldt, 2017). This pedagogy is rooted in the belief that learners learn better when presented with multiple learning modalities. The multimodal pedagogy allows learners to practice content in different ways, fostering a deeper and more meaningful understanding of content (Jewitt, 2014).

One of the most important effects of a multimodal pedagogy is increased learner engagement. Stein and Newfield (2006) 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 move away from the traditional autonomous model of literacy and a pedagogy that expects learners to cram literary devices rather than experience poetry. In their research, they devised an intervention that drew on the use of multimodal pedagogies to revitalise the genre of poetry. The 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 knowledges and practices (Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006). Multimodality in an English FAL poetry classroom can be an important way of neutralising the boring formal way of teaching poetry which follows the ATP strictly. This formal way starts with the teacher and learners looking at the meaning of the poem and figures of speech. These are the aspects that are emphasised in the ATP. After that, learners answer the questions in the textbook based on the poem being studied. In over 10 years of

teaching English FAL at Grade 11, I have realised that the lack of enthusiasm by learners in the poetry classroom and their mediocre performance in the poetry assessments has a lot to do with the employed pedagogy, as well as the canon which does not speak to the lives of the adolescents in South Africa.

Employing a multimodal approach in the 21st century offers a range of advantages for learning in the classroom. It is noted that adolescents are now more habitually reading texts that combine image, sound, and words, which are normally found in the digital spaces that are bound up in social practices. In this way, modern literacy practices have moved beyond the static and two-dimensional approach (Lothering & Jenson, 2011) and now incorporate multimodality. Multimodality is defined by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, p. 20) 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." A multimodal approach looks beyond language. Stein and Mamabolo (2005) undertook detailed ethnographic research in Johannesburg on the connections between home and school literacy practices. Their study concluded that families draw on their own resources to negotiate home-school relationships in distinct and diverse ways. Their findings suggest that this is a key part of the construction of literate identities of students and how they build and negotiate their education and literacy pathways through school and community life.

A multimodal approach to literacy focuses on the representations of learners across sites of learning and raises questions on how curriculum knowledge is organised, classified, represented, and communicated (Archer, 2017; Newfield & d'Abdon, 2015). It asks how different representations and modes of communication shape knowledge as well as locate and connect knowledge to the world. It queries what adolescents can do with poetry. The focus of all these questions lead to discussions on socially and culturally shaped resources.

Kress (2009) defines mode as a socially and culturally shaped resource for making meaning, for example, images, writing, layout, speech and moving images are all

modes. Moreover, Kress (2009) 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 adolescents 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, Newfield & d'Abdon, 2015). Most immediately, poetry's multimodal nature can be emphasised by means of performance. This helps adolescents to gain much greater understanding and appreciation of how language and structure create effects and convey meaning (Kalantzis et al., 2016).

The multimodal approach is growing in scope with the release of internet, computers, and other digital technologies (Archer, 2017). The onset of Covid-19 in 2020 has also fast-tracked the digital space in many countries. Important to my framing of multimodality and multiliteracies in the high school English FAL classroom is the premise that the wealth and diversity of literacies and identities that adolescents bring to the language and literacy classroom far exceed the demands of narrowly framed courses of study conveying discrete sets of literacy skills that must be learned in order to achieve success in the school. Vasudenvan and Campano (2009, p. 326) argue that in many cases adolescents are at risk in schools where "the expensive sense of self that many youths are experiencing in their out-of-school lives is being constricted or homogenised". Their review of a substantial body of research on adolescent literacies indicates the need for educators to develop ways of teaching that value the particularised identities of learners as well as the personal interests that they bring to the English FAL classroom. To do so means actively countering the kinds of classroom practices that delimit literacy and learning to sets of pre-defined, myopic educational objectives. Resisting this trend requires the development of pedagogies that undergo continuous change and a flexible canon which resists attempts to draw dichotomous boundaries between out-of-school and in-school literacy practices.

Adolescents are active agents who should guide their own education and have a great deal to say about the values of poetry in their lives. Dymoke and Hughs (2009, p. 230)

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.” Teachers should do their utmost to keep poetry multimodal, because leaving poetry on the page in the classroom is to “sound its death knell,” according to Black (2009, p. 1). A multimodal approach helps learners to “develop an engaged enjoyment and appreciation of poetry” as well as “creative and critical thinking” (Black, 2009, p. 28) during poetry lessons. Therefore, curriculum designers should take into cognisance the innovative approach to teaching poetry which embraces the modern changes to accommodate the needs of adolescents in the 21st century.

At the heart of learners’ digital practices are social networking sites. Social networking sites help learners to develop their social presence (Dymoke & Hughs, 2009). Social presence is defined by Kalantzis et al. (2016) as the ability to identify with the community in a trusting environment which fosters interpersonal relationships by way of protecting individual personalities. It is through these literate activities that learners can enhance their identity development. Therefore, as learners’ literacy practices become increasingly multimodal, digital and social, there is a need not only to include these practices in the modern pedagogy but also to help adolescents to be able to author their own lives through poetry. Hobbs (2010) articulates that the point of digital literacies is to simultaneously empower and protect people so that they actively engage with ideas and information to make decisions and participate in their social and cultural lives.

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 considered as having different potentials for learning and shaping of learners’ identities, and learners are motivated to make meaning in innovative ways which engage their minds and spark their interest. Recognition of multiliteracies helps learners to realise that they can contribute to their own learning. Scholars like Kress

(2000), Newfield and Maungedzo (2006), Newfield (2009), and Mavhiza and Prozesky (2020) 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.

The Department of Basic Education (2011) states that learners should enjoy poetry, and it accommodates the incorporation of poetry which is not prescribed. However, the real practice in the classroom does not allow the teachers of English FAL to be creative and bring in outside poetry as the teachers are always pressed with assessment. As a result, most English FAL teachers resort to the traditional way of teaching so that they can meet their objectives and continue with assessments. The classroom is not supporting the adolescents' development in helping them acquire more complex cognitive skills. They can think more abstractly and need to apply the knowledge they acquire in school to their communities. High school education curriculums should integrate all dimensions of adolescents' development through poetry. To provide a curriculum that enhances adolescents' identity development, more practical and real-life examples should be integrated into the English classroom and such examples should be included in teaching guides and textbooks. Curriculum should also give some autonomy to teachers and adolescents to participate in curriculum development and to incorporate adolescents' home and school literacies to meet the learning objectives.

The focus of this study is on South African adolescents. However, it is imperative to understand the global society's perspectives and attitudes towards poetry teaching and learning. The plethora of literature discussed earlier noted the benefits of poetry across societies because poetry is a universal genre. The challenges encountered in the teaching and learning of poetry in the South African English FAL classroom are not peculiar to Africa as stated before under section 2.6 of this chapter. From Indonesia, Masbuhin and Liao (2017, p.31) noted that the "unwillingness to teach poetry writing might be related to the English teachers' scepticism that poetry is difficult for both teachers and students." On the other hand, for Yemen, the challenge is with the learners, as Syed and Wahash (2020, p. 191) note that learners "are not interested

in poetry". They also note that the language in classical poems is difficult for learners and thus emphasise the need for careful selection of texts (Syed and Wahash, 2020). In contrast to the findings from Indonesia and Yemen, Europe, Munden and Skjaerstad (2018) identified that the teachers and learners in Norway value poetry both as an end in itself and for language learning and other purposes. The differing views of scholars presented here illustrate that canon and pedagogy are among the challenges encountered in the teaching and learning of English classroom poetry.

2.10 Chapter summary

In summary, the literature discussed in this chapter has raised important concerns about pedagogy and canon, which will inform the analysis of the effects of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. The value of poetry, the challenges that adolescents encounter with poetry, the different pedagogies used in the poetry classroom, and the problems with the Eurocentric canon are the fundamental points which have been discussed in this chapter using available literature. The South African poetry curriculum has also been discussed in this chapter and its shortfalls have been highlighted. The literature discussed above supports the notion of autonomous poetry classrooms for adolescents to develop their identities. The issues of context and identity are important as learners may find that the literature they are required to read does not have relevance to their lifeworld and therefore will be of little value as regards their personal growth and their understanding of the world. There is, of course, another side to the argument, and that is that learners can have their understanding of the world broadened by reading literature about other places, contexts and people; however, there is a very real possibility that if the world presented is vastly different from the learner's own, so much contextualisation has to take place that it inhibits effective learning. Therefore, an appropriate theoretical framework is needed for thinking of classroom poetry in a new way, a way that can do justice to English FAL poetry pedagogy and texts. The following chapter explores the theoretical and conceptual frameworks which underpin this study.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

In seeking to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom, one must come open-minded and be ready for a vast range of possible responses. I noted that the concepts of adolescents' identity development, pedagogy and canon are complex. Therefore, a singular theoretical framework would lack in rigour the knowledge needed to analyse and interpret the data that was collected. It was therefore more prudent to have a dual focused theoretical framework, and this study used a combination of the theory of identity development, focusing on the concept of youth identity during adolescence, proposed by Erik Erikson (1963; 1968) and critical pedagogy theorised by Paulo Freire (1970). This theoretical approach strengthened the data analysis in that the data was analysed in terms of how pedagogy directly affects adolescents' identities. It also ensured credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study's findings.

3.2 Eriksonian theory of adolescents' identity development

Erik Erikson was a German psychologist with a profound interest in the stages through which humans go to develop their unique identities. Revealing his basic philosophy, Erikson (1968, p. 23) maintains that one cannot separate "the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crisis in historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other". This suggests that humans' adult behaviour is largely determined by their adolescent experiences, which means that the adolescence stage is especially important to identity formation. It is at this stage of life that adolescents require supportive contexts to help them form their identities; poetry and relevant pedagogy form a crucial part of these contexts. What is unique about this stage of identity (adolescence), according to Erikson (1968), is that

it synthesises the earlier stage of life and gives anticipation for the future. Thus, the Grade11 English FAL adolescents come to class with identities from their home communities and their social lives, which the poetry classroom is expected to foster.

Erikson's theory of adolescents' psychosocial development is one of the chosen theories for this study because it crystallises the issue of identity crisis that adolescents face. When learners whose home language is not English encounter the learning of English as an additional language, they cannot avoid the experience of learner identity crisis because now they must learn English as a subject and do so in an environment quite different from home. According to Erikson (1968), the most important developmental task for adolescents is to solve the identity-versus-role-confusion crisis they experience. It is during this period that individuals are challenged to find meaning in their lives. Erikson (1968) describes identity as a fundamental organising principle which develops constantly throughout one's lifespan. This refers to ego identity which he defines as the conscious sense of self that humans develop through social interaction, and this constantly changes depending on new experiences and information which they acquire in their daily interactions with others. It is at the adolescence stage of life that children are concerned about how they appear to others and whether they fit in with their peers. Since contexts are not static and 21st century adolescents are confronted with a barrage of technological tools, their experiences in social spaces also influence their identity formation and development. Erikson (1968) stresses the role played by community in adolescents' identity development – as role models, motivators, and creators of positive identities. Therefore, pedagogy and canon are important aspects to take into consideration with regard to the identity development of adolescents who spend much of their time in the school environment.

As social institutions, schools have a direct effect on adolescents' identities, not just because school is where they spend most of their time but also because school shapes the values that help form their identities. Within the school curriculum, poetry has a significant role to play, and the poetry themes cover a broad spectrum of human experiences. Therefore, in view of Erikson's idea that the community influences adolescents' identity development, I argue that the poetry classroom can trigger,

support and scaffold identity formation in adolescents. However, this depends largely on what happens in the poetry classroom: what is taught, how it is taught and how learners are engaged. Erikson (1963) placed the individual within the social context, considering both internal and external pressures. Other scholars like Marcia (1966) and Luychx et al. (2008) are among the scholars that have further developed Erikson's identity theory.

Expanding on Erikson's theory, Marcia (1966) conceptualised the identity status using four statutes: identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. Identity diffusion describes youth who have neither established any life goals nor committed to a particular identity. The foreclosure status postulates that the youth are committed to values and life goals assigned to them. The moratorium status is the level when the youth can argue, and Marcia (1966) calls this stage the identity crisis stage where the youth want to explore and experiment with different values, beliefs, and goals. Finally, the identity achievement status is the status when the youth are said to have achieved their identity through exploration and strong commitment to the decisions made on values, beliefs, and goals that the youth feel is important.

Bosman (1992) contends that even though Marcia's theory helped researchers to examine the identity stage, it appears to be more construed as endpoints in development rather than part of a dynamic process as described by Erikson. The other weakness that Marcia's (1966) extension of Erikson's theory has is that it focuses on commitments and exploration of those commitments instead of considering the process of identity development that Erikson conceptualised as an interplay between internal and external factors (Schwartz, 2001). On the other hand, Luychx et al's (2008) comprehensive theory reflects a viewpoint coming from persons looking at identity development from a privileged status. For example, the desirability of the achieved status may be a function of Western bias, and such models may not be applicable when working with diverse groups that characterise South African township schools. Even though Marcia (1966) and Luychx et al.'s (2008) views on identity development are relevant, the weaknesses highlighted herein make them less suitable than Erikson's in a study on adolescents' identity development. Therefore, the

theoretical ideas of Erikson (1963; 1968) guided this study. The conception of identity by Erikson is interdisciplinary in that it acknowledges biological endowment, personal experience, and cultural milieu, which together give meaning and continuity to one's unique existence. Erikson's ideas apply to adolescents irrespective of race, class, and geographical location, because adolescents everywhere experience the stage of identity versus role confusion.

3.2.1 Criticisms of Eriksonian theory

Criticism of Erikson's theory of identity development has focused on several points, including the lack of attention to social influences on identity formation, the limited description of certain stages, and the difficulty of testing the theory in a laboratory setting. Critics have argued that Erikson's theory is overly reductionist as it fails to consider influences such as peer pressure, parental expectations, and socio-economic factors that can have a strong impact on identity development (Shaffer & Kipp, 2013). The other problem with Erikson's theory is the limited description of some of the stages of psychosocial development. For example, Erikson could have given more details about the stage of young adulthood (stage 6) which is the stage of intimacy versus isolation, because at this stage most learners are affected by intimate relationships and this has a great influence on their identity development. This stage overlaps with the adolescence stage (stage 5) and therefore is a crucial stage for understanding, especially because in this study the adolescent age has been placed at 16–20 years.

Erikson's theory of identity has also been criticised for being biased towards boys. For example, Walter and Peterson (2002) feel that Erikson's treatment of female identity development portrays women as inferior, weak and hopelessly dependent on men. Erikson (1968, p. 12) states that a woman "holds her identity in abeyance as she prepares to attract the man by whose name she will be known, by whose status she will be defined, the man who will rescue her from emptiness and loneliness by filling the inner space." If this has sexual overtones, then it is the reason why Erikson is discredited for implying that women are inferior and should submit to male supremacy.

3.2.2 The relevance of Eriksonian theory for this study

Despite the criticisms outlined above, Erikson's theory is still relevant in today's society because it was written in broad terms and can thus be judiciously appropriated to make sense of identity development among adolescents in any society. It is still very much reflective of young people's real life experiences across cultures. Erikson (1968) acknowledges that adolescents go through a great deal of turmoil as they desperately try to be what they are expected to be in the school environment and at the same time try to be themselves. However, this crisis in their lives should not be if the school employs curriculum that is coordinated with their lives. Adolescents desire to express themselves in their learning spaces, and making connections with poetry is paramount to their development within the English learning space. This is because poetry fosters self-expression. Therefore, if adolescents connect intimately with poetry, they will be able to express themselves freely. In addition, linking poetry to their lives helps adolescents to build meaning and it aids memory retention (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014). Erikson's theory is important for this study because it places the poetry classroom at the centre of adolescents' identity development. The poetry classroom is critical in creating an environment where each learner feels appreciated and is eager to learn new things, build on relationships with peers and develop their identities. Hooser (2020) encourages the application Erikson's theory of adolescents' psychosocial development in the classroom through having interactive teaching approaches. As I explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development, this theory becomes vital to my study since I advocate for adolescents' voices to be heard, not only in the classroom setup but in the English FAL poetry curriculum as well.

Poetry, as discussed in Chapter 2, has therapeutic effects on the mind (Raghuram, 2007; Bila & Abodunrin, 2020). Many adolescents struggle with questions, as outlined in Figure 1 below. These worries create uncertainities if they are not addressed. Thus, poetry helps adolescents to address their fears, losses and sense of helplessness while simultaneously figuring out solutions. However, for these benefits to be realised in the English FAL classroom, there is need for a selection of relevant poetry and a pedagogy that is communicative. The poetry classroom as a social context has the

potential either to foster the identity development of adolescents or to allow adolescents yield to role confusion. Figure 1 below summarises the Ericksonian concept of identity versus identity confusion during the adolescence stage (stage 5).

Figure 2: Erikson's stage 5 of identity development (identity versus identity confusion)



http://drvidyahattangadi.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ericson2.jpg

Erikson's (1968) theory is relevant to this study because of its in-depth conceptualisation of adolescents' identity development and the attendant crisis of identity versus identity confusion that adolescents face, which becomes a matter for interrogation in an English FAL poetry classroom. With the classroom being a social context, issues of power and authority emerge. The hierarchies within this context can assert ideological positionings which confine learners to defined roles in life and limit their freedom to be what they want to be, and this in turn may have an impact on adolescents' identity development. That makes critical pedagogy equally crucial for this study.

3.3 Freirean theory of critical pedagogy

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator with activist interest in rethinking education to be more inclusive of marginalised groups. Freire's (1970) theory of critical pedagogy examines the role of education in the life of a child but also considers the nature and purpose of education within society as a whole. Freire developed his ideologies based on views of education by American educational reformer John Dewey (1938). However, while Dewey emphasised participatory education, Freire talks about dialogic education with emphasis on liberating and humanising the oppressed. Dewey (1938) believed that the school environment should mirror the society since human experiences of the past, present and future influence the capacity to learn. In addition, Dewey proposed that good experiences now would impact future decisions and experiences (Sikandar, 2016). Dewey and Freire's reflections are similar in the sense that they both criticise the traditional pedagogy and point out its limitations in addressing learners' needs. This is important for this study where there is advocacy for contemporary poetry in the curriculum to meet learners' needs in the 21st century as well as for the adoption of the multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom to help learners interpret and enjoy poetry.

In as much as Dewey's theory could be relevant to this study, it has some limitations, which include the focus on the education of younger children whereas this study focuses on adolescents who can actually be classified as young adults. Dewey's (1938) theory is also less suitable for this study because it appeals to a democratic society owing to Dewey's American background. By contrast, Freire grew up in poverty-ravaged Brazil, an environment which can easily compare to the South African townships where this research was conducted. This explains why in his theory of education Freire (1970) focuses on societal educational imbalances. From the perspective of this study, these imbalances are the questionable curriculum with an unfair poetry text selection and the problematic pedagogies employed by the teachers in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. These imbalances are what have led to the increasing call for the decolonisation of the South African poetry education system, as highlighted in Chapter 2. The impetus for the decolonisation call is the

scholarly realisation that the South African English curriculum, many years after apartheid, still perpetuates colonial knowledge while African ideologies of poetry remain unexplored in the classroom (d'Abdon, 2016; Genis, 2019; Godsell, 2019; d'Abdon, Byrne & Newfield, 2020). This study questions both the canon and the pedagogy in the English FAL poetry classroom and this makes Freire's theory of critical pedagogy relevant for its interpretation of the data collected. In Freire and Macedo (1987), Freire states that only those that have power can define what is correct and what is not correct; only them can also decide what forms of intellectualism are acceptable and not acceptable. These words indicate that canonisation comes with power. The curriculum designers are the powerful individuals in the education system. They decide what poetry should be prescribed and what should be left out. How power plays out in curriculum choices was a concern for Freire and this makes his theory of critical pedagogy a significant source of insight for this study.

Critical pedagogy is a theory of learner empowerment. This is important for South Africa because the Grade 11 English FAL poetry canon does not empower adolescents by giving them poems that they can connect to their lived experiences, thereby developing their identities. Freire (1970, p. 173) believed that education could create for learners a "world of possibilities", but instead it was serving the status quo by imprisoning naturally inquiring and curious minds in cells of silence and submission. In line with Freire (1970), Apple (1979) asserts that schools do not only control people; they also control meaning. In addition, Apple (1979) argues that knowledge in schools is legitimised to support specific social norms. By this, Apple (1979) implies that the social norms promoted in the schools produce learners and teachers who are not able to challenge social disparities. In South Africa, instead of the schools mirroring society, learners are exposed to content that is divorced from their daily life experiences. Apple (1979) describes schools as empty boxes, implying that the curriculum has no impact on learners' identity development. Although Apple's theory is not being adopted as part of the theoretical framework for this study, it has been necessary to engage his ideas because they echo a lot of Freire's ideas about oppressive education.

Freire (1970) talks about the banking system of education where those being educated are converted into empty containers to be filled by the educators. This is an oppressive system of education which in this study equates to the traditional pedagogy deployed in poetry classrooms in South Africa. The reason Freire (1970) calls this educational model a banking system is that it regards the depositing of knowledge into learners to be one of the most important purposes of education. Freire (1970, p. 72) explains this as follows:

> The students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.

According to Freire in the quotation above, the banking system of education ignores the fact that learners are human beings with historical and socio-cultural experiences that have shaped their identities. Instead, the system pushes an agenda to suppress the learners' humanity. Within this system, the educator is all-knowing while those being educated are empty vessels. The educator speaks and those being educated listen amenably. Thus, the educator deposits knowledge mechanically into the memory bank of the learners (Freire, 1970). While the learners are pre-occupied with storing the material loaded on them, their critical consciousness that would have helped them to intervene in the world becomes passive (Freire, 1970). Furthermore, Freire (1970) notes that the banking system of education is not libertarian and that it causes the oppressed to become obedient and alienated. This model of education ignores learners' life problems, wishes and anxieties. Rather than acknowledging the lives of the learners and providing the learners with the tools to solve their problems, this model of education seeks to change the learners to conform to its own purpose. The model makes the individual an object on which work is performed, and the learner is regarded as a tool for teaching to achieve its purpose. Therefore, the target achieved by the banking system of education is the creation of a consciousness that is alien to the learner.

According to Freire (1970), banking education is one of the greatest instruments that hinder the humanisation process of learners. Opposing the banking model, Freire argues that the main purpose of education is to develop the social awareness and critical thinking skills of people (Freire, 1970). Thus, he proposed the theory of critical pedagogy. Within this framework, Freire (1970) considers education as a process of assisting learners, including adult learners, to develop their social awareness and critical thinking skills. He believes that this purpose can be achieved through a problem-posing education that helps learners acquire problem-solving skills (Freire, 1970). In this study, problem-solving education is reflected in the modern pedagogy which involves multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies, and is a pedagogy that is dialogical. Freire considers this an alternative to the banking model of education.

Dialogue is central to critical pedagogy because Freire regards dialogue as the most important item in the knowledge structure. He contends that “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 1970, p. 72). By implication, classrooms where critical pedagogy is implemented become meeting places where information is researched and shared by both teachers and learners, thereby creating an environment that allows young adults to develop their identities. It is apparent here that Freire does not consider dialogue simply as an education technique that leads to the attainment of certain results; rather, dialogue for him is complementary to human nature. In other words, we need others to know ourselves and we can affirm our identity only through other people when we engage them in dialogue. Freire (1970) suggests that the human has a social and historical existence unlike other living beings. Besides, the human has the capacity to know himself/herself. In other words, human beings are conscious of their incompleteness unlike other living beings. Therefore, humans can educate themselves by encountering others. Dialogue, according to Freire (1970), means the encounter between men mediated by the world in order to name the world. As dialogue is an existential reality, it should be applied to the pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1970), because even the oppressed have the right to name the world.

Freire's theory of critical pedagogy is relevant to this study because of its focus on problem-posing education. According to Aliakbari and Faraji (2011), critical pedagogy enables learners to focus on real life problems. I believe that when learners are motivated to talk about their real life experiences, they develop problem-solving skills. The poetry classroom presents an excellent opportunity to do this since decoding meaning in poetry makes for problem-solving. Critical pedagogy is also applicable to this study because of its emphasis on dialogic education. Freire (1970) takes dialogue as an element of pedagogical communication, so education means sharing. Therefore, education must be based on dialogue through which relational opportunities are created. In dialogical educational spaces, no one instructs another person. This enables adolescents, who are at a stage of trying to figure out who they are and what their potentialities are, to feel empowered and be responsible for their knowledge acquisition. Effectively, the educator learns from the learners and the learners learn from the educator in the process of dialogue; so the roles of the educator and the learners interchange.

Since critical pedagogy is about stimulating consciousness amongst the oppressed in order to dismantle structural oppression, it presents itself as a fitting theoretical framework to understand the reactions of Grade 11 English FAL learners to canonical poetry. As noted in Chapter 2, the poetry canon that is prescribed for Grade 11 English FAL is oppressive; it suppresses the voices of adolescents since it presents experiences that are unrelatable to the life experiences of the learners. Learners' responses to this oppressive canon can therefore be explained through the lens of critical pedagogy theory. In addition, how poetry is taught determines whether it fosters liberating or oppressive education. Critical pedagogy again becomes useful in this study on the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development since Freire (1970, p. 79) states that "liberating education consists of acts of cognition, not transferal of information". Such insightful theoretical ideas provide an appropriate basis for assessing the extent to which the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom is practicing liberating education.

3.3.1 Criticisms of Freirean theory

Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy, which focuses on creating an environment in which learners and teachers engage in a dialogue within the classroom, has gained a great deal of attention and praise within the field of education. However, there are also some criticisms and reservations against Freire's pedagogical approaches. One notable criticism that critical pedagogy faces is its failure to recognise the diversity of learners that can be found in most classrooms. Freire's approach heavily relies on a common dialogue between the teacher and the learners and this dialogue assumes that learners would understand the teacher's view and also that they will be able to provide input and feedback (Stańczyk, 2021). While this dialogue can be rewarding and educational (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011), for some learners it can be intimidating, while for those who do not feel empowered to participate in such a dialogue it can be difficult. This lack of consideration for different learning styles of learners can lead to frustration in the classroom and stagnation of learning.

The other challenge that Freire's theory has is its assumption that implementing critical pedagogy approaches in the classroom is a hassle-free process, as brought out by Nkealah and Simango (2023). In their argument, Nkealah and Simango (2023) note that pre-service teachers of English are equipped with the knowledge and skills that critical pedagogy offers but there are various contextual factors that limit the applicability and practicality of critical pedagogy approaches in the classroom when these teachers enter the school system. They cite the ATP and examination oriented curriculum among the issues that lead to failed attempts to apply Freire's theory in the English classroom (Nkealah and Simango, 2023). This indicates that Freire's theory needs augmentation for it to reflect the learner reality in different contexts. However, Sanders (2020) claims that the challenges that some educators experience with the implementation of Freire's theory in the classroom result from the existence of fundamental differences in epistemological access. While this is a valid argument, it must be acknowledged that critical pedagogy is also riddled with internal contradictions and weakened by its simplistic approach to learner empowerment that fails to recognise the different power relations in the classroom.

3.3.2 The relevance of Freirean theory today

Freire's (1970) theory of critical pedagogy is still relevant today and is especially relevant to this study on adolescents' identity development through literature. Freire's claim that education should be a process of humanisation rather memorisation or consumption of facts is important for this study which interrogates pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. While some criticism has been directed at Freire's dialogical concept because of its failure to recognise learner diversity in aptitude, as noted in the previous section, it is undeniable that true learning involves dialogue between teacher and learners. The dialogical approach is important because it encourages deeper understanding of learners – their fears and aspirations, their hidden emotions, their learning needs – which enables the teacher to refine teaching to be able to assist the learners develop their identities. Critical pedagogy is also relevant in promoting critical thinking skills which are valuable in modern society.

Another essential aspect in Freire's (1970) theory is its ability to continuously interrogate and transform educational systems in an ever-changing world. His ideas are still relevant in the 21st century, especially in the face of increasing racial and economic disparity between the rich and the poor. Freire was ahead of his time in advocating for equality and social justice – ideologies which have since been embraced by many who seek to create a path of holistic education for everyone. As discussed in Chapter 2, South Africa has seen a rise in academic protests against Eurocentric educational systems, with scholars proposing decolonisation of the curriculum, including the poetry curriculum (Mbembe, 2015; d'Abdon, 2016; d'Abdon, Byrne & Newfield, 2020). These protests can be linked to Freire's philosophy of collective liberation by breaking oppression, domination and exclusion. The opposing concepts of freedom and oppression allow learners an opportunity to explore their own thoughts, values and hopes; they are able to make meaningful connections between the poetry taught in the classroom and their own identity formation processes. This makes their education liberating.

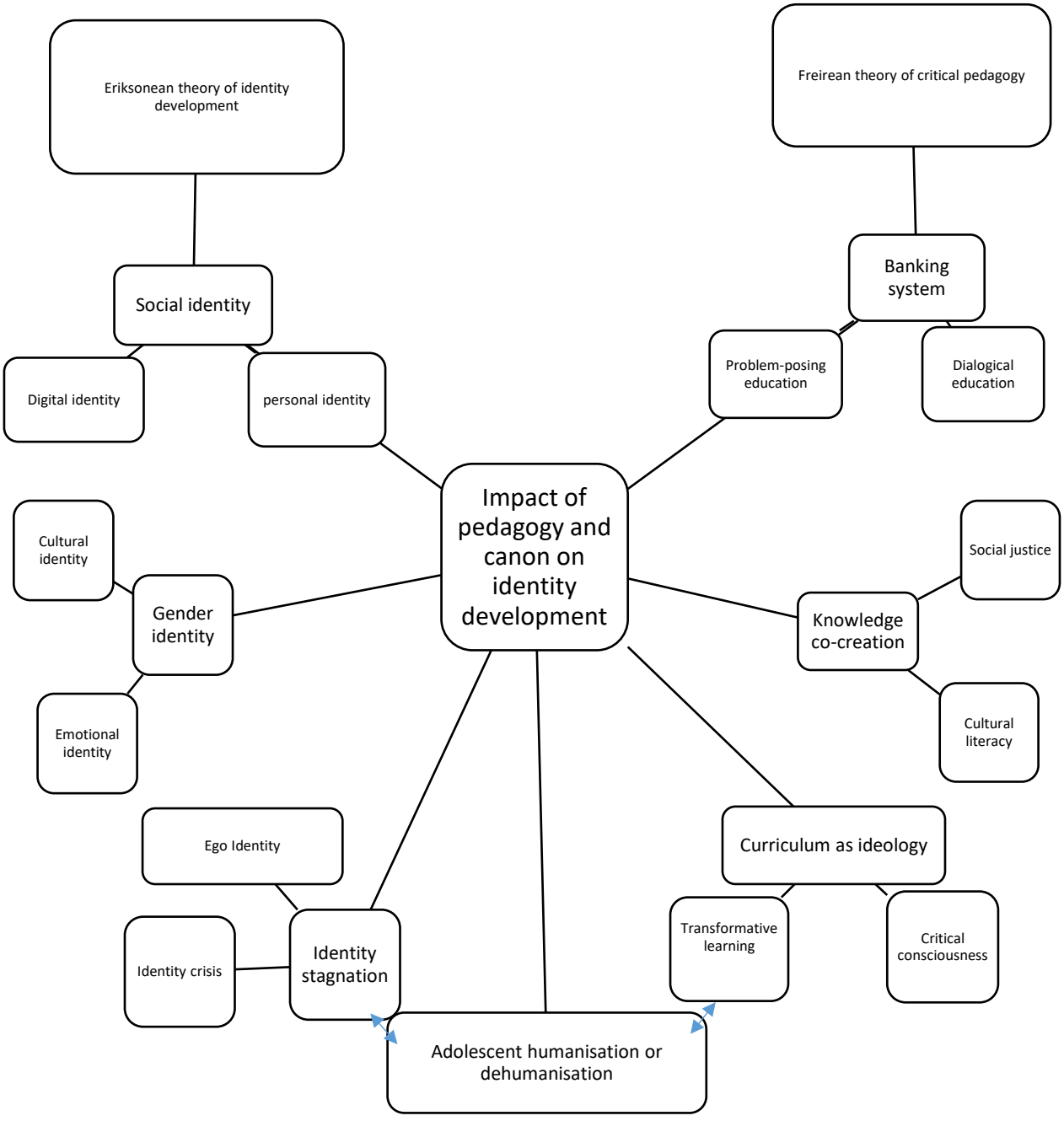
The persistent relevance of critical pedagogy today is evident in the way the theory continuous to inform new conversations in the 21st century. These conversations relate to the new realities, ways being and living in the digital world which defines the 21st century. Jandric and McLaren (2020) propose the concept of critical utopia as a reinvention of Freire's critical pedagogy in and for contemporary postdigital society. The digital revolution can be seen as a fulfilment of Freire's (1970, p. 35) declaration: "Critical consciousness, they say, is anarchic. Others add that critical consciousness may lead to disorder. Some, however, confess 'Why deny it? I was afraid of freedom. I am no longer afraid!'" These words by Freire show the importance of contemporary revolutionary critical pedagogy. Because this study advocates the use of technological tools in poetry pedagogy, critical pedagogy remains valuable in its interpretation of findings. The South African education system is still battling to close the gaps of inequality created by the colonial education system. This makes Freire's ideas on critical consciousness and social justice all the more relevant. The task for education scholars and practitioners is to demonstrate precisely the ways in which critical pedagogy enables the processes of transformation, decolonisation and reformation of the education system.

3.4 The theoretical framework

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this study utilises a dual theoretical framework incorporating theories by Erikson (1963, 1968) and Freire (1970). Both theories provide insights into the experiences of adolescents, with each having a unique approach in how to effectively work with and engage young people. Erikson proposed the theory of identity development which provides an understanding of how people navigate different life stages and developmental tasks. Stages 5 and 6 of Erikson's development stages focus on adolescence and young adulthood, respectively. These two stages overlap and therefore the knowledge about them forms the substance of the theoretical knowledge borrowed from Erikson to interpret the findings of this study. On his part, Freire (1970) proposed the theory of critical pedagogy in which he seeks to empower people by teaching them to reflect critically on the systems at work in the world. Freire's theory puts emphasis on creating a self-motivated learning environment that allows adolescents to make informed decisions

based upon reflective thought processes. Putting together the two theories entails streamlining them to extract just the key concepts that are relevant for interpreting the findings of this study as well as illustrating clearly the points of convergence that make them equally relevant. Figure 2 below does exactly this in visual form.

Figure 3: The interconnection of Eriksonian and Freirean theories



The diagram above is a demonstration of the theoretical framework for this study, showing the key concepts that have been used in an effort to find answers to the research question: what is the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom? Because the participants of this study were Grade 11 learners classified as adolescents, concepts were drawn from the two relevant developmental stages of Erikson's psychosocial development (stages 5 and 6) and from relevant sections of Freire's critical pedagogy theory.

Starting with Erikson, the concept of ego identity, as outlined by Erikson (1963), is the awareness of an individual's uniqueness within the society. This concept is particularly relevant to the developmental stage of adolescence because it is during this period that young people experience physical, emotional, and psychological transitions which lead to a strong sense of self. In addition, the concept of identity versus identity confusion is a crucial turning point in the development of insight, autonomy and self-direction. Identity is one's sense of self in relation to the outside world, while identity confusion is an uncertainty as to how one should behave in certain circumstances (Erikson, 1968). These two concepts are closely linked: identity confusion often occurs when someone has not yet attained a solid identity and remains uncertain about how to act in a given situation. According to Erikson (1968), identity begins to emerge during the early stages of adolescence. During this time, a child's thoughts and actions are heavily shaped by their own beliefs and values. It is during this time that they begin to evaluate the world around them and form their own sense of self. If this process is disrupted or shaped by the external pressures of society, identity confusion can occur. Thus, the environment in which the adolescent resides or spends time must be conducive to identity development in order to prevent what Erikson (1963) proposed as identity stagnation. Stagnation happens when adolescents get stuck in the process of identity formation due to lack of supportive insights from their surrounding environment.

To reach a stage of identity formation, adolescents must form a strong sense of who they want to become. They must learn to trust their instincts and decisions and they

must feel supported by those around them. Apart from the communities where learners reside, the school and the English FAL poetry classroom in particular also have a big role to play in this case. The adolescence stage is a particularly volatile time of life and adolescents' social status, which includes associated values, expectations and beliefs held by their family and society, can influence how they construct their identities. For example, a person from a high socio-economic status family might be encouraged to pursue higher education, while a person from a low-income family might face limited opportunities and thus be encouraged to find employment right after high school. These different expectations can shape young people's social identities.

One of Erikson's (1968) unique concepts is the emotional aspects of a person's identity throughout their lifespan. Erikson identified particular stages of development that a person passes through in the course of their life and focused on the emotional elements that each stage brings forth. The stage of adolescence is of particular interest here as it coincides with many important changes in emotional identity. In some instances, the emotional identity carries along some moral obligations. This makes the other important concept to be moral identity. In some cases, adolescents want to explore and this prompts them to make moral decisions. These decisions are made while adolescents try to discover who they are and how they fit into the world. Moral identity as described by Erikson (1968) is the component of identity development associated with the understanding of right and wrong and the emergence of one's moral self-concept. As adolescents reconcile the contradictions between their developing sense of themselves and the values of society, they form moral definitions of who they are and what they deem to be right and wrong. Within the context of socially accepted roles, Erikson (1968) further proposed the concept of social identity which suggests that adolescents search for an identity amongst their peers through experimentation and the adoption of unique characteristics. Erikson's social identity concept proposes that the social group that a person associates with defines the individual's identity. Erikson believes that this process of identity formation can determine a person's future life choices. It is highlighted particularly in adolescence as adolescents are still finding a direction in their lives.

The primary way adolescents discover identity is through exploring values, beliefs, interests, and goals in relation to those of their peers. They become aware of their own differences, but also their similarities and shared values and goals. Through experiences such as friendships, social media interactions, and physical activities, adolescents develop cultural identity. Erikson (1968) argues that the search for cultural identity is central to adolescence. He suggests that individuals develop a secure identity in order to become mature and successful adults who are fully integrated in their culture and society. During the adolescence stage, individuals confront, reject, embrace or adapt to different aspects of cultural identity to form their own identities. Within the concept of cultural and social identity, Erikson infused the gender identity concept. According to Erikson, gender identity emerges from the individual's interactions with their parents and society. As children grow, they begin to internalise expectations related to their gender and develop a sense of self that fits within socially accepted roles for their gender. Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of development proposes that during this stage, adolescents confront the challenge of developing a gender identity and become competent in their gender roles and expressions. His gender identity concept suggests that our gender identity, or the extent to which we accept or reject a particular gender role, is shaped by the roles and expectations we learn and internalise during our formative years. According to Erikson, the adolescent years are a crucial period in which children accept and embrace their own gender identity.

During an individual's adolescent stage many aspects of life, such as identity and interactions, are re-evaluated and reconstructed. As technology continues to grow, so does humans' need to communicate with the digital world, allowing everybody, including adolescents, to take part in discussions of identity in the virtual world. The concept of digital identity explores how adolescents use the power of technology to create, explore and maintain their evolving identities. Digital identity can be defined as an online or networked identity adopted or the practice of claiming to be an existing person in digital spaces, usually fabricated with inaccurate or incomplete information (Svärdemo & Akerfeldt, 2017). The digital identity defines the 21st century adolescents in many ways.

The key concepts pulled from Freire's theory which relate to adolescence are problem-posing education, dialogue, critical consciousness, knowledge co-creation, social justice, transformative learning, cultural literacy and the banking system of education. Problem-posing education, as it relates to adolescents, is the emphasis on helping learners explore complex problems in their lives through dialogue and contemplation. Through problem-posing, learners are encouraged to think critically and question their own thinking processes, while also engaging in meaningful conversations with their peers. By addressing the problems that they encounter, learners can gain insight and understanding into their own behaviour and come up with potential solutions. The problem-posing concept has dialogue as its key element. Dialogue removes the autocratic classroom environment and paves way for cultural literacy, social justice and youth empowerment. Because of his own activist work, Freire (1970) proposed that social change is possible through enabling education and by dismantling systems of oppression. He argued that by engaging in critical literacy, cultivating a solid understanding of culture and history, and challenging oppressive dynamics in society, youth can act as agents of social transformation. Adolescents, just like the oppressed that Freire (1970) speaks about, have the power to enact change and to challenge oppressive systems. Freire's critical pedagogy theory was founded upon the premise that no individual exists in a vacuum and that knowledge should be formed from a collective experience. Freire believes that education should be a shared experience and should prioritise the active participation of youth. By recreating the notion of schooling, Freire (1970) challenged traditional values and the status quo, which typically view adolescents as passive beings.

3.5 Chapter summary

In summary, Erikson and Freire's theories illustrated above indicate how poetry pedagogy and canon are directly implicated in adolescents' identity development. Erikson's identity theory specifies that adolescents are humans with feelings and emotions. Their societal interactions have the potential to either shape or destroy their identity development. Similarly, Freire challenges the traditional pedagogy which sees

the teacher as an all-knowing individual who passes on directives to the learners. Freire's critical pedagogy theory aims at liberating learners, seeing them as participants who are capable of contributing to their own learning. Freire provides an example of how critical literacy can be used to raise the social conciousness of learners and suggests that learners be given the opportunity to explore and construct knowledge. As explained above, these two theories are interlinked and have been used as the theoretical framework for interpreting the findings of this study.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical framework of this research. As was explained, the study uses a dual theoretical framework which combines the Eriksonian theory of identity development and the Freirean theory of critical pedagogy. This chapter outlines the methodological processes that were followed in the study to explore the effect of poetry pedagogy and canon on identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. Thus, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology for the study and shows how the choices made assisted in providing a better understanding of the phenomenon that was explored. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) describe research methodology as the approach that the researcher takes in conducting the research project. To some extent, this dictates the tools the researcher selects. This chapter therefore explains the chosen research paradigm, research method, research design, sampling method and procedures, research context and participants, data collection methods and procedures, and data analysis method. In addition, it explains the ethical matters that were considered for the data collection and reporting of findings as well as matters of reliability, validity and credibility.

4.2 Research paradigm

There are at least three positions from which reality is viewed, namely, a positivist, interpretive and critical perspective (Harrison, 2010) and each of them has its own approach in viewing ontology, epistemology, and methodology. For example, the positivist view looks at research as taking place independently from the researcher. It views research as an objective exercise which seeks truth through scientific means without taking into consideration the human nature of subjects (Kivunja, 2017). It does not take context into account. As a result, it was not appropriate to apply positivism in

this study; the contextual nature of events and issues had to be taken into consideration.

The critical paradigm views the world from the perspective of the researched and researcher, with the aim of confronting social oppression at whichever level it occurs (Creswell, 2014). Basically, it seeks to change the world. While this approach has the potential to produce valuable insights on social phenomena, its applicability in the education context is riddled with challenges. In educational contexts of research, stakeholders may have different views and it could be difficult to assess the validity of these perspectives without bias. Moreover, a direct challenge of power structures could lead to issues with ethics as data may be taken out of context.

The third research paradigm is the interpretive paradigm which emphasises the importance of the involvement of the researcher in the research process in order to better understand the world of the participants. This is the paradigm that this study fits into. Harrison (2010) explains interpretivism as a position based on a life-world ontology that argues that all observation is both theory and value laden and an exploration of the social world cannot be done in pursuit of a detached objective truth. Epistemologically, the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges that our knowledge of reality is a social construction of human actors. The interpretivist paradigm was most applicable for this project because this is exploratory research, and different interpretations about the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development could be made from the data. Identity development is a phenomenon that requires understanding the adolescents themselves rather than observing from a distance; thus, the research tools in place engaged with the adolescents to hear their voices.

4.3 Research design

According to Creswell (2014), research design refers to the strategy that one chooses in order to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring effective address of the research problem. This study is qualitative research and there are several types of qualitative research designs, namely, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Since this research aimed to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom, it adopted the case study design which is defined by Page and Meyer (2000) as an in-depth description of an individual, group or organisation either to determine who makes a case superior or inferior or also to determine similarities and differences across cases. The study provided deep insights into the problems around canon and pedagogy in English FAL poetry classrooms and the effect these problems have on the identity development of adolescents.

Due to the complexity of this study, it was designed as a dual case study. Johnson and Christensen (2011) note that a case study is a research that provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases. The dual case study is an appropriate design for this study because it focuses on a phenomenon in detail using multiple cases to discover data which under normal circumstances cannot be found in quantitative research. The flexibility offered by the case study design allowed me to visit two township schools in semi-urban Johannesburg for the purpose of collecting data on canon and pedagogy in the traditional poetry classroom and canon and pedagogy in the modern poetry classroom so that I could make an inquiry into how pedagogy and canon in the two classrooms affected adolescents' identity development.

Shortcomings of case studies have been noted by some authors and one of the weaknesses mentioned is their explorative nature (Cresswell, 2008; Hatch, 2012). However, for this study, the explorative nature was found suitable for understanding

data which established the limitations and affordances of the traditional and modern pedagogies and then establish the ways in which the two different pedagogies limit or extend opportunities for expression that support identity formation for adolescents in the English FAL poetry classroom.

The dual focused theoretical framework described in Chapter 3 informed the research design decisions for this study. The combination of Erikson's (1963; 1968) theory of adolescents' identity development and Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy necessitated a case study design. Erikson's (1968) theory indicates that identity is not static; it is influenced by one's surroundings. According to Freire (1970), these surroundings can enhance one's critical consciousness. This critical consciousness can then enable a person to make changes in their lives, and these changes include identities. Linking Freire's theory to Erikson's, these changes can be either positive or negative, resulting in identity development or identity confusion. Thus, the dual case study design allowed me to observe pedagogy and canon in two different surroundings or classrooms to be able to decipher how each one enhanced or forestalled adolescents' identity development.

4.4 Research method

As mentioned earlier, this study sought to understand the effect of the poetry pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. In other words, the study sought to find out how learners' identity formation is influenced by poetry pedagogy and canon in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom. There are basically two approaches to doing research: qualitative and quantitative. However, it should be noted that there is also the mixed-method research approach which is the combination of the two approaches. In this study, a qualitative approach to research was used.

Plenty definitions for qualitative research have been given and formalised. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 3) state 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." Similarly, Hatch (2012) notes that qualitative research looks at the lived experiences of real people in their natural settings in an attempt to gain their perspectives. 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 participants' point of view (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative research method is appropriate for this study because it allows a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena and contexts than a quantitative method would do. In this study, the responses to the research questions could not easily be put into numbers but rather be examined for emerging insights; thus, the qualitative method was deemed appropriate. In the data collection phase, the Grade 11 English FAL adolescents were heard and observed in order to understand the effect that poetry pedagogy and canon have on their identity development. This qualitative study focused on a social phenomenon, which is the identity development of adolescents in a poetry classroom, and answers what and how questions in the pedagogy and the canon employed in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry 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 the definition of Bogdan and Biklen (2007) which looks at qualitative research as an approach to social science research that emphasizes collecting descriptive data in natural settings, with the aim of 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 daily life situations. Because qualitative research can examine phenomena within real-life contexts, and these real-life contexts shape adolescents' identities, it was imperative that I employ a qualitative method in conducting the research.

4.5 Sampling and participants

Sampling is a technique that is used in research studies to collect data from a population. Sampling allows a researcher to collect data efficiently without having to collect data from all members of the population being studied. Saunders, Luise and Thornhill (2012) note that there are various methods that researchers can use when sampling research participants for qualitative studies, and these include purposive sampling and convenience sampling. In some cases, these methods can be used in conjunction with one another. However, this study dictated that purposive sampling, which is also known as the judgmental technique (Saunders at al, 2012), be used in identifying the two poetry classrooms for inquiry. No other sampling method guaranteed the selection of the right kind of classrooms to form the basis for understanding how different pedagogies affect adolescent learners' identities. Purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research because it helps in achieving appropriateness (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, it involves identifying and selecting research participants or sites that can speak to the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, for this study, I purposively selected a class which used traditional pedagogy and one that used multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in order to find out how each pedagogy affected learners' identity development. The two classes happen to be in two different schools but within the same district. Both schools were easily accessible and that minimised logistical hiccups that might have hindered progress in data collection.

Participants for the observations and questionnaires were 90 learners: 45 learners from each class. For the reflective journals, I had 18 participants: 6 from School A and 12 from School B. These were Grade 11 adolescents who were approximately aged between 16 and 20 years at the time that the research was conducted.

4.6 Research context

As mentioned in the previous section, this research was conducted in two public schools in the same district. Public schools were chosen for this study because they were doing the same poems using the same anthology prescribed by the Department of Basic Education. Therefore, understanding how the same canon was taught in two different poetry classrooms addressed the concern regarding pedagogy and canon's effect on adolescents' identity development. This study was conducted in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The two schools that were selected for this study were situated in South African townships in the south of Johannesburg. About nine South African official languages were spoken in these township communities, as mentioned in Chapter 1. However, English was studied at First Additional Language level in the two township schools that were selected. In 2021, a selection of the same poems from the prescribed anthology was made by government course curriculum planners and passed on to the schools. Table 1 below presents the poems that were prescribed for English FAL in 2021.

Table 1: 2021 English FAL Grade 11 prescribed poems

Title	**Author**	**Gender**	**Nationality**	**Date of Birth**
Shantytown	Anonymous	Unknown	Unknown	Not Known
This Letter's to Say	Raymond Wilson	Male	Scottish	1874
Composed upon Westminster Bridge	William Wordsworth	Male	English	1770
I Sit and I Look Out	Walt Whitman	Male	American	1819
Memory	Chris Van Wyk	Male	South African	1957

A Sleeping Black Boy	Mongane Wally Serote	Male	South African	1944
The Call	Gabeba Baderoon	Female	South African	1969
Forgotten People	Nkathazo Ka Mnyayiza	Male	South African	Not Known
At a Snail's Pace, Please	Oswald Mtshali	Male	South African	1940
Chimney Sweeper	William Blake	Male	English	1757

The problems with the curriculum reflecting on the table above have already been highlighted in Chapter 1 as part of the research problem. As was noted, the prescribed poems are old and male-dominated. The Department of Basic Education usually issues an ATP towards the end of the year to be used in the following year. This is the plan that is followed by all teachers. For example, in term one, the ATP stipulates the poems that are supposed to be taught in that term. Therefore, there is consistence in the poems taught from one public school to another. It cannot be disputed that there could be other factors that might have an influence on adolescents' identity development, but the two public schools have been carefully selected such that issues such as the socio-economic status of learners, behaviour of adolescents in the specific townships, the school set-up, and the school teaching resources are very similar, making it arguable that what distinguishes the two poetry classrooms is mainly the pedagogy employed by the teachers.

4.7 Data collection instruments and procedures

Merriam and Tisdale (2016) define data collection as a systematic process of gathering and measuring information to answer stated research questions, assess hypothesis and evaluate outcomes. Data collection allows the researcher to gain first-hand knowledge and original insights into the research problem. For this study, data was collected empirically. Empirical research was ideal for this study because it gives information based on experiences and observations. For this study, empirical data was collected at two Grade 11 English FAL poetry classrooms. Observations were done at

one school where I once taught before and at another school in the same district and same province. The reason for choosing the same circuit and province was to ensure that the adolescents who are the main subjects in the study did not have significant contextual or social differences other than the pedagogies employed by the individual teachers in the poetry classrooms. The following subsections outline the tools that were used for data collection.

4.7.1 Lesson observations

The first data collection instrument that was used is the lesson observation. Merriam and Tisdale (2016) refer to observation as a method of data collection in which a researcher observes phenomenon within a specific research field. Observations can be participant or non-participant. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) define participant observation as a process which enables researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in natural settings. Participant observation requires the researcher to be completely immersed in the environment being observed by actively participating in the activities of the participants, so as to gain a deep understanding of the activities and participants. Since this study involved the observation of learners' responses to the prescribed Grade 11 English FAL poems as well as the teachers' pedagogies, I opted for participant observation. This method helped me to note down the instructional practices that took place in the two poetry classrooms so as to determine the affordances and limitations of the pedagogies employed by the teachers in the classrooms. Having been a member of the community for more than 10 years, learners in both schools had no difficulties engaging with me as a researcher.

As pointed out earlier, the two classrooms were purposively selected to include one classroom that employs traditional pedagogy and another that utilises the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy. I was a participant observer in four lessons for each poetry class. Four lessons allowed the participants to get used to having an outsider in their classroom and that made them feel comfortable after the first lesson and display their natural behaviour in subsequent lessons. Four lessons were observed to ensure that rich data was collected on the teaching of different

poems, whereas one or two lessons would have only yielded superficial data. During the first observation, learners were still apprehensive about a researcher in their midst and could not act naturally. Because the research is a case study which requires observing the phenomenon in its natural setting, four lesson observations helped learners to behave naturally as the researcher became part of them for a considerable period of time. Time spent in the school was four weeks per school and one lesson was observed each week and, in some cases, fortnightly. The pace was dependent on the teachers' and schools' programme. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic which was still raging in 2021, Grade 11 learners were not attending face-to-face lessons every day. This had an impact on my schedule as a researcher because on the days that the learners were not in school, no teaching was taking place for me to observe, even though the learners were doing work at home. Therefore, I had to constantly consult with the teachers before going to the schools.

Participant observation helped me to obtain reliable data as I was able to make follow-ups during observation lessons on issues that needed clarification. In addition, being a participant observer enabled me to act at the same level as the learners, thus making the atmosphere relaxed and conducive for genuine self-expression by learners. An observation schedule attached (Appendix B) was used during lesson observations. During the lesson observations, I used an audio recorder to capture the conversations verbatim and also managed to write comments on the gestures by both learner participants and teachers. The audio recorder helped to retain the captured data with no loss of its richness and allowed for repeated consultations while analysis was being done. Participant observation also allowed me to experience first-hand the characteristics of the pedagogies employed by the teachers in the two classrooms as well as the responses by learners to the employed pedagogies and to the canon. In one school, the teacher used the traditional poetry teaching methods which is the teacher and book centred teaching approach. This is the method which Freire (1970) refers to as the banking system of education where learners are viewed as empty vessels waiting to be filled. In the other school, the teacher used multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies which is the modern teaching method that is learner centred.

I started the observations in School A and B in March 2021. Both schools gave me their timetables, but these were eventually not followed as we had changes due to Covid-19. On some days, the learners were sent home early to create space for other grades to use the classroom since the authorities did not want many learners in school on the same day. This was their strategy to minimise the spread of the corona virus. The rotation system happened mostly in March and April 2021 when learners were writing tests. Under these circumstances, the willingness of the two teachers to assist me with my data collection was impressive. The school principals were incredibly supportive, and they allowed me to be in the classrooms following the Covid-19 regulations. Some of the regulations included sanitising my hands and keeping distance from learners and teachers. They also allowed the use of big rooms to accommodate all the 45 English FAL learners from the selected classes so as to avoid me visiting the schools too many times. This was extremely helpful. It allowed me to observe the four poems within a shorter period of time than expected. Both schools agreed to have poetry on Fridays fortnightly, and this helped me to reduce traveling since on some days I was able to visit the two schools in one day and be able to observe both lessons. For this thesis, the schools are named School A and School B to ensure their anonymity. School A is the one that used the traditional teaching method and School B the modern pedagogy.

The lesson observation instrument was used to collect data to answer two of the research questions: Research Question 1a (What instructional practices characterise traditional pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?) and Research Question 1b (What instructional practices characterise multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?).

4.7.2 Questionnaire

At the end of the four lesson observations, all learners in the class were requested to fill in a standardised five-point Likert Scale Questionnaire (Appendix D). Nemoto and Beglar (2014) describe a Likert Scale Questionnaire as a scale used to represent people's opinions to a subject matter. I chose this questionnaire because I was

working with Grade 11 learners who, according to my teaching experience, are usually complacent to respond to chunks of work within a short space of time. Moreover, Grade 11 learners are usually reluctant to answer open-ended questions because these require thinking about the subject and writing down responses. Being English FAL learners, some of them are not comfortable about their writing and may either ignore questions or give superficial responses. Therefore, the five-point Likert Scale Questionnaire was user friendly to my participants since it simply required them to tick appropriate boxes. The aim of the questionnaire was to learn the adolescents' views and reactions to the pedagogy and canon employed in their English FAL poetry classroom. It also helped me to gain a broad understanding general attitudes and opinions related to the topic. The questionnaire was structured and included all possible perspectives learners may have had toward the poetry lessons – perspectives relevant to identity formation, pedagogy and canon. The most compelling reason for using the questionnaire was that it saved time since the questionnaire was administered during class time at the end of the four lesson observations. There was the provision of the journal entry which learners who wanted to write more could make use of in expressing freely their deeper feelings about the poetry lessons. It was important that the questionnaire remained structured while the journal allowed for free writing to avoid duplicated information during the data collection phase. The questionnaire was used to collect data that answered other two of the research questions: Research Question 2a (How does the traditional pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?) and Research Question 2b (How does the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?).

4.7.3 Journals

Lastly, I collected data using journals. At the beginning of the research, I encouraged all the Grade 11 learners that I was working with to keep poetry journals and author poems and reflective responses after every poetry lesson. I informed the learners that these journals were not for assessment and teachers would not have access to them. This helped learners to write independently and be able to express their emotions freely without curriculum interference. Analysis of the learners' poems and reflective pieces helped me to understand the identities of adolescents as poetry writers. It also

helped to identify the themes and forms of poetry that adolescents participating in the research identify with. This also gave young people an audience for their voices and ideas. I collected the journals at the end of the four-week research visit to each school to use for analysis. To facilitate the journal writing, at the beginning of the research I handed over notebooks to the learners for authoring their poems and reflective pieces. Each learner in each of the poetry classrooms received one notebook for this purpose.

The learners' journals were useful for the identification of challenges to identity formation that learners were experiencing with the canon of poetry that was being taught in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom as well as to understand how learners' own poetry helped them to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities. Learners were told to write in their journals during their spare time, either at home or at school. This was meant to help learners do the journal writing willingly and not take it as challenging work. While learners were told that the journal entries were not for assessment, the teachers were also told that the journals were to be collected and passed on to me without them reading the contents. Learners were told not to write their names on their journals so that their identities were protected. This gave learners the latitude to express their emotions freely. The challenge with the journals, however, was that due to the school breaks that learners were given in order to control the spread of the deadly Covid-19 disease, many learners were not able to return their journals to their teacher. In School A, only 6 journals were returned while in School B 12 were returned. So I received a total of 18 journals from the teachers.

Reflective journals help learners to revise and to critique what they have learnt. O'Connell and Dyment (2013) explored the advantages of using journals in motivating learners in the process of reflecting on their own learning and improving their own writing skills. Reflection is a means of bringing meaning to human identities, lives, and worldviews. In addition, O'Connell and Dyment (2013) indicate that reflective journals inspire learners to take a holistic assessment of their learning practices. Reflective journals "empower students to practice new ways of knowing, try out different ideas in a safe space, challenge their modus operandi, and turn their lived experience, both in and out of the classroom, into learning through a reflective process" (O'Connell &

Dyment, 2013, p.19). In their argument, Dyment and O'Connell (2013) note that this skill is acquired over time through practice. This is noticeable in the contents provided by the learners as some learners did not reflect as instructed. Even though instructions on how to write these journals were given, some learners summarised the poems taught in class. Some wrote notes in paragraphs reflecting on their understanding of the poems taught, others went further to comment on these poems while other students authored their own poems under themes that they were familiar with. For the purpose of this study, all journals submitted were taken into consideration, read thoroughly and valid data was pulled out, presented, analysed, and discussed. Some participants authored their poems in their Indigenous languages and I had to translate these poems from isiZulu, Sesotho and isiXhosa into English for the purpose of accessibility to the reader. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, these were the languages that were taught at home language level in the communities where the research was conducted. I was incredibly careful with the translation and in some cases I consulted the native speakers of the languages to avoid distorting the meanings of the original poems. It is also important to `note that translation of some African idioms is sometimes difficult because the idioms are context based. However, justice was done in this thesis to ensure that accurate translations of the poems were provided.

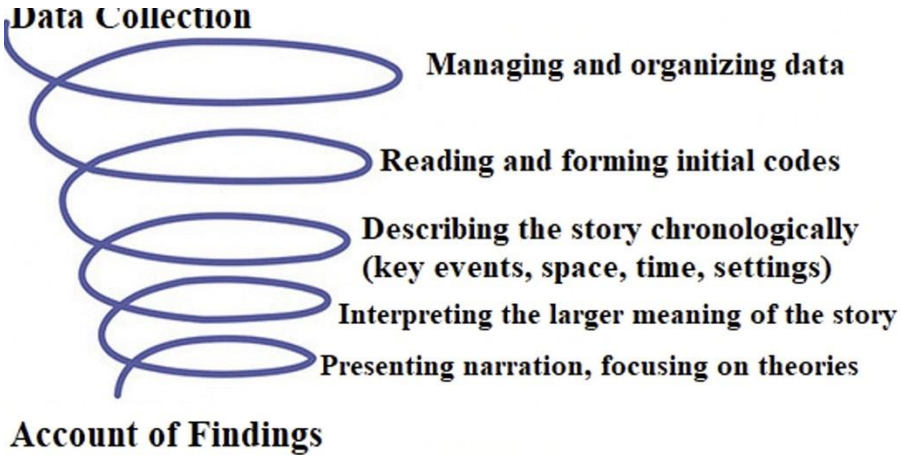
The journal entries were an effective way of changing the researcher-participant power dynamics. Journals allowed participants to reflect on their lived experiences freely. Through this writing, learners exercised what Dyment and O'Connell (2013) refer to as amplification of voices through journaling. These amplified voices of the adolescent learners enabled me to achieve the purpose of this research which was to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. Journal entries provided data that responded to Research Question 3a) (What challenges to identity formation do learners experience with the current canon of poetry being taught in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?) and Research Question 3b) (How do learners' own poetry help them to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities?).

These three data collection instruments were designed specifically to collect data about the pedagogies of teachers in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom, the ways in which these pedagogies affect learners' identities, and learners' responses to the poetry canon they were being taught. The three instruments complement each other in that each focused on one strand of the research to provide data that was not be collected using another instrument. This triangulation of data collection methods helped to ensure that the data collected was dependable and it also contributed to the richness of the data (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008).

4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of organising data to draw important conclusions. The process uses analytical and logical reasoning to sieve vital information from the data (Patton, 2002). Data analysis is further noted by Cresswell (2008) as a crucial process of research because it enables the researcher to find meaning in the data so that stakeholders can use the information to make decisions. For this study, the first set of data, which was the lesson observations, was analysed descriptively, while the data from questionnaires and journals were analysed thematically. This was important as Rawat (2021) points out that descriptive data analysis allows for big volumes of words to be processed and studied with scrutiny. I followed Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral presented below.

Figure 4: Creswell's data analysis spiral



The chronological description of data helped me to summarise events. The comprehensive descriptive summaries presented accurate details of the collected data in a way that made sense to me, in line with Creswell (2007). Themes emerging from these summaries became useful for thematic analysis of the data which followed Broun and Clarke's (2006) framework. The six stages of thematic analysis, which are familiarisation with data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and labelling themes and producing the report, were followed.

Leedy and Ormrod (2019) points out that thematic content analysis helps the researcher to closely examine the data to identify common themes, topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. For examining the participant observation data, descriptive analysis was more appropriate because it helped to uncover patterns and relationships in the data and it gave me an opportunity to explore the data from a holistic point of view. In this process, I looked for clues that indicate learners' involvement in producing knowledge about the poems and clues that indicate learners' enjoyment of poetry to be able to make any arguments about traditional pedagogy and modern pedagogy. With the questionnaire, I looked for recurrent aspects of the Grade 11 learners' identities that were affected positively or negatively by the pedagogies in the English FAL poetry classroom. For the learners' journals, the common themes in the poetry produced by adolescents informed me about the prefered poetry forms among adolescents, while the common problems learners had with the canon provided insights about the weaknesses of the canon. Therefore, for this report, I used both descriptive and thematic analysis.

For the analysis of the data and the testing of my hypothesis, I had to choose an appropriate data analysis method. In qualitative research there are two methods that are generally used and these are deductive and inductive. Deductive method starts with a premise or premises that are applied to specific situations to draw logical conclusions. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019, p. 20) "these premises are statements or assumptions that the researcher initially takes to be true". Inductive method on the other hand involves drawing general conclusions based on specific instances. This study is housed under the premise that if a modern pedagogy and a relavant canon are applied in the Grade 11 English poetry class, there is potential for adolescents to develop their identities.

4.9 Reliability, validity, and credibility

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), validity in qualitative research is determined by the research design and the data collection methods, and this is best accomplished by simply having others review the procedures to determine whether any factors could invalidate the findings or provide competing explanations. A crucial element in most qualitative research that enhances validity is participant observation occurring in a natural environment. This study therefore ensured validity by conducting the participant observation in the natural setting of poetry teaching: the classroom.

Triangulation of data collection methods was also used to ensure reliability and validity. Olsen (2004) notes that triangulation is mixing approaches to get two or more viewpoints upon the things being studied. Triangulation is useful because using three data sources helps a researcher to do cross verification on the same information. In this study, participant observation, questionnaire, and the journal were used to obtain data. This overcomes the weakness of intrinsic bias and the problem that comes from a single method study. In this study, the words used by participants in the classroom observations, questionnaires and journal entries were captured verbatim. Translation is another way of increasing credibility in a study, especially when the research is conducted with participants who have challenges with English. Data that was

produced in Indigenous languages from the journal entries was carefully translated to English and in cases where the language was difficult for me to translate, I consulted the native speakers. This all ensured credibility that the participants' input was well represented. The questionnaires were in English and it was not necessary to translate them into Indigenous languages since the participants were Grade 11 learners who had fairly good proficiency in English.

4.10 Ethical considerations

This research adhered to the Human Research Council's ethical standards as ethical clearance was applied for and granted by the University of the Witwatersrand ethics committee. Research clearance was given by the committee in November 2020 under protocol number H20/11/38. Since the research was conducted at public schools in Gauteng, permission was sought from and granted by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) for the Ekurhuleni District and by the schools. Data was collected from the two schools in Ekurhuleni South from 15 March 2021 to 31 August 2021. The research was conducted honestly, with accountability, professional courtesy, and good stewardship. My research participants were Grade 11 English FAL learners. They were given participant information letters which provided details about the aims of the project as well as their involvement in it. The participants gave assent, and their guardians gave consent to participate in the research. Four poems were taught in each school that was observed. During the poetry sessions, I sat in the classrooms throughout the duration of the lesson with the teacher and the learners.

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) mention four main ethical issues, that is, reducing the unanticipated harm, protecting participants' information, informing participants about the nature of the study, and reducing the risk of exploitation. To address these ethical issues, the researcher employed the guidelines explicitly detailed below.

4.10.1 Anonymity

All information shared in the questionnaires and in the learners' journals is confidential and has been captured with anonymity in this thesis. In the analysis of the observation data, participants were given pseudonyms to hide their original identities. With the questionnaire, participants were not required to print their names anywhere on the documents, and this ensured that their identities remained anonymous. Pseudonyms were also used in the analysis of the learners' journals. The transcriptions from the audio tape and video recordings were stored in a password-protected folder on my laptop and backed up using a remote flash drive and I am the only one who has access to these gadgets. The transcripts will be kept for 5 years before being deleted from the system. Participants were given this information before the research commenced.

4.10.2 Informed consent

Participants were given two documents. One was the information letter and the other was the assent/consent form. The information letter explained the research project to the learners and requested them to participate in the study. The assent/consent form asked for their consent to fill in the questionnaire, to be audio recorded and pictured during the lessons and to write journals. The assent form was signed by learners below the age of 18 years and the consent form was signed by parents or guardians in the case of participants who were below 18 years.

4.10.3 Right to withdraw

The participants were informed of the study and its purpose in advance. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time if they felt that they could not continue. They were also told that their participation was voluntary and if they decided to withdraw at any time they would not be penalised.

4.11 Description of the research site

The two schools which were selected for this study are situated in neighbouring townships in Gauteng and they both fall under the Ekurhuleni district. These schools are neighbours and share learners who come from the same community. The area from which the participants came suffered intense political violence during apartheid and after. There is also a history of tribal turmoil in the area which has left many children orphaned and some homeless. Many come from single-parent households because one parent has died or has disappeared. The socio-economic status of most parents and caregivers is low. The two schools are surrounded by informal settlements or ghettos where some of the learners reside. These schools are quintile three and this means that they are non-fees paying schools. They depend on government funding as well as donations from well-wishers. The Department of Basic Education provides internet access to teachers and learners to be used in the classrooms as well as textbooks.

Figure 5: Map of Ekurhuleni



https://dearsouthafrica.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Road_sign_Ekurhuleni-map.jpg

The issue of language is important in the context of this research because this study was conducted in English FAL poetry classrooms where English for many of the learners was a second or third and sometimes even fourth language. Howie et al. (2017) state that “South Africa was placed last out of all 50 countries who participated in PIRLS 2016”, and the 2021 results were not any better as they revealed that 81% of South African Grade 4 learners could not read for meaning in any language and this was up from 78% in 2016. PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is a study conducted under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. In South Africa, the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) manages the programme. The PIRLS results of 2016 and 2021 can be read as an indication of the lack of English input from the foundation phase. The issue of language in this community is however complicated and sensitive. The language policy that was explained earlier in Chapter 1 allows foundation phase learners to study in their home language. Therefore, the majority of these learners will get as far as Grade 11 without being able to speak or write English correctly, and yet they are expected to study poems with sophisticated English. Moreover, while the post-apartheid government desired to bring Indigenous languages to the fore by introducing the Language Incremental Policy (Hugo, 2016), many South African parents in the townships still prefer to send their children to private schools and former model C (schools that were set aside for white children during apartheid) where they start their educational journey with English, because of the vast advantages that English has as the language of the economy. However, some children, especially in the township where this study was conducted, still have misconceptions about English where they look at it as the language of the oppressor. In addition, the exposure to many Indigenous languages which are taught at home language level within the community makes English to be less preferred among many learners and teachers alike. All nine South African Indigenous languages are spoken in the area, as noted earlier. This might have been caused by the migrant labourers who stayed in the three hostels built for them between 1960 until 1981, with labourers split among ethnic, social and language groups (Nkosi, 2014). Because of the many languages spoken in the area, English is also less preferred among the languages spoken in the community. The complexity of the language situation in this community is significant

because it has a bearing on learners' responses to the poetry canon and pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom, as subsequent parts of this thesis will show.

Even though the selected schools were neighbours and shared learners from the same community, each school had its own infrastructure, management, teachers, learners, and school governing board. Because of this, it is important to give some background for each school separately.

4.11.1 School A

The school had one principal and two deputy principals during the time when this study was conducted. There were 50 teachers and 1 248 learners. The school had a functional library and a computer laboratory. It had a few computers in the laboratory, but learners had no access to the equipment. The school also offered technical and ordinary high school subjects. The English FAL classroom was equipped with a whiteboard, chalkboard and a smartboard. There were no charts or posters pinned on the walls of the classroom. This school started offering English at home language level to selected learners in 2020, starting from Grade 8. However, all Grade 11 learners in 2021 were studying English FAL, not English HL. The other subjects taught at home language level in this school were isiZulu, isiXhosa and Tshitsonga.

4.11.2 School B

School B was less than 10km away from School A. The school had one principal, two deputy principals and 46 teachers. The school had 1 177 registered learners and offered ordinary high school subjects such as mathematics, accounting, economics, physics, chemistry, geography, history, tourism, additional language and home languages. Like School A, the school had a functioning library and computer laboratory. The English FAL classroom had electricity supply, just like all the other classrooms within the school. The classroom also had a smartboard, whiteboard, and chalkboard. Posters with figures of speech were pasted on the walls of the classroom.

In this school, English was only offered as an additional language, while Indigenous languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa and Sesotho were offered at home language level.

4.13 Chapter summary

The objective of this chapter was to outline the procedures that were followed in the study to collect data to answer the research question. The study aimed to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. As highlighted above, the research was conducted at two schools in Gauteng, one where the teacher used traditional pedagogy and the other where the teacher used modern pedagogy, which included multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies, to teach prescribed poetry. The chapter has identified and explained the study's research method, research design and research paradigm and also provided justifications for these choices. Equally, it has explained the choice of purposive sampling and the data collection instruments. The chapter has shown that descriptive analysis was found appropriate for analysing the data collected through the lesson observations, while thematic analysis was found valuable for analysing the questionnaires and journals. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, including getting ethical clearance and participants' informed consent. In addition to addressing matters pertaining to ethics, the chapter has provided a detailed description of the schools where the research was carried out and also situated them within their appropriate socio-historical context. The next chapter presents and analyses the data that was collected.

Chapter 5

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion: Lesson Observations

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the research methodology that was followed in conducting this study. This chapter is concerned with data presentation, analysis and discussion of the classroom observations. As noted in Chapter 4, three data collection tools were used in conducting this study: observations, questionnaires, and journals. While this chapter focuses on classroom observations, the next chapters will look at the questionnaires and the journal writing of the learners. The purpose of presenting the analysis of the data according to the tools used is to avoid information overload in one chapter and also to tease out the details of the observations without worrying about the constraints of chapter length. This separation of chapters also allows for an in-depth look at how learners construct their identities using their own voices and creative skills. This chapter therefore presents, analyses and discusses the data collected through the classroom observations. As noted in Chapter 4, the data is analysed descriptively and the analysis follows a deductive method. Each school is discussed in its own section in this chapter even though the poems which were observed are the same because the schools use the same curriculum and they follow the ATP which guides them on what needs to be covered at the defined timeframes.

5.2 Background on the classroom observations

As a participant observer, I became part of the class in the two Grade 11 poetry classrooms in the two different schools that I observed. I observed four poems being taught in each of the two schools, which gave me a total of eight observations to be analysed. Merriam (2002) argues that observations are a major means of data collection in qualitative studies as they give the researcher first-hand experience of the research phenomenon. As stated in Chapter 4, the aim of choosing participant

observation was to enable me to act at the same level as the learners, thus making the atmosphere relaxed and conducive for genuine self-expression by the learners. This also helped me to obtain reliable data because I was able to make follow-ups during observation lessons on issues that needed clarification. An observation schedule attached (Appendix B) was used. During the lesson observations, I used an audio recorder to capture the classroom conversations verbatim and also managed to write comments on the gestures by both learner participants and teachers. Even though I could not video record the observations, as some learners were not comfortable with being on video, I managed to take some pictures which learners happily allowed. The audio recorder helped me to capture rich data and I could always return to the recording to verify information during data analysis.

Even though it was a bit hard to capture all words by learners, especially in the most interactive lessons in School B, the notes captured adequately highlight the teachers' pedagogies and the learners' responses to them, thus providing ample evidence for determining the effect of pedagogy on the learners' identity development. I jotted down notes on the ways the teachers conducted the lessons, the learners' responses and actions, and the questions posed by the teachers. I also made observations about gaps in the lessons, silences in the class, and learners' behaviour, as well as my interactions with the learners and my critical reflections emerging out of that. This is consistent with Denzin's (1998) view that field notes should be detailed, containing explicit references to participants, interactions, routines, rituals, temporal elements interpretations and social organisation. My field notes helped me to build my understanding of the learners' reactions, behaviour and attitudes during the English FAL poetry lessons. It also helped me in identifying and determining the characteristics of traditional and modern pedagogies. Furthermore, it facilitated my understanding of how learners respond to these two different pedagogies and how each pedagogy affects learners' sense of identity.

In each classroom, I sat four times and in each of the four lessons a new poem was taught. I had an opportunity to ask questions and to engage in class discussions. The fact that I had taught in one school for ten years and interacted with learners in the other school during extra-mural activities such as poetry and public speaking

competitions made learners to feel at ease. However, some learners were confused by the role shift, particularly learners that I had taught when they were in Grade 8. However, I explained to them that I was sitting in their classroom as a postgraduate student and I was doing research on the topic that I relayed to them in the first meeting when I was outlining the ethical protocols and introducing myself. I told both the teachers and the learners that the data obtained for the study through the classroom observations, questionnaire and journal writing will be used for my studies on the topic "Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom" and for publications. I reiterated on the ethics protocols and informed both learners and teachers that anonymity will be observed. Pseudonyms were used for the learners whose names I knew. This made learners to understand my position and feel free to behave normally during the lessons.

5.3 Challenges with lesson observations

While Merriam (2002, p. 13) argues that observation is the best means of data collection in qualitative research because "observational data represent the firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest", the process also comes with challenges. In my case, the most challenging aspect of classroom observation was defining my role as the researcher. I had to start by defining what I meant by participant observer. As a former teacher within the community, I still had a relationship with teachers and learners to the point where learners even thought that I had re-joined the school as a teacher and would occasionally ask me about the tasks that the teachers gave them. In the most interactive lessons, particularly in School B, learners wanted me to say more and when I said anything in contribution to their classroom discussions some nodded their heads in approval even though some further interrogated my responses or voiced different opinions. In School A, there were learners that I once taught in Grade 8, and these wanted me to teach them at least one poem and some even referred to their Grade 8 poetry class, making comparisons with the current poetry class. However, I kept telling them that I was in their classroom as a student and not as a teacher.

Participant observation is involving. According to Dewalt and Dewalt (2010), participant observation is an immersion of the researcher into the day-to-day tacit aspects of people's activities, rituals, and interactions as a way to reconstruct their practices, performances, behaviours and actions within a natural setup. Contemporary studies have shifted towards observing the individual within their natural context to understand the ways in which elements of the social, economic, cultural and political environment are constructed and to understand how such constructions ultimately both enable and constrain particular people or cultural groups (Cooney, 2006). Therefore, alternative ways of doing and thinking about participant observation have emerged. These aspects include unavoidable influences of a researcher, the constructed nature of what is observed, and the significance of researcher reflexivity. In this study, participant observation allowed me to coexist within the context, being a participant in almost everything that the learners were doing, including class discussions. Dewalt and Dewalt (2010) consider participant observation to be an effective research instrument as it provides the researcher with a unique way of knowing, because the researcher is a participant in what is being observed. However, this way of observation also has its drawbacks, for example, learners' expectations for me to contribute more during their lessons. I realised that this could have influenced some of the learners' behaviour since most of them wanted to impress me or to show me that they were still doing well in their education. For others, it was like a protest against their current teacher to show that they missed the way I had taught them poetry in Grade 8.

Most learners looked at me in anticipation that I should comment on their responses in the capacity of a teacher, as mentioned earlier in the background of classroom observations. Therefore, when I contributed something, it instantly got their approval and this also became another challenge as I was not there to replace their teacher. Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach (2009) note that power relations in qualitative research, and specifically in participant observations, are critical issues to take cognisance of. On reflection, it occurred to me that the learners were subtly according me the power of a teacher rather than seeing me as a mere learner as themselves.

This meant that I had to constantly remind myself why I was there. Having been a teacher in the school some years ago and coming back as a researcher meant that I had to motivate my presence and explain thoroughly to both teachers and learners that my presence was only for my study and that I was not critiquing the teachers nor the learners. It did not only become complicated for the learners to accept my position, but colleagues also felt a bit uneasy at the beginning. Issues of power relations, particularly in my situation, could not be ignored. Karnieli-Miller et al (2009) argue that power relations in qualitative research are often affected by the content of the enquiry and equally by the institutional context where the research is conducted. Thus, the complexity of being an insider and an outsider simultaneously necessitated that I establish my status upfront. This helped to put my colleagues at ease and enabled them to teach poetry the usual way without thinking that they were being judged. The clarification of my role in the class also helped the learners to act in their usual way, knowing that I was not there to check on their classroom behaviour but only to collect data for my study. In the end, this enabled the participants to understand that as a researcher, I was not in any privileged or superior position.

Even though I made it clear to my former colleagues that I was not there to assess them but to observe their teaching for the purpose of my studies, it was personally hard for me to maintain the boundaries between being a former teacher in the school and being an observing researcher. Naturally, I felt inclined to step in and teach the learners. This was particularly the case in School A because most learners were quiet during lessons and the teacher mostly gave instructions. There was not much of learners' involvement in classroom activities, and this made some learners to spend much of their time doing other things not related to poetry during the poetry lesson. Most of these learners knew me personally as I had taught them in Grade 8 back in 2018, so oftentimes when we met outside the classroom they would come to ask me if I could teach them poetry again. Not wanting to jeopardise my research by blurring the lines between teacher and researcher, I immediately dismissed these requests by telling them that I was a student and I was there to learn for my postgraduate studies. In School B, I found the power relations to be uncomplicated as learners mostly led the discussions with the teacher's guidance. Even though some learners looked at me during discussions to comment on their contributions, there was a mutual ground since

some learners were able to disagree with my contributions or create a discussion around that.

Although the teachers, learners and school management were welcoming, I had to face the additional challenge of observing during a pandemic – the Covid-19 pandemic which started in late 2019 and was still raging on in 2021. As mentioned in Chapter 4, learners' classroom attendance was erratic in both schools, and this meant that I had to constantly check with the teachers whether observations were feasible on the scheduled days and times. Sometimes the teachers would call to stop me from coming to the school when I was already on the way driving to the school. They would inform me that on that particular day the Grade 11 learners had been told to go back home because other grades needed space for end-of-term tests. This made my school visits to extend to the second term of the 2021 academic year even though I needed only four observations in each classroom. I realised that the longer I stayed in the classrooms, the more I became part of the classroom environment. I felt indebted to the teachers who worked under these stringent conditions but still extended their generosity by sharing their spaces with me. I eventually shared with them some resources that I deemed useful in the teaching of poetry.

5.4 The observations and the observation guide

As stated in Chapter 1, the aim of this study was to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. Chapter 4 mentioned that data was collected from two poetry classrooms in two separate schools that employed different pedagogies. The observation data from the two different sites is presented and analysed under separate sections of this chapter. The classroom observations offered an opportunity to understand participants' responses to canon and pedagogy through their body language and verbal expressions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, descriptive presentation and analysis of data is advantageous because of its high degree of objectivity, its ensuring the neutrality of the researcher, and its vastness in providing a broader picture of an event or a phenomenon.

The four poems which were taught in the two schools during my observation time are “Shantytown” whose author is anonymous, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” by William Wordsworth, “I Sit and I Look Out” by Walt Whitman and “This Letter’s to Say” by Raymond Wilson. Teachers were following their ATP and this helped me to have the same poems observed in both schools, even though some were observed at different times due to the Covid-19 pandemic which altered learners’ school attendance. The classroom observations intended to answer research questions 1a and 2a: What instructional practices characterise traditional pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?; and What instructional practices characterise multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom? For the observations to meaningfully answer these research questions, an observation guide had to be followed. The guide focused on the following elements:

- The pedagogy employed by the teacher
- Whether the teacher drew on learners’ experiences
- Teacher’s encouragement of participation
- Teacher’s display of special knowledge of the poem
- Explanation of terms and concepts in the poem
- Learners’ willingness to give responses verbally
- Whether curiosity was stimulated
- Whether the poem was contextualised
- Whether the learners enjoyed the poetry lesson
- Whether the teacher used ICT
- Whether the teacher involved learners in the use of ICT

During the lesson observations, I realised that my observation guide was very helpful in the sense that it provided an opportunity to capture the pedagogies employed by the teachers as well as the learners’ responses either verbally or in action. It helped me to focus on the aspects that I wanted to investigate. Therefore, I noted down the intriguing details of the classroom discussions and all proceedings as I observed them.

This included taking few photos of the incidents that I deemed interesting and important for this study. However, to protect the participants' identities, I have blurred pictures used in this report following the ethical protocols. For anonymity and confidentiality sake, I withheld from including in this thesis any picture which still revealed some easily identifiable features of learners, even though some details from these pictures are analysed in this chapter. Should this evidence be required, these pictures can be made accessible. That said, these classroom observations helped me to experience the teachers' pedagogies first-hand and to observe learners' reactions and interpret their behaviours and attitudes towards the employed pedagogies.

5.5 School A observations

Creswell and Creswell (2018) point out that ethical protocols must be maintained throughout the cycle of a study. This means practising professionalism by protecting the identities of participants throughout the reporting. Thus, all participants referred to individually have been given pseudonyms, as noted in Chapter 4. In this section, I provide a descriptive analysis of the classroom observations of the four poetry lessons in School A.

5.5.1 School A: Lesson observation 1

The observation took place on 15 March 2021. The principal had told me to go straight to the classroom on arrival at school and avoid mingling with staff and learners since this was during the pandemic. In class, I sat at the front close to the wall where I could see everything. I had met the learners in my pre-observation session and they were aware of my coming. When the teacher arrived, she acknowledged my presence and greeted the learners before instructing them to take out their poetry anthology titled *Vistas of Poems.* However, during this time, I observed that some learners did not have the textbook and due to the pandemic they had to observe social distancing, thus they could not move to sit closer to their classmates who had the books. When I looked around the classroom, I observed that it was equipped with the smartboard, chalkboard and whiteboard. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the school had access to electricity and the Department of Basic Education provided internet connection which

could be used to operate the smartboard. However, during this lesson the teacher did not use any of these available resources except the prescribed poetry anthology. During the first observation, the poem “Shantytown” was taught.

Shantytown

Anonymous

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 high veld cold without soft rain,
Dry as the sand, rough as a rasp,
The frost-rimmed night invades the shacks
Through dusty 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 sounds 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 in Scheffler, 2015, pp. 136-137)

This poem can be taken as a South African poem even though the author is unknown because of its use of diction such as “veld” and “shacks” which are terms typically used in South Africa to refer to an open field and an informal settlement, respectively. The transcript below shows what transpired in Classroom A during lesson observation 1 when the above poem was taught. The transcript, like all the others in this thesis, is presented in the present tense to indicate that the data was captured in real time.

Transcript 1: School A lesson observation 1

Teacher: (*Teacher reads the poem, “Shantytown”*). Now, take out your books and pens and write the notes. Learners: (*Some are quiet while others are heard mumbling*). Teacher: (*Reads the synopsis of the poem from the anthology*) So, eh, this poem talks about poverty and the harsh living conditions during winter for the people that stay in the informal settlements. (*Some noise is heard in the class. Some learners write the notes in silence while others imitate the teacher’s voice. Other learners stretch, yawn, some girls play with their hair while others play with their pens*). I hope you all know what is a frost, nee? Learners: Yes (*A loud chorus response is heard as learners agree at the same time. Others drag their Yes to make it sound longer*). Teacher: You also know *emkhukhuini*, right? Learners: Yes (*Another thunderous roar is heard as learners agree at the same time in numbers*). Teacher: I now want you to answer the questions that I am going to write on the board. Please write your work quietly and show some respect for our visitor. (*Teacher starts writing the questions on the chalkboard*). Learners: (*Some fidget around while some write the questions in their exercise books*).

The excerpt above shows that there was no meaningful interaction between the teacher and the learners in the teaching of the poem. The teacher read the poem to the learners and the learners listened. The fact that the teacher dictated the notes from the anthology clearly indicates that the teacher heavily relied on the textbook, which could be the reason why the learners showed no interest in the lesson as there was nothing new to be learnt. There is evidence here that the teacher used the prescribed textbook to show authority but learners in this class resisted the pedagogy by giving

chorus single-syllabic responses to the teacher's questions and engaging in the gestures like yawning, playing with pens and titivating their hair. All these are signs of boredom and, in a way, learners were protesting against the pedagogy. Moreover, the teacher's questions did not encourage effective participation and meaningful dialogue in the classroom. The close-ended questions such as "*I hope you all know what is a frost, nee?"* and *"You also know emkhukhuini, right?"* were met with thunderous chorus responses "*Yes*". I observed that this type of response was not an indication of the learners' particular interest in the subject but was meant to make the teacher to move on. Some learners even showed an element of boredom and mischief in the way that they dragged their "Yes".

After reading the notes to the learners from the textbook, the teacher wrote the questions on the chalkboard and instructed learners to answer them in their classwork books. Analysing the process of this lesson, I argue that this is a typical traditional way of teaching which recalls the banking system of education that Freire (1970) criticised. The implications of this for adolescents' identity development will be addressed in the discussion section of this chapter. For now, it is important to point out that the teacher left the poem on the page (Creely, 2019) and failed to help learners critically think about the issues of housing and service delivery raised in the poem, which are not new to today's South African townships. Learners' imaginations were not activated, and it is evident that learners failed to understand and to appreciate the poem even though it is based on a South African context. Poetry, according to Armstrong (2019), is meant to stimulate learners' imaginations. However, in this class, there was no evidence of learners engaging meaningfully in the poetry lesson. Without imagination, learners cannot engage with a poem at a personal level, leading to disinterest in the subject matter. This disinterest can manifest in behaviour problems and lack of participation in the classroom activities. During this lesson observation, I noted some rebelliousness in the tone of the learners' voices when they shouted out the chorus response "Yes!" The observation that some learners focused on other things and never paid attention to what the teacher was doing is another example of rebellion against the pedagogy that the teacher employed.

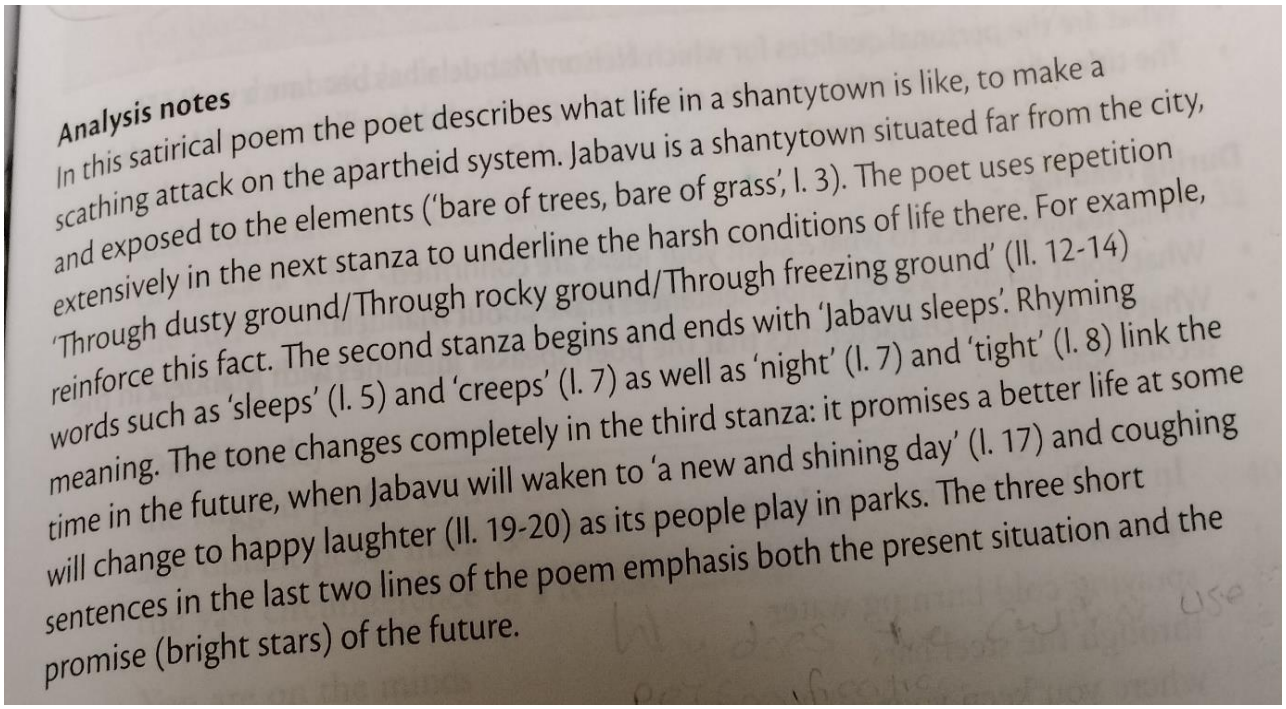
While the behaviour enacted by learners in this classroom could be said to be disrespectful of the teacher, especially because these learners came from African homes where children were presumably taught to respect their elders by being obedient (Murovhi et al. 2018), the learners' actions could also be read as their disapproval of an instructional style that did not challenge their critical thinking or value them as co-creators of knowledge. In addition, learners' behaviour could be read as their quest for recognition of their life experiences in teaching. South African adolescents, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, have got serious social issues which affect them. Hadfield (2017), Graham (2019) and Barnes (2021) agree that some South African adolescents are battling issues like bitterness, anger, disgruntlement, rejection, hunger, disillusionment with the future, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, negative peer pressure, poverty, and fear. All these issues sometimes find their way into the classroom because they are part of learners' life experiences. These issues sometimes manifest as ill-behaviour in class when the curriculum and the pedagogy fail to bridge the gap between home and school experiences, or to offer possible solutions to learners' challenges. In line with this argument, Hartnack (2017) notes that if the school environment fails to support learners experiencing psychosocial problems, this may lead to school dropout. Furthermore, Hartnack (2017, p. 9) proposes that for South African learners who are struggling with such problems to remain committed to school, "they need an engaging and diverse school programme and curriculum which is relevant to their cultural context and career aspirations and possibilities". Hartnack's views, while not directly about poetry, points to a need to use poetry in the classroom to assist learners deal with their personal challenges by talking about issues emerging from poems that relate to their own life experiences. Many poetry scholars have raised concerns about the South African poetry curriculum and how it needs to be revamped (d'Abdon, 2016; Mvenene, 2017; d'Abdon, Byrne & Newfield, 2020). Therefore, based on the evidence gleaned from lesson observation 1, I argue that the curriculum problem is compounded by poor poetry pedagogy in the classroom and this situation pushes adolescent learners to react negatively to poetry. However, rather than seeing their negative reaction as passivity, I read it as an assertion of their identities as young black South Africans in the 21st century and equally as a protest against an education that does not centre social inclusivity.

The poem taught in this lesson is generally seen as a South African poem even though the author is anonymous. The poem uses vivid imagery to present a South African location called Jabavu where children suffer from persistent cough and the nights are freezing cold. The deprivation suffered by the residents of Jabavu is captured in the images of Jabavu being “bare of trees, and bare of grass”, which suggests a suffocating environment – an environment where poverty suffocates the people. Jabavu is as “dry as the sand, rough as a rasp”, with shacks built on “dusty ground” where people sleep in “rags and sacks”. In spite of this bleak state of Jabavu, the poem ends with the hope that “One day Jabavu will awake / To greet a new and shining day” where there will be children’s laughter in place of their coughing, flowers in place of dust, and warmth in place of cold. The content of this poem could have been relatable to learners in School A because there were more than three informal settlements in their surroundings and some of the learners actually resided in these locations. A dialogic pedagogy which involved learners could have been used to help learners to understand the poem’s subtle criticism of apartheid’s racist and discriminatory policies which left black South Africans destitute and living in deprived conditions.

As black learners living in equally deprived communities, the learners would have been moved by the pedagogy to reflect on how apartheid defines their identities even today as they continue to inhabit these deprived locations reserved for black people. Hartnack (2017) asserts that social issues in the townships, which include lack of service delivery, have dire consequences on learners’ academic progress. For many learners living in the township, service delivery and poverty are major socio-economic issues that affect even adolescents. While some of these learners may not live in shantytowns, otherwise known as informal settlements nowadays, they may be staying in makeshift houses, also popularly known as *zozo*, at the backyard of other people’s houses, or they may know someone staying there. In other words, degenerate living conditions is a serious issue in many South African townships and in the township where this study was conducted as many feel that the democratic government has not fulfilled its promise of better housing for the poor. Travel blogger KAMI (2022, par.15) notes the following: “Now all these years after the apartheid collapsed, the situation in townships is getting better yet it’s still far from being decent.

There're townships with better facilities and these that look like the time stopped there". The township where this research was conducted is one that looks as if 'time stopped there' because of the poor facilities. Issues of service delivery and housing are thorny in South African townships where the majority black population were promised by the ruling party that they will own decent houses after apartheid, yet that promise has not materialised for many (Hartnack, 2017). With this issue still being a burning one, an engaging pedagogy which allowed learners' voices to be heard was most appropriate for this poetry classroom. A pedagogy which prompted learners to comment on the poor conditions of living in Jabavu and their relatedness to contemporary township life was most needed. Instead, the teacher narrated the contents of the poem, reading from the textbook. The notes included in the textbook did not allow learners to engage personally with the poem. They gave a picture of the experiences as historical without much relevance to the present living conditions of black South African adolescents in the townships. Below is a snapshot of the notes that the teacher read for the learners from the anthology.

Figure 6: "Shantytown" analysis notes from *Vistas of Poems*



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 city, and exposed to the elements ('bare of trees, bare of grass', l. 3). The poet uses repetition extensively in the next stanza to underline the harsh conditions of life there. For example, '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) link the meaning. The tone changes completely in the third stanza: it promises a better life at some time in the future, when Jabavu will waken to 'a new and shining day' (l. 17) and coughing 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 and the promise (bright stars) of the future.

Reading the notes above without engaging learners in a discussion and giving them an opportunity to comment on this poem in relation to their lived experiences was detrimental to adolescents' identity development. Learners were technically muted by the reading of these notes as the notes were presented as the authority which should not be interrogated or criticised. The teacher's failure to involve learners in a discussion of matters that concerned them might be seen as a suppression of learners' identities, because some of these learners came from shantytown communities and had been shaped by them. Even for those who did not stay in the informal settlements, the mere fact that informal settlements were part of their communities made them identify with them. So for the teacher to not allow the learners to talk about the shantytown in the poem and what it represents in present-day South Africa was to silence their voices on an important part of their identities.

Godsell (2019) argues that poetry helps learners to understand history and critically think about it, while providing multiple processes of examining knowledge production and co-production. The co-creation of knowledge in a poetry classroom helps learners to shift their positionalities and mindsets while critically analysing realities. This being an English FAL poetry classroom, it was especially important for the teacher to employ pedagogy that involved learners as co-creators of knowledge so as to leave no room for wrong interpretations or failure to comprehend the poem. In a classroom where irrelevant pedagogy is employed, adverse effects like boredom, disengagement, anger, stress, anxiety and depression can be experienced by learners. I realised that disengagement was evident in this classroom as some learners showed that they were either absentminded by focusing on playing with their hair or intentionally disruptive by tapping their pens on the desks.

The pedagogy employed in the classroom also informed the assessment thereafter. For example, below are the questions that were later written on the chalkboard for learners to answer on their own. The teacher started writing the questions towards the end of the lesson. I quickly penned down the questions as the teacher wrote them on the board so that I could finish capturing them before the next teacher walked into the class.

1. Identify the figures of speech used in the poem and give examples.
2. Discuss the theme of the poem and give evidence from the poem.
3. What does Jabavu symbolise in South Africa?
4. State three things that will be different for Shantytown in the future.
5. Explain if the words “awake” and “asleep” are being used literally or figuratively. Provide reasons for your answer.

Looking at the questions above, one would not dispute that these are technical questions which the teacher and the curriculum designers may have felt were helpful in preparing learners for examinations. However, these questions do not help adolescents to develop their identities in terms of tapping into their lived experiences to express their emotions and what they feel about the poem in relation to their cultures, religions and social backgrounds. For example, Questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 are all technical questions focusing on the stiff aspects of language: figures of speech. These questions do not give adolescents an opportunity to think about themselves. Instead, they perpetuate the book-centred approach which is dehumanising and takes individuals as empty vessels (Freire, 1970). Without the knowledge of these figures of speech, a learner cannot succesffully respond to these questions. To make it even more challenging for English FAL learners, they have to memorise these figures of speech and be able to apply them to the poem taught. This process is not one that enables adolescents to do self-reflections or to contextualise the information for them to be able to draw meaning from personal experiences. Similarly, Question 4 requires learners to find the answers from the poem. This, according to the cognitive levels of questions, is a low order question which is devoid of critical thinking. It is also a question that does not help learners to link the contents of the poem to their personal experiences. In other words, these questions leave the poem on the page, thereby killing the creativity that can bring about enjoyment of poetry and teaching of life lessons. Bila and Abodunrin (2020, p. 4) describe the South African canon as dominated by “Anglo-Saxon poetry, which has little relevance to [learners’] social environment and circumstances”. In this case, the poem “Shantytown” is a South African poem, one that has the potential to inspire learners to have opinions about themselves and the world around them so that they can challenge their underdevelopment and powerlessness. The poem has the potential to steer up deep

thoughts about youth identity in an increasingly disillusioning South Africa. However, in Class A, there was need for a pedagogy that allowed learners to explore their identities and have a voice by analysing the poem in ways that were close to their situations.

5.5.2 School A: Lesson observation 2

The second observation was done a week after the first one. I had much to process. As we were walking to the class, the teacher told me that the learners in her class were naughty and did not want to learn. She also said that they struggled with literature in general because they were lazy to read. When the teacher told me that she was going to teach the poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" by William Wordsworth, at first I thought that maybe the lesson was going to be different. I thought that the teacher was going to engage learners and facilitate a discussion for the understanding of the poem since it is a Western poem with different experiences and a different English variant from the English that is spoken in today's world and in South Africa. I was a little sceptical, however, about the learners' response to this poem. Realising that none of the learners had asked questions or even tried to give a comment during the previous lesson where the poem had relatable content, I was now curious to observe what was going to happen during this second lesson. The poem taught is as follows:

Composed upon Westminster Bridge
William Wordsworth

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 the 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!

(Wordsworth in Scheffler, 2015, pp. 23-25)

When we walked into the classroom, learners were busy finishing up the previous lesson's work while others were talking to classmates sitting near them. I observed that some learners did not quickly respond to the teacher's presence until she greeted them and asked them to take out their poetry books. The transcript excerpt below shows what transpired during this lesson.

Transcript 2: School A lesson observation 2

Teacher: Today we are looking at the poem titled "Composed upon Westminster Bridge". Take out your *Vistas* and open page 23. (*Teacher reads the poem and the analysis notes while learners are quiet but the facial expressions of some show that they are not focusing on what is happening in class.*) Now you can take out your classwork books and answer questions 1-5. Learners: (*Some look at each other. Others keep staring at the teacher. Some pull out their books slowly from their bags*. *Others maintain the same postures they had while the reading was done*). Teacher: (*Walks around quietly*).

Transcript 2 above shows that the same strategy of teacher reading was repeated in the second lesson. This shows the teacher's lack of creativity and, most likely, lack of poetry comprehension as well. The observation that the teacher did not even make an effort to engage learners in a discussion might also be a sign of fear of poetry which according to Creely (2019) often makes teachers to leave the poem on the page. For anybody to engage in a discussion, they must be having some knowledge on the subject, but in this class there was evidence that, just like the learners, the teacher did not understand what the poem was all about. It also made me to think that learners did not ask the teacher to explain anything because the learners might also have

figured out that the poem was difficult for the teacher too. I could also see that there was an element of lack of interest both from the teacher and the learners. The sitting postures by the learners showed me that they did not bother to understand the poem, and neither did the teacher as she did not make any effort to explain or contextualise the poem. This shows that the teacher employed a pedagogy which pushed the learners to the periphery of learning and further distanced her from the learners.

The other factors that could have contributed to the lack of understanding of this poem by both the teacher and the learners is its place of origin and the time when the poem was written. This is an English poem which was written to describe London's view from the Westminster Bridge and it was written in 1802. This poem was prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL learners in 2021. This means that South African learners were studying a poem that was written more than two centuries ago. While this cannot be a reason for this poem not to be learnt and taught in South African English FAL classrooms, because even the Bible is still valid yet it was written before this poem, there is need for considering time and space in canonisation. This is because young people in South Africa today need poetry that is relevant to their identities. Evidence of this claim was provided in Chapter 2 where Diana Ferrus, a South African poet, activist and storyteller, was quoted as stating: "We don't need the Canon. We don't need the gatekeepers. We don't even need the gates. We are climbing anyway. We want to know who we are" (d'Abdon, Byrne & Newfield, 2020, pp. 66-67). Ferrus' assertion echoes the views of many young people in South African schools today. For the Department of Basic Education to be holding on to the classics which speak what is not there in the 21st century is not only unfair to South African adolescent learners who cannot visualise what London looked like before industrialisation but is also an act of cultural dispossession. While cultural enrichment is highlighted by Pushpa and Savaedi (2014) as one of the crucial benefits of learning poetry, learning about others should not disadvantage learning about the self. Tajeddine and Packzadian (2020), in support of cultural enrichmnet, postulate the view that in today's globalised society, it is important for learners of English FAL to familiarise with and share different cultural experiences. In as much as this is important, one would argue that for South African adolescents, the experiences in this poem are too far removed from what these learners need to develop their identities. This is so because South African townships

have suffered during apartheid and the wounds are still fresh as many of the children have their living parents and relatives who share their experiences with the children. These societies also experience abject poverty which makes it difficult for them to appreciate the message of a poem such as “Composed upon Westminster Bridge”. South African adolescents battle with daily challenges of trying to get enough to eat and survive for the day. With this background, appreciation of a city that wears the beauty of the morning like a garment becomes trivial.

In addition, South African adolescents are battling with more important issues which can build or destroy their lives, apart from poverty. Such issues as gender based violence, teenage pregnancy, rape, death, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and, most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic which has wreaked havoc throughout the entire world (Toska et al., 2021). With serious issues like these to deal with, it is most unlikely that the adolescents will appreciate nature; rather, they might associate it with the disasters that often ravage informal settlements, which include floods and severe storms. All these issues raised above make it difficult for learners to enthusiastically appreciate this poem, which makes it problematic that such a poem is included in the curriculum. However, the far bigger problem is the way the poem was taught. Mostly, there was failure to find meeting points between learners’ contexts and the context of the speaker in the poem. The teacher also had to grapple with making English FAL learners, whose first language is not English, to comprehend the contents of a poem written in old English. I argue that the South African curriculum needs a total revamp if teachers have to give adolescents a voice through poetry and for the average teacher to be creative in preparing lessons so as to help learners develop their identities.

It is noteworthy that in two observation lessons the teacher used the same textbook-centred pedagogy. The lack of support for the learners to reflect on what they were learning as well as what could be improved on their responses to the activities that the teacher had given them was prone to leave many learners confused, frustrated, not knowing how to move forward and excel academically, as well as not being able to build their confidence. This correlates with Erikson’s theory as stated by Cherry (2021) that if the social interaction and relationship between adolescents and adults is not

well-nurtured, adolescents' growth is retarded, as they experience internal conflicts. From my observations, I realised that there was no teacher-learner relationship in the poetry classroom as the book was the intermediator between the teacher and the learners, something that Freire (1970) speaks strongly against. Because of this disconnection between the two, adolescents failed to develop essential skills that were needed for a strong sense of self, such as self-expression and logical argument.

5.5.3 School A: Lesson observation 3

The third poem that I observed is titled "This Letter's to Say". The poem was written by Raymond Wilson, a former British literary scholar. Wilson lived between 1874 and 1942. Again, we have a poem that predates the 21st century. This British poem is satirical and uses uncommon words which require checking their contextual meaning. The poem can be difficult for some South African teachers to explain to the English additional language learners in a way that will help them to understand, to relate to, and to develop their identities. The poem is presented below.

This Letter's To Say

Raymond Wilson

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 of England
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 Q6824)
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 lunches;

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,

(Wilson in Scheffler, 2015, pp. 57-59)

There are several reasons which may make learners shun this poem. One is that this poem, like the other poems prescribed for Grade 11 English FAL learners, is very old as it was written a very long time ago. Additionally, the satirical nature of the poem makes it difficult to comprehend as its meaning is not literal. To make it worse, some of the terms and expressions used in the poem require the teacher to do some research to be able to understand their meanings in context, e.g. bible-punchers. Without such research, the teacher might not be able to guide the learners successfully in unpacking the poem's meaning. That said, I observed the lesson to see how the teacher would approach the poem.

During this third lesson, the teacher greeted the learners as usual. Then she tried a different strategy with the reading of the poem, as evident in the excerpt below.

Transcript 3: School A lesson observation 3

Teacher: Please take out your *Vistas* and open page 54.
Learners: (*Some take out their poetry books while others remain unmoved. There is no noise though some silent voices can be heard from the learners sitting at the back of the class*.)
Teacher: Today I am not reading for you… (*Some learners look at each other; few learners smile while others raise their heads to look at the teacher*) eh… I have realised that some of you will end up not knowing how to read on your own neh… (*Some learners laugh softly*). Yes, I know. Let's get started. You have five minutes to read the poem titled "This Letter's to Say".
Learners: (*Some learners start reading while others without books move closer to the other learners with books*).
Teacher: (After some time) I guess you are done. Let's discuss the poem. What is emphasised by the repetition of "No" in stanza 4 and 5? (*There is silence in the room and the teacher pauses for a while*). *Bathong, kanti* you read the poem, guys. You should know the answer. Ok, let's move to the next question: state the difference between flat number Q6824 'on the thirteenth floor' and the present home of the recipient? (*No answers from learners. Others are heard whispering*.) Well, guys, you don't want to talk so now take out your classwork books and answer questions number 1 to 5. (*Few learners start writing, some take their phones while some of the learners who had moved closer to those with textbooks start chatting*).

The excerpt above shows the new strategy that the teacher applied, that is, individual silent reading. Antika (2017) notes that poetry reading is vital to learners as it enables them to experience the power of language. However, in this class the power of language was not evidently achieved as learners could not respond to the questions that the teacher posed after the reading activity. There are, however, a number of reasons why there was lack of participation after the reading. Firstly, it could be that learners had not understood the meaning of the poem despite reading it. Secondly, the questions were not designed for discussion as many of them were technical questions that did not invite the real life experiences or evoke the interest of the learners. Lastly, it could be because of the teacher's failure to explain the poem for the learners' understanding or to explain certain words which are not normally used within the South African context.

The teacher eventually asked the learners to answer the questions in their classwork books. The questions are in the Grade 11 prescribed anthology. Below are the questions.

1. What is emphasised by the repetition of “No” (stanza 4 and 5)?
2. State the difference between flat number Q6824 ‘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’ (line 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?

(Scheffler 2015, p. 59)

The above questions have little to offer in fostering adolescents’ identity development. For example, Questions 1 to 4 mainly focus on the comprehension of the poem. While poetry comprehension is important because it helps to achieve the other purpose of poetry which is enjoyment, having only questions that focus on comprehension does not push learners to higher cognitive levels of thinking. Creely (2019) notes that it is the focus on the technical aspects of poetry which makes learners to lose what poetry has to offer. For example, Question 4 requires learners to have acquired enough vocabulary to enable them figure out the antonyms of the given terms and expressions. Looking at these questions, one can tell that they are purely meant to help learners prepare for academic success in their examinations. Coupled with the traditional pedagogy employed, the nature of the questions resembles the banking system which limits learners’ creation of knowledge (Freire, 1970). Even though Question 5 requires learners to give their own opinions, it is also problematic because for learners to be able to reflect on emotions they need to comprehend the poem first, which in this class might not have happened for the majority of the learners who were

not writing the given task. This is supported by Nkealah and Simango (2023, p. 76) who note that in English FAL literature classrooms “the activities that accompany the reading [of texts] seldom stimulate learners to think independently and analytically; learners are made to answer questions that require them to merely identify figures of speech in a text”. This informs us that curriculum design is as much a challenge in the identity development of adolescents as pedagogy and canon.

During the first lesson observed, learners portrayed some resistance verbally through mumbling and exclamations, but when the teacher instructed learners to answer questions during this third lesson, learners were quiet. Perhaps learners were then getting used to this mode of teaching and felt powerless in changing it, so they just kept quiet to get through the motions until the lesson was over. However, most of the learners were not writing the work given by the teacher. As in the first lesson, some learners were on their phones and others were chatting. Few of the learners were writing the task that they had been given. Others were just seated and doing nothing. The picture below was taken during the third lesson observation at the time that the learners were expected to be working on the task that the teacher had given them.

Figure 7: School A learners during the poetry lesson



The picture above shows that some of the learners were detached from what was happening in the classroom even though the class was quiet. From the left side one learner was on her phone but below her classwork book was the poetry anthology. Behind her is a learner seated seemingly with her eyes closed showing that she might have been sleeping or daydreaming. The boy seated at the back in the same row was writing the activity given by the teacher while the girls seated at the back in the middle row were whispering to each other but not writing. The two girls seated in the middle were writing their work while the other girl giving her back to the camera was on her phone and talking to the one writing her work. On the far right the two girls were sitting idly. When I looked at the girl in the front on the right side, I could tell that she might probably have been waiting for further instructions from the teacher. She looked confused and this shows a lack of what Sutton (2021) describes as emotional engagement. Sutton (2021) notes that the teacher is instrumental in ensuring that there is engagement in the classroom and failure to do this may lead to negative behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement. This negativity manifests in many

ways, including lack of participation, self-isolation, boredom, anxiety, sadness and dislike of school. During the lesson observation, the teacher walked around the class checking on the learners' work and this gave me an opportunity to ask her why she did not explain the poem to the learners. In her response, the teacher said that the poem was too long. This was an unexpected response from a language teacher and more specifically a poetry teacher. Language teachers are expected to be good readers and model this skill to their learners. However, from this response, I sensed an element of fear or lack of confidence in the teacher's ability to read and explain the poem correctly or interpret it meaningfully. She was probably also not conversant with the context of the poem, but instead of doing research on it she chose to ignore it and just teach it the traditional way – the textbook way, leaving the poem in the book. This can be read as a disavowal of responsibility towards learners.

Some learners in the classroom wrote only the questions and left out blank spaces for the answers. From my teaching experience, this behaviour shows that the learners will be waiting for the teacher to revise the work in the following lesson then they will just fill in the answers. However, if the teacher had paid attention to what the learners were doing while she was walking around the class, she could have picked this up and explained the poem to the learners for them to write their own answers. One learner whom I asked why he was writing Maths during an English lesson responded in isiZulu and explicitly said "*nginesithukuthezi*", meaning "I am bored". The young man showed that he did not want to be asked any further questions because after saying that he placed one hand on the left ear and continued writing Maths. I realised this was the perception that many learners in this classroom had. They believed that poetry was boring and I observed that it was because the pedagogy that was employed by the teacher was not critical pedagogy which according to Nkealah and Simango (2023) helps learners to become independent thinkers. This also correlates with Apple (1978) and Freire (1970) who construct critical pedagogy as learning through problem-solving and practical application that allows learners to play an active role in establishing their experiences and positions within their society. In contrast to critical pedagogy, the teacher deployed traditional pedagogy and, as a result, learners felt alienated and lacked a sense of belonging in the poetry class.

In my post-observation discussion with the teacher, she again indicated to me that the poem was too long, which is the reason why she could not read it for the learners. She also mentioned that when the learners were occupied, it was easier to manage them as they did not make noise. I argue that this is an authoritarian pedagogical style which suppresses dialogue and perpetuates banking education (Freire, 1970). What the teacher saw in the learners were not individuals with the potential to make meaning of their education process but unconscious humans who needed to be tamed so that they behaved properly. Contrary to the teacher's thoughts, her actions were actually dehumanising the learners as they were being disassociated from their true selves. Freire (1970) argues that this process disconnects individuals from the creative, healing and survival power of human relationships.

I observed that the pedagogy employed in Class A did not give learners opportunities to interact with the poem at a personal level, neither could they dramatise the poem to express their enjoyment and performance skills. In line with the view of d'Abdon, Byrne and Newfield (2020), the teacher did not open up a space for discussion as a way of creating paths for self-discovery. In addition, in this class, there was lack of reflective teaching which makes learners to see value in the content being delivered. Therefore, one might interpret the learners' silence as a sign of confusion where some learners did not know what to do despite the fact that the teacher had told them to write an activity that was in their prescribed textbook. Significantly, the teacher's pedagogy made the learners look like the residents in Wilson's "This Letter's to Say" poem who were simply asked to vacate their homes to make way for a motorway without being given the opportunity to engage the government on the human cost of such developmental projects.

5.5.4 School A: Lesson observation 4

The last poem that I observed in Class A is titled "I Sit and I Look Out". This poem was written by Walt Whitman in 1860. Walt Whitman was an American poet. This poem criticises the oppression of human beings by their fellow human beings. Whitman

raises in this poem concerns about sorrow, oppression, anguish, shame, neglect of the elderly, pestilence and war. These are some of the challenges that South Africans face today and adolescents in school are aware of these issues. The poem is presented below.

I Sit and I Look Out

Whitman Walt

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
laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;
All these—All the meanness and agony without end, I sitting, look
out upon,
See, hear, and am silent.

(Whitman in Scheffler, 2015, pp. 51-52)

Having taught this poem for more than two years myself, I anticipated that learners were going to enjoy the poem. I had a brief discussion about the poem with the teacher

on our way to the classroom. The teacher sounded excited but she pointed out that learners in her class had no interest in poetry, therefore they will not appreciate the poem. The teacher read the poem with some enthusiasm this time, but the learners did not pay much attention to her high-pitched voice. Instead, some giggled when the teacher stammered on a few words. I noticed the effort put by the teacher in trying to make the poem lively using a high-pitched voice. However, for the learners who probably thought that this was unlike the teacher that they were used to, it might have looked funny, which was perhaps the reason why some of them were giggling.

The teacher then read the questions one by one, trying to initiate a dialogue with the learners, but this did not work as there were no responses from the learners. Immediately, she asked the learners to answer the questions from the anthology. Very few learners took out their books to write. The rest were doing their own things. For example, two girls were helping each other to cover a book. Some were talking to one another. The teacher showed no interest in what the learners were doing as she stood by the door for the whole duration of the lesson. This was a single period; therefore, it was a forty-five minutes' lesson. Adolescents need constant supervision as they are easily distracted by their surroundings (Murovhi et al, 2018; Cherry, 2021). Furthermore, Erikson (1968) states that adolescents who receive proper encouragement and reinforcement will come out of this stage with a strong sense of self. However, in this classroom, learners were on their own. Consequently, one can argue that the teacher's pedagogy has the potential to cause confusion among the learners in the classroom. Some learners who are neglected like this end up not doing the assigned work and this results in poor academic performance in English FAL and a negative perception of English education. Some of these learners end up dropping out of school when they realise that the school is not doing any good for their future. All these behaviours are tantamount to a miserable future for these adolescents. Some may end up getting into crime for them to earn a living. Ironically, Whitman's poem speaks about the social evils that can be practised by young people when they drop out of school, resulting in "young men, at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done". This resonates with experiences of young men in South Africa, particularly in the townships, where they start drinking excessively and harassing their mothers and caregivers for money (Scott & Laurren, 2022). With the correct pedagogy

in Class A, learners could have reflected on such behaviour, which this tells us how important pedagogy is and how critical the teacher's pedagogical choices are.

I argue that if a pedagogy helps learners to comprehend the poem, it will appeal to their emotions and help them to find solutions to some of the challenges they are faced with, which are similar to the issues raised by Whitman in his poem. Even if they do not find solutions to their problems, talking about them with their teacher and peers provides an outlet for self-reflection that would enable them to define their own roles as young people in post-apartheid South Africa. Lack of engagement with the issues raised in the poem creates disempowerment for these adolescents.

5.6 School B observations

The previous section presented and analysed data from School A where I observed a classroom in which the teacher employed traditional teaching pedagogy. The same poems observed in School A were also observed in School B. The difference is that in School A, the teacher employed traditional pedagogy which is textbook-based. In School B, the teacher employed the modern teaching pedagogy which is multimodal and draws on learners' literacies to foster learning. This section presents and analyses data collected from School B. As mentioned in the previous section, I am analysing the data descriptively because descriptive analysis of data is closely associated with observational studies, as pointed out by Ethridge (2004), Creswell, (2008) and Rawat (2021). The descriptive approach is also important because it enables me to give a detailed layout of the situation more explicitly than is possible without employing this method. Since the poems were already presented in the analysis of data from School A, they will not be reproduced here. In this section, some excerpts from transcriptions are used as well, together with quotations and pictures, to illustrate the teacher's pedagogy. This is important because in this classroom, the teacher used an interactive teaching pedagogy incorporating multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies. Discussion of the findings from the observation data will be done later in this chapter.

5.6.1 School B: Lesson observation 1

The poem “Shantytown” was taught in School B following the prescribed ATP. Thus, I was able to observe the lesson in School B on the same day that I observed it in School A (15 March 2021). I was fortunate that the timetable allowances of the two schools and their proximity to each other allowed this to happen. In School A, I observed the lesson on this day at 08:00 to 09:00 while in School B the lesson took place at 11:30 to 12:30. The two schools are only 4km apart from each, which facilitated data collection on the same day.

The excerpt below shows how the teacher introduced the lesson after greeting the learners. This is an important excerpt because it shows how the teacher drew the learners’ attention by introducing them to situations that they were familiar with.

Transcript 4: School B lesson observation 1

Teacher: What do you know about apartheid in South Africa?
Sbu: Black and white could not share public things like toilets.
Teacher: Yes, there are places which were accessible only to white people. What’s next?
Jabu: There was serious racism, tribalism and segregation.
Teacher: Yes, meaning that there were other races that were regarded more privileged than others. Now talking about privileges. What would you say about the locations demarcated for each race?
Stacy: Black people stayed in the townships while white people and Indians stayed in underdeveloped places.
Teacher: That’s true, you have raised a very important idea. Yes, there was segregation, actually Indians and coloureds were also not treated very well. They also suffered racial segregation though black people are the once that suffered the most in the townships. There are different areas that surround us here which are not developed and these are communities where some of us are coming from. What are the effects of apartheid on the black South Africans’ social and economic status?
(*Many hands are up and there are many voices speaking at the same time*. *Teacher restores order and asks the question again.*)
Learners: Poverty, poor service delivery, no water, no electricity, no roads, inequality, unemployment…
Teacher: Yes, what is a shantytown? (*There is silence in the classroom*). Okay, think about the housing conditions in the location.
Learners: *Mokhukhu*, shacks, *emkhukhwini*, *zozo*
Teacher: Well done. Now can we have examples of locations that have the types of houses that you have mentioned?
Learners: Mandela, Empilisweni and the hostels.
Teacher: That’s very good. This takes us to all the socio-economic issues that we stated earlier. Do you think the government has made much progress to make black people’s lives better from what it was during apartheid?

(*Too many voices shouting No! The teacher manages the class and tells the learners to raise their hands. Many hands go up in the air*.)
Ayanda: The only difference that my mother talks about is that we no longer walk around with *dom* passes. Otherwise we are suffering in the communities, we are poor and there are no jobs. Social grant is not enough to feed the whole family for a month.
Teacher: Yes, thank you for your response, Ayanda. You can see, guys, that we can take the whole day talking about these issues because they affect us even today. Even for those who are working now, they still see the cappuccino system at workplace (*The teacher laughs and most learners join in, with a few whispering to classmates probably seeking explanation for the teacher's joke*.) Now open your *Vistas of Poems* and turn to page 136.

In the above excerpt, the teacher asked the learners what they knew about the history of South Africa. This is important because the townships where this study was carried out have a strong political history which left many people with deep apartheid scars. These learners were familiar with pains and sorrows of the township as they were probably second and third generation children of the victims of the Thokoza and Katlehong wars of the early 1990s which left many families traumatised (Kynoch, 2013). Therefore, issues related to apartheid were on many learners' minds and could easily draw their attention. From the discussion initiated by the teacher, learners mentioned segregation, racism and tribal isolation as problems that plagued their communities. This shows that they were familiar with these terms, indicating that the apartheid legacy was still felt in the black communities. The teacher elaborated on the learners' responses and pointed out to the learners that due to these divide-and-rule tactics by the apartheid government, people had demarcated areas of dwelling. There were White communities, Indian communities, Coloured (mixed race) communities and Black communities. The latter two communities were the least developed. As the teacher was talking about these apartheid segregation laws, pointing out the differences in the locations occupied by each race, he kept encouraging learners' participation by asking questions such as "What are the effects of apartheid on the black South Africans' social and economic status?" This is a high order question. It is a question that required learners to think critically about the history of apartheid and what it had left as a legacy in Black lives. It also helped to create dialogue in the class. Many learners responded enthusiastically, as evident in the picture below where most of them had their hands raised to answer the teacher's question.

Figure 8: School B learners participating during the poetry lesson



Throughout the lesson, it was evident to me that learners were having a discussion on something that was close to their hearts. Learners' responses to the teacher's question about the effects of apartheid included poverty, poor service delivery, water shortage, electricity irregularity, bad roads, social inequality and unemployment. The teacher used the chalkboard to write as learners were giving responses. The classroom was equipped with a smartboard but on the day that the observation was done the teacher used the chalkboard and the whiteboard.

Immediately after the discussion on the effects of apartheid, the teacher asked the question, "*What is a shantytown*?" Learners were quiet. On realising that the learners were struggling to come up with the definition for a shantytown, the teacher asked learners about the conditions of the houses in their locations. He encouraged the learners to identify the types of houses that people in the townships lived in. Learners mentioned makeshift houses such as *mokhukhu,* shacks*, emkhukhwini,* and *zozo*.

Learners said that many of these were found in the informal settlements. I noticed other learners nodding their heads in agreement and this showed that learners were starting to comprehend the message that the teacher was trying to put across. Then the teachers asked learners to give examples of informal settlements that were close to the school and they mentioned three. The three mentioned were Mandela, Empilisweni and the hostels. The learners discussed the deplorable situations in these places and how unsuitable they were for human habitation. The discussions about the familiar informal settlements and the appalling conditions therein brought the learners close to the poem even before they started reading it.

Some learners brought in their daily experiences and there was a lively discussion as they talked about the disadvantages of staying in informal settlements. For example, one learner stated that "*staying in informal settlements is difficult because many people share one toilet and sometimes the toilets are very dirty which is not healthy for us and younger children.*" After this statement was said by this learner, I managed to take a picture to see the gestural responses from other learners who were sitting close to her. These are real life situations which are hardly discussed in the classrooms and the majority of adolescents conceal the pain in fear of shame and being embarrassed in class. However, these pains may result in some learners losing confidence and also thinking that there is no way that they can come out of their situations. When such issues find a way of being discussed in class, it helps learners to open up and be hopeful about change. The picture below shows that some learners might have felt embarrassed to talk about this condition as evidenced by one learner who covered her face with her hand and the other learner looking down. However, the fact that no one laughed or made an expression of disapproval meant that learners had an opportunity to reflect on their daily challenges and also to empathise with others even if they themselves were not living in the informal settlements.

Figure 9: School B learners' reactions to poetry discussion

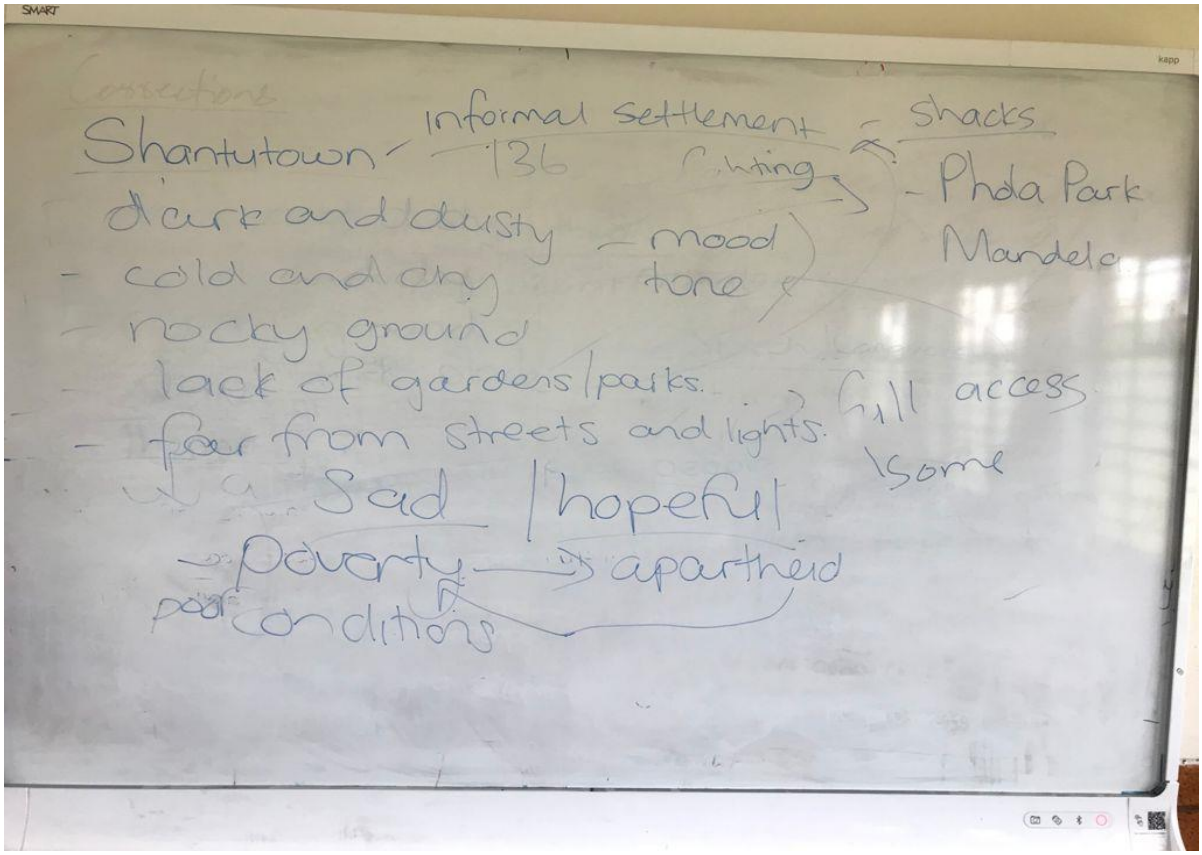


Furthermore, one learner whose hand is raised in the picture above also added a comment on the conditions in informal settlements and she said: "*Sir, the other problem is that people are threatened with evictions regularly and this stops people from building strong structures that are warm and secure*." From this comment, I realised that these adolescents shared the plight of their parents and guardians who were constantly troubled by the possibility of eviction. They could reflect on these socio-economic challenges which could possibly help them to make career decisions that would enable them to pursue better lives in future.

Below is a picture of the notes written by the teacher on the chalkboard while learners were brainstorming what they thought about a shantytown. This was a whole class

discussion led by the teacher. I believe that the teacher could not break the learners into smaller groups due to Covid-19. The social distance had to be maintained and having a whole class discussion was ideal since it meant that learners did not have to move close together or change their seating positions.

Figure 10: Discussion notes on the whiteboard



The teacher's contextualisation of the topic and definition of key terms in the poem, as shown in Figure 10, helped learners to engage with the lesson, and I observed that many of the learners in this classroom enjoyed the lesson. During the time when the teacher was writing learners' contributions on the whiteboard, learners took turns to call out their responses and this was done in an orderly manner. All that the teacher did was to say "next". This proved to me that the learners felt that they had an opportunity to share their knowledge.

In teaching the poem, the teacher explained various concepts and terms that were in the poem as well as the tone and mood of the poem. The teacher asked for a volunteer to read the poem. I observed several hands of learners who all wanted to read the poem. Among all whose hands were raised, the teacher asked Mpho to read the poem. Mpho read the poem eloquently in a relaxed tone of voice. As I listened to Mpho reading, he observed the punctuation marks, which gave emphasis on the shared emotions between the persona, the reader and the audience. The silence in class indicated to me that learners empathised with the people in *Jabavu* and when the last stanza was read some sounds of exhalation resonated with the tone of hope shared by the persona. After the reading, the teacher asked learners if they thought that everything that they had said is what the poem was all about. Teacher and learners engaged in a discussion around this.

Godsell (2019, p.1) asserts that poetry "provides a voice for sensitive topics, acknowledges and embraces complexity and pain". I found this true in this classroom. Through the teacher's engaging pedagogy, learners were relaxed and enjoyed asking questions and also responding to the questions that the teacher asked. The teacher removed himself as the mediator to open the space for critical thinking and giving learners a voice to examine the poem in relation to their daily living experiences. For example, Ayanda asked the teacher and her classmates a question: "*What do you think people staying in the shantytowns should do to uplift their livelihood apart from waiting for government assistance*?" This question implies two things: that Ayanda lived in a shantytown and was therefore concerned about what she and her community could do to change their lives for the better or that Ayanda did not live in a shantytown but was aware of the challenges that shantytown dwellers experienced in terms of housing, water and electricity and was therefore prompting conversation on ways these people could be assisted to improve their circumstances. Either way, here was an adolescent with a vision to transform her society through community effort rather than waiting for government intervention which often fails to come.

I viewed the question above asked by Ayanda as a very important question which suggested that these learners were not docile listeners but they were becoming critical

co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. This dialogue made it possible to pull out the poem from the book because learners related the poem to their own personal daily experiences of living in South African informal settlements. Furthermore, dialogue opened up new possibilities for critically thinking about the world that they were living in, and this was a first step towards problem solving. As mentioned earlier, many Black South Africans in the townships have got housing problems, apart from other socio-economic challenges that they experience on a daily basis. Some live in their relatives' backyards where they have managed to put up a makeshift room, while others live in informal settlements resembling that pictured in the poem "Shantytown". As articulated by Erikson (1968), identity development includes the ability to stay true to oneself and this means being able to identify who one is as a person and as a community. Ayanda's question encouraged the learners to think of ways to develop their identities as they reflected on the challenges that their families and fellow South Africans in their own communities face. The African concept of Ubuntu denotes that another person's problem is also one's problem. As such, even learners who did not stay in the informal settlements found it important to think of ways that they could improve these communities. This shows that the pedagogy employed in teaching the poem "Shantytown" in School B helped Ayanda to identify a crisis in her community and to develop a sense of responsibility to want to take action to change things.

In response to Ayanda's question, interesting responses were given. Among the responses given, one learner's response, Sihle, drew my attention. He said: "*It is important for people to start making savings which can help them to build smaller houses for themselves*". I viewed this response to be valuable in the sense that the learner showed a sense of independence which he thought could be practised by people who were living in shantytowns. If this learner was living in these conditions, one could claim that already the learner had a practical thinking mindset because he proposed a possible solution to the housing crisis. A discussion was raised around this response as some learners argued about the availability of the money to save. Interestingly, another learner, Siyanda, said that many parents in the community were part of at least one *stokvel* and therefore it was possible for people to channel this money towards building materials for a house instead of luxurious food items for Christmas. *Stokvel* is a term used to refer to a savings pool or investment society to

which members regularly contribute a certain amount. In South Africa, the funds are paid at regular intervals and each member receives a lump sum equal to their monthly contributions at the end of the cycle. These ideas by the adolescents in this class reflected critical thinking as they made suggestions which were practical for the development of their environment.

After the discussion, the learners read the poem silently. This, in my opinion, was the right time for learners to engage with the text. Reading the poem individually and silently helped learners to meditate on it and reflect on its meaning after having the class discussion which contextualised the content of the poem. After the silent reading, the teacher engaged with the learners and the transcript that follows explains the discussion that took place.

Transcript 5: School B lesson observation 1

Teacher: Who can give us a summary of the poem?
Ayanda: The poem describes the harsh conditions under which the Jabavu people live.
Teacher: Good. What is the economic status of the people that stay in informal settlements?
Learners: Poor people (*Some sounds are heard from other learners exclaiming aah, uumm and others saying no.*)
Teacher: Okay, what description is given in the poem about the Shantytown and how people live?
Learners: Dark, dry and dusty, coughing children, cold, no warm blankets, no electricity, far from cities.
Teacher: That's very good. This means that the place is underdeveloped and indeed the people living there are economically disadvantaged. Please note that this is not an insult but we are looking at the real lives that are lived by many people in our South African townships currently for us all to understand the poem. What do you think were the feelings/emotions of the poet as he was writing the first and second stanzas of the poem?
Learner: Angry.
Teacher: Let's read the stanzas again then you will tell us what the poet's feelings were. (*Teacher reads the stanzas while learners listen*). The word angry refers to a feeling of having strong displeasure or annoyance while sad is a feeling of showing sorrow or unhappiness. Now which word best describes the poet's feeling?
Learner: Sad
Teacher: Yes. And why does the poet feel like this?
Sbu: Because of the poor conditions that black people who live in informal settlements experience.
Teacher: That is true. The poet empathises with the informal settlements dwellers. Now what message is being expressed by the poet? What is the poet trying to tell us?
Jabu: That even when we experience hardships because of poverty there is hope for a better future.

Transcript 5 above shows how the teacher used discussion in the class. The teacher encouraged learners' participation by giving clues where learners seemed to have challenges. For example, when the teacher asked a question, *"What do you think were the feelings/emotions of the poet as he was writing the first and second stanzas of the poem?"* One learner responded that the poet was "angry". The teacher took the learners back to the stanzas and read them, then asked the learners the same question. Then the teacher explained the meanings of the words, sad and angry. The same learner now said "sad". This was an important part of the lesson, considering that the teacher was working with learners who were studying English as an additional language. This shows some of the difficulties encountered in the language as discussed earlier in Chapter 1. I observed that the teacher used a method that made learners to comprehend what they were being taught and they showed this through their participation. There was evidence that the teacher had managed to create an environment which allowed learners to identify with the lesson and they could mirror themselves through the poem. The back and forth on the reading of specific stanzas and explaining meanings of terms showed the teacher's willingness to make learners co-creators of knowledge rather than the teacher lecturing the learners. In addition, the opening of space for dialogue by the teacher signifies the relationship that the teacher had with the learners, a relationship which did not place the teacher as the authority of knowledge but as the facilitator of learning, giving everyone in the room a chance to participate. The teacher also showed that he was prepared to listen when learners were given an opportunity to create meaning out of what they were learning, thus enabling them to be change agents.

The excerpt below shows the interaction between the teacher and the learners while discussing the features of the poem and below the excerpt are the pictures taken while the teacher was writing some notes on the chalkboard during the discussion.

Transcript 6: School B lessom observation 1

Teacher: Now that we have talked about the emotions in the poem, can someone tell us what we mean by figures of speech? Ayanda: A sentence that has a hidden meaning. Teacher: Thank you, Ayanda. Yes, it refers to a word or a phrase that possesses a separate meaning from its literal meaning. What are some examples of figures of speech that you are familiar with? Learners: Simile, personification, metaphor. Teacher: Well done. Now let's look for the figures of speech that were used in the poem, "Shantytown".

Figure 11: Discussion notes on the chalkboard

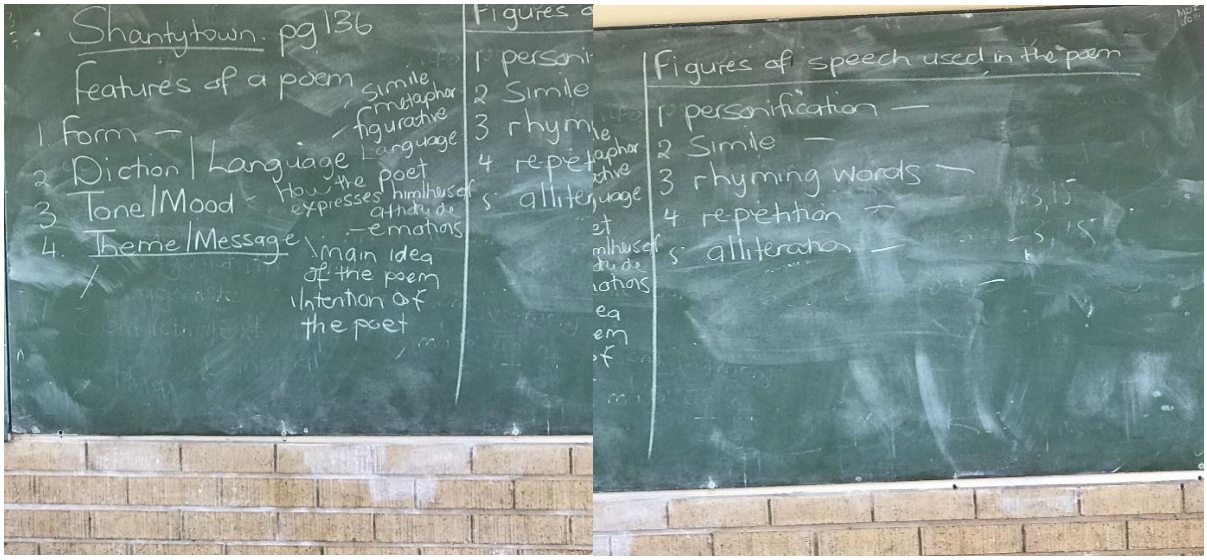


Figure 11 above shows the discussion on figures of speech that the teacher had with the learners. The teacher introduced the learners to the form of the poem, the choice of words by the poet, the tone, mood and the theme of the poem. Learners were able to connect their previous discussion to these features of the poem. For example, they were able to point out that the tone of the poem was critical and the mood was sombre. After discussing the features of the poem, the teacher led the discussion on the figures of speech. The picture above shows the interaction that the teacher had with the learners. The teacher wrote some notes on the chalkboard and encouraged learners to write in their books while they were discussing. The use of class discussions, the whiteboard and the chalkboard by Teacher B shows a multimodal teaching pedagogy

where the teacher used a variety of modes to create meaning from the poem. The teacher displayed knowledge of the poem he was teaching. Teacher B allowed learners to go on the internet during the lesson and look up pictures of shantytowns around South Africa. Learners were encouraged to share the identified pictures. One of the pictures was retrieved from the *Daily Maverick* newspaper in an article authored by Egu (2021) pictured below.

Figure 12: One of the pictures retrieved from internet by learners

.



“Shantytown” is the only South African oriented poem that I observed being taught, which is the reason why I chose to do a detailed analysis of how the poem was taught in School B, which is very different from how it was taught in School A. The other three poems that I observed are non-South African poems. The next poem I observed in School B was “Composed upon Westminster Bridge”.

5.6.2 School B: Lesson observation 2

The poem titled “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” was taught in School B on 29 March 2021. The teacher introduced the lesson with a song based on the poem. The song was sung by Sam Swallow and it was accessed on YouTube (available at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9SLJLu6uLs). This was a good teaching aid because many adolescents could easily connect with the music. I could hear learners humming along to show that they were excited. At the end of the song, I heard some learners exclaiming "*aah…".* This shows that the song had come to an end earlier than anticipated as learners were enjoying it. This created curiosity as learners eagerly waited to hear what the teacher had to show. I noticed that some learners were smiling and sat upright showing their physical and mental presence. Immediately, the teacher started reading the poem in a high-pitched voice. He moved around the classroom slowly as he read. This drew the attention of the learners who kept their eyes on the teacher. At the end of the reading voices were heard exclaiming "*wow, uum…".* This sounded like they were mesmerised by the teacher's reading and probably the contents of the poem as well.

Teacher B contextualised the poem by comparing it to Nelson Mandela Bridge which learners were familiar with. The teacher made use of local landmarks as teaching aids. He asked the learners what they felt when they were standing on the Nelson Mandela Bridge. Some learners indicated that they had never been there but the idea that the bridge was named after Mandela made the bridge special. Many learners, including those who had been to the bridge, agreed that it was the name that made the bridge spectacular and not where it was located. I realised that the comparison made learners to feel that they were prepared to discuss the poem as most South African adolescents felt that identifying with Mandela shows how patriotic one is. While learners were still in this mood, the teacher used ICT in teaching by showing the slide pictures of Westminster Bridge, projecting from his computer to the smartboard. The teacher gave the background of the poem by explaining that the poem was written in appreciation of the Westminster Bridge in London. The poet had arrived in London very early in the morning from the rural areas. The city was still quiet and this was before industrialisation. The teacher also mentioned that during that time cities were not as overcrowded as they are these days. I observed that the learners were quiet during this time when the teacher was explaining the background, giving comparisons with the city of Johannesburg. An interesting conversation that ensued is evident in the excerpt below.

Transcript 7: School B lesson observation 2

Teacher: The city of London on this particular day was very quiet, no traffic, no people walking around, which made the speaker to be in awe of the environment. This might be the same if you go to Joburg city very early in the morning…
Learners: Aaah no… (*Some learners laugh while others start conversing among themselves. However, the teacher manages to calm the learners down and restore order*.)
Teacher: I understand why you are rejecting the idea that Joburg is quiet in the morning… (*He laughs and learners join in.*) Yes, in Joburg people do not sleep. But let's reserve this discussion for another day. Today, let's focus on the poem. What do you see on this picture? (*Teacher points at the picture showing on the projector screen.*)

The transcript above shows that the learners contested the teacher's comparison of London to Johannesburg, which indicates their awareness of Johannesburg as a noisy city with constant activity, even in the early mornings. This means learners could tell that the timeframes were not the same. For example, the learners could tell that the London of Wordsworth's time could not be compared to the Johannesburg of today. Certainly, it cannot be compared even to the London of today. Therefore, although this is a very old poem set in a European city, learners were conscious of the differences between that Western geographical location and their current metropolitan city of Johannesburg. The learners' resistance of the teachers' comparison denotes identity development in terms of their recognition that they were surrounded by a metropolis that could not be idealised.

The teacher opened a space which allowed learners to be free to engage in a discussion and to disagree with ideas they found problematic. This aligns with what Mavhiza and Prozesky (2020) refer to as the fluid pathway which opens learners' knowledge and experiences. The deliberate destabilisation of the teacher's authority created a conducive atmosphere that helped learners to participate in the class discussion, pointing out to what they were seeing on the picture showing on the projector screen. This created an atmosphere that enabled the learners to start analysing the poem, with the teacher facilitating the learning process. Because the learners had no experience with the poem's contents, contextualisation was necessary. One learner said that she wished to see this bridge one day. However, some of the learners in the classroom laughed and said that it was not an African

cultural practice to admire bridges. In this context, the reference to culture means that learners interpreted the poem in relation to their cultural values and experiences. In other words, they positioned culture as an important aspect of their identities. For some of the learners to have expressed the view that it was un-African to move around admiring bridges means that the poem did not project cultural values that the learners identified with. The poem was, in fact propositioning an action that the learners found contrary to their culture. However, it was also interesting to note that the learner who said that she wished to see the Westminster Bridge was female and she got support from some of the girls, while most of the learners who opposed her were boys. This brings in a gender element where boys may feel that it is not a trait of African masculinity for men to move around idly admiring bridges when they should be working to make a living while girls may feel that it is a romantic gesture. I realised that learners' responses to the poem were influenced by their gender identities. Thus, the class discussion gave learners an opportunity to display gender attributes and also to demonstrate how they thought about poetry from a gendered perspective. It is also important to note that even though none of the learners had been to London, the use of pictures and class discussions provided a fruitful inter-semiosis which helped them to connect with the poem. This visual and verbal interplay proves that classroom poetry is critical in creating an environment where each child feels appreciated and eager to learn new things, thereby building on relationships with peers without fear (Hooser, 2020) and developing their identities.

5.6.3 School B Lesson observation 3

During the third lesson observation in School B, the teacher taught the poem titled "This Letter's to Say" by Raymond Wilson. The poem was taught on 12 April 2021. The lesson started with the teacher asking learners what they would do if the government made an announcement that they should move away from where they were staying and that there was no compensation for such eviction. This reflective authentic teaching method sparked an interesting conversation, but the teacher remained in control of the lesson as he told the learners to put up their hands up to give their responses. One student said: "*That will create a forced revolution, we will not leave without fighting*." Many learners were heard supporting this view by saying

“Yes”. Almost every learner in the classroom said something. They showed that this was a serious issue which could not be taken lightly. Their impassioned participation in the class discussion conveyed their eagerness to learn. To bring calmness after this discussion, the teacher asked the learners to take turns to read the poem. Each learner read a stanza. This showed me that the learners in this classroom enjoyed participating and contributing to their own learning. After reading, the teacher asked the learners if they could relate to the poem. Some learners said that there were some similarities to their present lives in the sense that politicians did not do anything to make the people happy. However, the majority of the learners said that the poem was not related to South African contexts. Even though the teacher did not correct this misconception, it must be stated that the poem is relatable to the South African context, unlike Wordsworth’s poem “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” that was not directly relatable. The history of evictions is well documented in South Africa (Reed, 2013) as this became a weaponised tool used by the apartheid system to keep Black, Indian and Coloured people oppressed. In addition, the media is awash with stories of land invasions by the government. For example, the *Times Live* (Hosken, 2021) narrates incidents of fights between farmers and the government because of land invasions. This shows that issues of property expropriation for public purposes, which is referred to as the ‘eminent domain’ (Slade, 2014), is not unique to the United Kingdom but many nations including South Africa have such a bill which allows the government to take private property for developmental purposes. However, the affected individuals must be fairly compensated. It is the issue of fairness in compensation which is questionable in Wilson’s poem. Hence, learners in this class said that in South Africa such actions are met with resistance. In this poem, Wilson does not tell us the reaction of the recipients of the letter who are not even addressed by their names. This shows the insensitivity of the municipality in Wilson’s poem and equally symbolises the insensitivity of postcolonial governments to the plight of poor masses.

Teacher B explained the key concepts in the poem and did a comparison of the terms used in the poem to terms used for the same things in South Africa today. Some examples are:

Borough corporation	Municipality
Motorway	Freeway
Miles	Kilometres
Bible punchers	Jehovah's Witnesses

This contextualisation of the poem helped learners to understand it, and shows that the teacher was knowledge/eable about the poem. Learner engagement can be seen as the glue that binds all aspects of learning and growth. Learners' participation in Classroom B showed that learners had comprehended the poem and that they were enjoying the lesson. Sutton (2021) argues that when a lesson is engaging and fun, learners' participation increases and learners are more likely to excel academically. During the observation, I realised that the teacher's pedagogy helped learners to understand the poem as he drew the context close to home and this made learners to enjoy the poem despite the fact that it was from a different geopolitical context. The lesson shows that learners can identify with experiences from other geographical locations if poetry content is contextualised and if relevant pedagogy is employed. The following excerpt shows an interesting discussion on the relevance of the poem "This Letter's to Say".

Transcript 8: School B lesson observation 3

Teacher: What do you learn from this poem?
Learners: Nothing! (*Many voices shout at the same time in response, followed by quieter voices as learners speak to each other.*)
Teacher: I hear you, I hear you, please calm down. Can we hear one voice at a time please? (*There is a moment of silence followed by many hands in the air*. *Teacher looks around and calls out Sihle's name.*)
Sihle: This poem has nothing much related to our experiences in South Africa, so I think there is nothing to learn from it. (*Voices are heard saying yeah, yes, uuum in agreement with Sihle.*)

This transcript shows that although learners enjoyed the employed pedagogy, they had problems with the relevance of the poem to their real lives. Bila & Abodunrin (2020) assert that poetry echoes the voice of the soul and enables the reader to reflect, dream, reminisce, observe, and fantasize. This means that poetry must convey a meaningful message to the reader. However, in this class, learners claimed that there

was nothing they could learn from the poem “This Letter’s to Say”. This was possibly because the teacher had failed to draw links between the London evictions described in the poem and the forced evictions of Black, Indian and Coloured people from the cities into the townships during the apartheid era (Forced Removals in South Africa, 2022). This history may have been passed down to the learners by their families, but in this classroom it was evident that the learners were either ignorant of it or they just did not want to see the links. That the teacher failed to make the links is surprising, considering that the teacher had time to find a music video on YouTube to play for his class; he could easily have done some research on the poem too and figured out ways to connect it to South African socio-historical realities. Classical research could have helped the teacher to do some deep reflection so that logical contextualisation could have been implemented in this lesson.

Beyond the teacher’s failings, the transcript above points to learner’s beliefs about Western poetry: that the poem is a British poem possibly explains why learners thought that the poem was not relatable. Thus, the issue of poetry selection is a major concern. Learners in this classroom felt that the poem was not related to their context because it was not a South African poem expressing South African Black experiences. This problem was compounded by the teacher’s failure to link the poem to forced evictions in South Africa. In previous lessons where the teacher made good links to learners’ contexts, the response was more positive. It appears that in this case the teacher also did not completely understand the poem. The language of a text matters in poetry comprehension for both the teacher and the learners. Language helps communication to take place and this has to align with people’s experiences. Where experiences do not speak to the language, it might lead to communication breakdown. My observation data is pointing to canon as a problem, but one that is exacerbated by poor pedagogy. In this context, the teacher used different semiotic modes to teach the poem, but the language of the poem of the poem made it difficult for learners to relate to it.

It is important to note that poetry is just like music: one may enjoy the sound or the beat but not understand the language. In this case, meaning will not be a priority but

enjoyment. This is what I observed in this class. The teacher made an effort for learners to understand the message in the poem despite the fact that the experiences in the poem were deemed unrelatable by the learners in this class. This shows that learners in this class understood the poem because it was contextualised. Also, there is evidence of critical thinking among the learners as they were able to identify similarities and differences with their own settings. Thus, they could tell that this particular poem did not help in their identity development since there is nothing that they learn from it.

5.6.4 School B Lesson observation 4

During Lesson observation 4 in School B, Walt Whitman's poem titled "I Sit and I Look Out" was taught on 20 May 2021. Teacher B started the lesson by asking the learners what they usually see on their way to school. This was a great way of introducing the lesson because it linked learners' lived experiences to the poem and prepared them for what they were about to learn. Learners enthusiastically gave different responses to the question. Immediately, the teacher showed the class the world map. The teacher integrated a geography lesson into the English FAL lesson by showing learners where South Africa was on the world map compared to America where the poem was written. Teacher B also explained the different terms in the poem. He explained the meaning of terms such as oppression, treacherous, pestilence, tyranny, martyrs, famine and Negros. He equated pestilence to Covid-19 which all learners were familiar with since this lesson was happening during the Covid-19 pandemic. The teacher likened oppression to apartheid and traitors to the commonly used word in the townships *impimpi*. The word Negros was explained to be a derogatory term which referred to Black people in the US and the teacher likened the word to *Makwerekwere*, a derogatory term commonly used in the townships to refer to African foreign nationals in South Africa. The teacher constantly did comparisons, using examples that learners were familiar with, to bring the context of the poem close to home. At times, the teacher shifted between English, Sesotho and isiZulu as he explained these terms. I realised that this code-switching helped most learners to understand these terms as exclamations of agreements were often heard when learners said "*Okay", "aah", or*

"ooh." The multiliteracies and multimodal approach served as a medium for the teacher to lift the poem from the textbook.

As the lesson progressed, the teacher asked learners to give examples of South African wars and learners mentioned xenophobia, gangsterism, tribalism, school bullying and service protests. The teacher then showed a photo of xenophobic attacks and another photo with evidence of school bullying on the smartboard. There was dead silence in the room. Possibly the silence was because the pictures had taken the learners to what they had experienced in their own communities where attacks on foreign nationals usually reached horrendous proportions. Such attacks were rife in informal settlements and high-density townships around Gauteng, and as pointed out in the beginning of this chapter these learners came from such areas. The teacher then asked one learner to read the poem. This shows that the teacher valued the learners' presence and contributions towards their own learning.

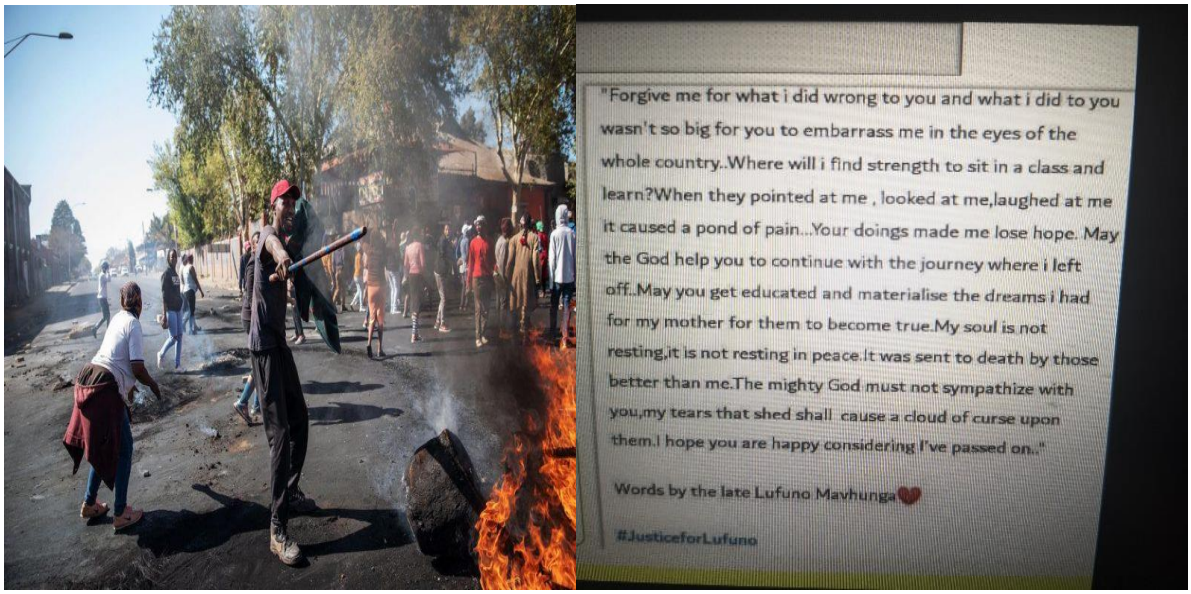
During the discussion of the poem in this classroom, learners showed willingness to learn by writing notes and responding to the teacher's questions. The teacher contextualised the poem by asking learners to point out the daily struggles that South Africans face. Vasudenvan and Campano (2009) argue that adolescents are at risk of hiding their emotions when in school because often the sense of self that they experience in their out-of-school lives is constricted in school. In contrast to this view, learners in School B did not hide their emotions; instead, they poured out their hearts in a discussion when the teacher asked how they intend to change the situations in their communities. The excerpt below shows the interactions between the teacher and the learners at this point in the lesson.

Transcript 9: School B lesson observation 4

Teacher: Now that you have mentioned the daily struggles that we face as South Africans, if you were to be chosen to lead the country for a week, what would you change? Learners: (*Many learners shout responses.*) Jail terms for rapists, drug dealers, murderers and school bullies; the education system; service delivery and poverty; increase social grant; building houses for the poor; create employment.

The above excerpt shows how adolescents who are living in the townships and in the area in which this research was conducted are distressed by social and economic issues which they are experiencing on a daily basis. Some of the mentioned issues directly affect these adolescents and also has an impact on their identity development. For example, the issue of violence in schools and communities dominated the discussion after the teacher showed the pictures. Some of the pictures shown by the teachers are presented below.

Figure 13: Picture and information displayed by the teacher on the smartboard



The two pictures above show how violence has negatively impacted adolescents' lives, particularly in the South African townships. One picture with people shows the xenophobic attacks, which did not only affect foreign nationals but some South Africans as well, particularly those from the minority tribes like Venda and Tsonga. The second picture is a speech by Lufuno Mavhunga, an adolescent who took her own life after being bullied by a classmate. The teacher used these multimodal forms of real life experiences to help learners understand the social ills demonstrated in the poem "I Sit and I Look Out". This was also a way to show learners that even though the forms of social injustices in the poem were different, South African learners were not strangers to issues of violence. Learners showed disappointment in the perpetrators of violence as they analysed the captions above in relation to the poem studied. Even

though all learners were putting on their face masks, some expressions of disapproval of what they were looking at could be seen on their faces, as shown in the picture below.

Figure 14: Learners' reactions to class discussions



The picture above shows some of the learners touching their faces. In some cases, touching one's face or looking aside or downwards are signs of embarrassment. In this case, it was an indication that the learners wanted the discussion to quickly pass. For some, these photos might have brought back some horrible memories that were traumatic. This is evidence that adolescents have fears and anxieties to deal with; they are faced with fears even within the school setup. Some experience domestic violence and they bring these invisible scars to school. The use of ICT, which is part of the new literacies by the teacher, helped the learners to reflect on their personal experiences of violence and violation. I argue here that when learners meet a relevant pedagogy, they have a space to vent out, while pathways of healing are also created.

After the lesson, the teacher encouraged the learners to write their own poems expressing their daily experiences. I realised that the pedagogy employed by the teacher enabled learners to reflect on relationships and how these could affect the choices that they made. The activity also gave the learners an opportunity to make their own voices heard.

5.7 Summary of findings from classroom observations

The findings from the eight classroom observations are summarised and presented in themes on the table below.

Table 2: Summary of findings from classroom observations

School A	Description	School B	Description
Teaching strategy	The lesson was teacher and book centred.	Teaching strategy	The lesson incorporated learners and the teacher used a multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy with the use of the chalkboard, whiteboard and learners' smart phones.
Learner involvement	Ineffective, random closed questions prompting chorus responses were used.	Learner involvement	Effectively engaging. Learners had a chance to share their ideas as well as participate in finding information on the internet individually and in groups.
Contextualisation of poems	Teacher focused on the information that was provided in the anthology.	Contextualisation of poems	Teacher drew on learners' personal experiences during the discussions.

Learners' response to the pedagogy	Rebellion, boredom, lack of participation, lack of interest in doing class activities and negative attitudes to poetry	Learners' response to the pedagogy	Enthusiasm, willingness to learn. Positive rebelliousness where learners' resisted the imposition of Western norms on their context, showing that they were thinking critically about what the teacher was saying.
Teacher's knowledge of the poems	Teacher showed that she was struggling to teach poetry with knowledge. She focused on information provided in the textbook.	Teacher's knowledge of the poems	The teacher showed some expertise and became creative to ensure that learners understood difficult poems.
The role of the teacher	The teacher posed as the knowledgeable being who provides knowledge to the passive learners in the classroom.	The role of the teacher	The teacher became the facilitator who led the discussions and helped learners to contextualise the poems.

The table above summarises the findings from the eight classroom observations. It is noted that learner engagement can be difficult, especially in Grade 11 township classrooms where learners are sometimes unmanageable due to ill-behaviour. However, this ill-behaviour can also be viewed as the reverse effects of poor pedagogy and irrelevant canon. There is evidence from the data that the modern pedagogy made learners in School B to be actively involved during lessons; this is because learners used technology and, as Kress (2009) notes, technology is apealing to 21st century adolescents. In addition, the modern pedagogy allowed learners to think for themselves, engage in discussions and offer alternative suggestions to human challenges that were brought out in literature. Learners' responses were drawn from their own understanding of the world around them, while the pedagogy helped to

develop their ability to question and examine that world. This led to learners' gaining critical consciousness because they could think reflectively about their contexts and offer possibilities for transformation of society.

In agreement with Creely (2019), the themes drawn from the observation data show that resorting to traditional pedagogy could be because of lack of knowledge on the teacher's part. This I say because in Class B the teacher used the poetry anthology and taught the same poems as Teacher A, but Teacher B's lessons indicate that research and lesson preparation were always done before the poetry class, albeit not as much as could have been done. The differences in the two teachers' pedagogies can be attributed to a variety of factors. Firstly, some teachers teach the way they themseveles were taught. Secondly, some think that traditional pedagogy is best for time and classroom management as it ensures that the lesson content is covered according to the ATP, with minimal disruption from learners. Lastly, some teachers do not have much knowledge on the poems prescribed and they do not want to take time to do research on them; thus, they stick to the textbook. The findings presented in the table above clearly illustrate that teaching poetry effectively requires investment in time and resources, especially to combat the challenges posed by the canon.

5.8 Discussion of findings

The themes presented in the table above were drawn from the lesson observations data analysed in this chapter. This discussion of findings explores the themes in detail in relation to the study's theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3 and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. As shown in Chapter 3, the study utilized Eriksonian theory of adolescent identity development and Freirean theory of critical pedagogy to formulate a theoretical framework that centres pedagogy and canon in learners' identity formation processes. The discussion below centres on six key findings.

5.8.1 The banking system of education as a barrier to learners' empowerment

As explained in Chapter 3, the banking system of education refers to a system where knowledge is seen as a commodity that is to be deposited into the minds of passive learners. According to Freire (1970, p. 72), "in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing." This supremacy notion that the teacher upholds treats learners as empty vessels waiting for the knowledgeable teacher to fill them in. Freire (1970, p. 72) notes: "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor." This kind of education creates a barrier to learners' empowerment as it does not allow for critical thinking, dialogue and creativity. While this system of education has been used worldwide, including in South Africa where this study was contacted, the results of this study show that the banking system of education has detrimental effects on learners. The system creates passive learners who memorise and regurgitate information as it is passed to them. In Class A, this is exemplified by emphasis on figures of speech, examination oriented questions from the textbook, and lack of dialogue in the classroom. This shows that the banking system of education minimises learners' creative power and this goes against Freire (1970) and Apple (1978) who both agree that the schools should mirror the society and in this society learners should contribute towards their own learning for the society to be liberated from oppression.

Freire (1970, p. 96) argues that "the starting point for organizing the program content of education…must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people." Educators who are not aware of this take "the risk of either 'banking' or of preaching in the desert." Because the traditional pedagogy sees learners as empty vessels, content is imposed on the learners just like what Teacher A did in all the observed four lessons. The book becomes the tool of authority used by the teacher. There is no dialogue in the traditional pedagogy, implying that there is an "assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator" (Freire, 1970, p.75). This approach to education ultimately disempowers learners as they do not make any contribution to what they learn and how they learn it.

In the banking system of education, the teacher regulates the way the world enters into the learners and does not permit any dialogue that may create alternative ways of understanding the world. Freire (1970, p. 93) notes: “For the anti-dialogue teacher, the question of content simply concerns the program about which he will discourse to his students; and he answers his own questions, by organizing his own program.” This means that the anti-dialogue teacher focuses exclusively on delivering teaching content and does not consider that the ‘how’ of doing so matters. Contrary to this view, this study shows that teaching content must be delivered in ways that take the real world experiences of learners into consideration, if meaningful learning is to take place. In Class A, there was evidence that the teacher acted like the bank clerk. This was evident through the teacher’s reading of the poems, dictation of notes, and instructions on class activities without modelling correct responses. This teaching strategy did not yield positive results as some learners did not do the activities given by the teacher. Concurring with Freire (1970), Kim (2016) points out that the banking system of education does not promote collaborative learning among learners. I observed that in Class A, there was no learner engagement or peer work or group work. It was only the teacher’s voice that was heard. This rote learning is both anti-intelligent and dehumanising. It is equally disempowering. The system figuratively turns learners into collectors of information that has no real connection with their lives. Freire (1970, p. 247) makes the following statement:

> Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is a spectator, not a re-creator. In this view, the person is not a conscious being (*corpo consciente*); he or she is rather the possessor of a consciousness: an empty ‘mind’ passively open to the reception of depositors of reality from the world outside.

What Freire means is that the imposed banking concept results in the evident demise of the learners’ consciousness. In this view, acceptance of teachers as depositors and learners as receptors changes humans into objects. Humans (as objects) do not have autonomy, neither do they have the capacity to rationalise knowledge at a personal level. In addition, the banking system of education makes learners feel inadequate,

disempowered and dependent as servants. Freire (1970, p.65) notes: “The peasant is a dependent. He can’t say what he wants. Before he discovers his dependence, he suffers.” In this case, learners are figuratively the peasants who suffer in the hands of the traditional pedagogy which gives them false generosity of knowledge that does not help them to be independent thinkers or to gain a sense of consciousness. Without such consciousness of being, adolescents “lose contact with the world” (Freire, 1970, p. 65). This was observed in Class A where learners could not say what they wanted to say. The data shows that some of the learners chose not to do the work as instructed by the teacher, which can be seen as a manifestation of misbehaviour typical of adolescents. However, a deep reflection on learners’ behaviour may suggest a different understanding of it. I argue that while learners were muted in Class A, their actions in response to the pedagogy and the canon can be interpreted as a protest, which unfortunately was not recognised by the teacher. This means that there was a dissonance in this class as learners’ language of silence, and sometimes rebelliousness, was not in sync with the teacher’s language which was examination oriented, focusing on questions from the prescribed textbook. Based on this, I argue that lack of learner consciousness of being may be dangerous and may even pave the way to a bleak future.

In an explicit description of what the banking system of education means, Freire (1970) looks at this approach as a narration. He asserts that this narrative education does not yield critical thinking among learners.

> [It] involves a narrating subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students) …The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or he would pound on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the student…The outstanding character of this narrative education, then, is the sonority of words, not their transforming power (Freire 1970, p. 52).

In Freire’s terms, learners under traditional pedagogy are oppressed and dehumanised, and for them the world is not satisfactory. However, this realisation only comes once they get the consciousness of their surroundings, without which they cannot think of anything different from what they experience. Even though the silence,

the yelling of chorus responses and not observing instructions demonstrated in Class A can be interpreted as a sign of learners' consciousness of their environment and that these were learners' ways to show resistance, I argue here that because this resistance could not be interpreted by the teacher, it did not change the pedagogy, neither did it benefit the learners. Thus, the pedagogy failed to empower the adolescents. For real learning to take place, the language of the teacher must be attuned to the concrete situations of the learners that the teacher teaches. Freire (1970, p. 96) posits the view that "…the language of the people cannot exist without thought, and neither language nor thought can exist without a structure to which they refer". With only the teacher's voice being heard in the poetry classroom, learners struggled to make connections with the structures and contents of the poems prescribed. Consequently, when they failed to comprehend the content, they withdrew into themselves, and this affected them academically and emotionally. The banking system of education then became a hindrance to their identity development.

5.8.2 The role of problem-posing pedagogy in developing learners' social identity

Pedagogy plays a critical role in the development of adolescents' social identity. Social identity is a person's sense of self, based on a certain social group. Here we see the interdependence of the two theories that underpin this study, that is, Freirean theory (1970) and Eriksonian theory (1968). The classroom as viewed by Freire (1970) mirrors a society, as discussed in Chapter 3. This society, according to Erikson (1968), defines who the individual is and plays a role in shaping their future identities. Because a classroom is a social setup that is dominated by pedagogy, social identities can be built or destroyed. Closely looking at the attributes that make one to reach selfhood, issues such as confidence, cultural recognition, empathy, and tolerance are worth mentioning as they all contribute towards social identity. Social identity then can be seen not as something that is fixed but as performative. The performative social identities in a poetry classroom can be 'positive' or 'negative', depending on the employed pedagogy. For example, in Class A, learners showed resistance to pedagogy through body gestures, verbalisation and passive behaviour. By contrast, in Class B, learners had opportunities to develop a sense of agency and empowerment

to make meaningful contributions to their own learning. Butler (1990) notes that human beings act out their identities on a daily basis. This echoes Erikson (1968) who notes that changes in adolescents' behaviour can ultimately result in their identity development or identity confusion. Identity shifts then depend on the pedagogy to which learners are exposed. This study provides evidence that a problem-posing pedagogy helps adolescent learners develop their social identity.

Observations from School B evince the instructional practices which characterise multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy which I call the modern pedagogy in this study. In Freire's terms, this is the problem-posing education and it stands in sharp contrast to banking education: "Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers" (Freire, 1970, p. 83). Based on this quotation, the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy espouses problem-posing education because it encourages dialogue in the classroom through which learners gain critical thinking. In addition, the concept of problem-posing education enables learners to focus on real life problems (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). The data analysed in this chapter shows that Teacher B used technology, pictures, music, and contextualisation of poems in teaching poetry, and also incorporated learners' knowledge into the lessons to make meaning of the poems taught. This approach encourages learners to actively participate in their learning process by investigating real-world problems and collaboratively thinking of how to solve these problems. Thus, Nkealah and Simango (2023, p. 71) point to the eradication of "the tendency of learners and parents to view schools as islands detached from their reality". This means that when authentic issues that relate to learners' real lives are talked about in an engaging learning environment, learners may understand the predicaments faced by humanity in general and be able to diagnose their own problems as well as prescribe remedies.

The data presented and analysed in this chapter shows that problem-posing education plays a significant role in developing a learner's social identity. Contrary to the banking

system of education, problem-posing education, as noted by Nkealah and Simango (2023), empowers learners to become critical thinkers rather than just being recipients of information. Thus, learners heighten their sense of belonging to a community. Freire (1970, pp. 83-84) states:

> Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the *intentionality* of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation. (emphasis in original)

Freire's words indicate that problem-posing education helps in developing learners' sense of social identity by providing them with the skills to effectively navigate challenges in life and find solutions. This was evident in Class B. For example, in response to how communities could solve housing problems in South Africa, Sihle in Class B had this to say: "*It is important for people to start making savings which can help them to build smaller houses for themselves*". This response by Sihle shows that in today's fast-paced world, where problems are constantly arising and complex decision-making is a necessity, problem-solving skills are highly valued, and these should start in the classroom. When learners are engaged in problem-solving tasks, they enter a state of cognitive training. This state of cognitive training is what brings about the need for creativity and innovation, as learners are forced to think beyond their prior experiences and knowledge. Most importantly, as learners begin to explore new ideas and perspectives while seeking solutions to problems, they develop their social identity.

At its core, problem-posing education encourages effective participation in class and this gives learners a voice. For example, in Class B, learners' active participation, high voice projections when they answered questions, contestation of hands to respond, laughter in the classroom, asking questions, and eagerness to respond to questions asked by peers shows that problem-posing pedagogy does not only contribute to learners' success academically but also enhances the quality of their social life. The energy with which the learners participated in the poetry lessons gives credibility to

Freire's (1970, p. 81) claim that when students "are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, [they] will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge." They become more certain about what they believe, what they are passionate about, and what they stand for. Therefore, the problem-posing teaching approach can motivate learners to apply their skills outside the classroom and make meaningful contributions to their communities. The epistemological access offered by Teacher B equipped adolescents with the tools to critically analyse problems and make informed decisions, which promoted a sense of confidence and self-efficacy among the learners. Learners began to see themselves as agents of change, capable of making a positive impact on their surroundings.

5.8.3 Dialogical education and the harnessing of learners' emotional identity

Dialogue is a key element of problem-posing education, as explained in Chapter 4. Freire (1970) notes dialogical education as an approach to teaching and learning that emphasises the importance of conversation and dialogue between learners and the teacher. In Class B, I noticed the dialogical way of teaching as identified by Freire (1970) and Godsell (2019). Freire (1970, p.31) states that "the dialogical approach does not present the teacher as the all-knowing individual but as a participant in the building of knowledge in the classroom where learners also play a role". The dialogical approach is based on the awareness that learning is a collaborative and dynamic process that involves the exchange of ideas and perspectives. One important aspect of dialogical education is the recognition of the emotional dimension of learning. Emotions play a significant role in the learning process, and dialogical education seeks to harness these emotions in productive ways. In Class B, the teacher created an inclusive classroom which supported a positive learning environment. Mavhiza and Prozesky (2020) note that when students feel safe, respected, and valued in the classroom, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn.

There is evidence in this study that emotions play a big role in transformation. The most transformative potential of positive emotions was recognised when Teacher B introduced the second lesson with a song by Sam Swallow. This emotional engagement encouraged deeper learning where learners could realise that the new knowledge from the poem could be applied in a meaningful way outside of the

classroom. The teacher also used the pictures which showed the transformative potential of negative emotions. These pictures were shown during the fourth lesson observation and they were on violence and school bullying. Through these pictures projecting explicit sorrow, sadness, shame and remorse, the teacher demonstrated that negative experiences could engender deeper learning. The pictures also showed learners that what they were learning extends beyond the classroom. In recognition of Freire (1970) who points out that education had sidelined strong feelings in favour of reasoning, I argue here that meaningful learning can be driven by emotion, but it takes the correct pedagogy for these emotions to be evoked. The data analysed in this chapter shows that where the modern pedagogy was employed, learners became conscious of their life realities and were able to imagine different realities as they engaged with the poems. Learners' engagement with the poems moved them to make suggestions towards social change. This is in agreement with Freire (1970) who notes that the interactive teaching approach is liberating and makes learners to be aware of who they are. This process helps adolescents not only to develop intellectually but also to enhance their emotional identity.

In my view, the findings from the observations offer great opportunities for assessing the influence of pedagogies on adolescents' identity development. By harnessing learners' emotions in productive ways, dialogical pedagogy supported positive learning in an inclusive environment created by Teacher B. This helped learners develop emotional intelligence and gain a deeper understanding of complex issues that affect them in their daily lives. They also learned to empathise with the emotions of others. As such, the dialogical approach can benefit learners at all levels of education and prepare them for success in the 21st century. The traditional approach, on the other hand, presented multiple negative effects which include lack of engagement, lack of motivation, disinterest and boredom.

5.8.4 Traditional pedagogy as a barrier to adolescents' digital identity

The teaching and learning process has the ability either to foster the development of adolescents so that they can become change agents in the society or confuse them

and create a negative impact on the way the adolescents view the world. According to Svärdemo and Åkerfeldt (2017), digital identity can be defined as an online or networked identity. The digital era as explained in Chapter 1 defines 21st century adolescents. Traditional pedagogy does not prioritise the use of new technologies as it upholds supremacy notions of the teacher as the sole source of knowledge. Therefore, there is evidence in the analysed data that the traditional pedagogy is a barrier to adolescents' digital identity. In Class A, learners could not explore and express their digital identities because the teacher relied on the traditional teaching strategies which could not capture the interest and attention of adolescents. While Erikson (1959, p. 114) wrote during the time when digital identity was less common, he notes that an individual cannot be understood outside their social context: "Individual and society are intricately woven, dynamically related in continual change". This relationship between individual and society makes learners to question their role in the ever-changing world. Results presented in this chapter show that learners in Class A experience a different world in the poetry classroom from the world outside the classroom. Their outside world is dominated by technology whereas the in-class world is poignantly devoid of technology; the printed text dominates the space. Thus, I argue that the traditional pedagogy is a barrier to adolescents' digital identity.

5.8.5 Multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy as an enhancer of adolescents' personal identity

Personal identity is a complex and multifaceted concept as discussed in Chapter 3. The core of personal identity is the sense of self that one has. It is the conscious awareness of being a distinct being with a unique personality. Aspects of personal identity such as self-esteem, self-awareness and self-efficacy are shaped by upbringing, culture, social interactions and life experiences (Erikson, 1968). These aspects are not fixed entities but are based on continuous streams of self that link to the past, present and future. Results in this chapter show that as the concept of literacy has evolved along with social change and technology, multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies have great potential to enhance adolescents' personal identity. Even though Erikson (1968, p. 23) maintains that one cannot separate "the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crisis in historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other", it is possible to do

so. I argue that the data from the lesson observations proved that with the right pedagogy which broadens adolescents' intellect, alternatives to individual and contemporary crisis can be redefined as people confront new challenges and tackle different experiences. For example, through social interaction, adolescents may be exposed to different experiences which help them to think about their role, beliefs and values in the society.

In School B, the teacher used the modern pedagogy which was interactive. The teacher moved beyond the prescribed curriculum by exposing learners to think of more challenging problem-solving questions and alternatives about their societal issues and those problems that humanity in general face. Meanings of the poems were made for understanding and not for completing examinations. The teacher used the prescribed anthology as an instructional appendage, not the determiner of the curriculum. The teacher applied a culturally responsive pedagogy which according to Ladson-Bills (2021) works on three propositions: academic achievement or student learning, cultural competence, and social-political consciousness. Observing these propositions, Teacher B made appropriate linkages between what learners knew and what they did not know. The teacher did this through giving familiar examples, comparisons and contrasts. The teacher challenged learners' minds by opening the space for them to contribute to the production of knowledge in the poetry classroom. This was done through application of different teaching strategies that placed learners at the core of learning.

The teacher gave the learners some escape moments from the prescribed textbook to engage in real life situations and engage in discussions, thereby enhancing their development of identities as active members of their society. The different teaching strategies, such as contextualisation of poetry, whole class discussions, note taking, using music, ordinary daily stories, pictures, PowerPoint slides and encouraging learners to research for relevant information using their smartphones, made the lessons interactive and lively. During class observations in School B, I noticed that different poetry reading strategies were employed. Firstly, the teacher asked the learners to read the poem individually and silently. In the second instance, he read the

poem himself in a dramatic way. During the third lesson observation, the teacher asked for a volunteer to read the poem for the class. Finally, the learners took turns to read stanzas of poems. Such variation of teaching strategies removes monotony and creates anticipation while enabling the learners to experience poetry multimodally. According to Freire (1970), Teacher B's pedagogy placed learners at the centre of learning and valued learners' contributions towards their own learning, making them co-creators of knowledge together with the teacher. As multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies were employed in Class B with great success, it proved that with the correct pedagogy, the old, male-dominated and white canon can be contextualised for adolescents to understand the contents of the poems and be in a position to critically look at them in ways that express their consciousness of being and personal identities.

5.9 Chapter summary

This study sought to find out how poetry pedagogy and canon in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom affect learners' identity formation. To achieve this aim of the study the lesson observations intended to answer the following secondary research questions: 1a) What instructional practices characterise traditional pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?; and 1b) What instructional practices characterise multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom? From observations of the lessons in Classrooms A and B, I realised that the pedagogy employed by the poetry teacher can either help in fostering identity development in adolescents or it can fail to help adolescents develop their identities. The observations revealed that a multimodal and multiliteracies pedagogy is ideal for English FAL adolescents as it helps them to develop their social, emotional, digital and personal identities as well as to gain personal and collective empowerment. Even though the poems which I observed were mainly Eurocentric and not culturally related to the South African contexts, in Class B learners understood the poems because of the way that they were taught. By contrast, Class A learners showed resentfulness of poetry by not writing or participating in class due to the fact that the poetry information was taken directly out of the textbook. This shows that for identities to develop through pedagogy and canon, the teacher plays a pivotal role. In Class A, the teacher used a

traditional pedagogy which was not engaging but paid more attention to examination specifications through writing an activity. This approach killed creativity and poetry enjoyment for both the teacher and the learners. In Class B, the learner-centred approach helped learners master concepts through sharing information among themselves and with the teacher. Learners made good use of their communicative skill which is necessary to prepare them for the global world. They also were able to comprehend the poem and critique the contents using their cultural contexts. In the next chapter, I present, analyse and discuss the data from the questionnaire.

Chapter 6

Data Presentation, Analysis & Discussion: Questionnaire Responses

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and analysed data from the classroom observations and also discussed the findings. In this chapter, I present and thematically analyse the data collected through questionnaires. Using the thematic steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), as explained in Chapter 4, the recurring patterns in the data were noted and grouped together. Thematic analysis aided my understanding of the effect of pedagogy and canon in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom in relation to specific aspects of pedagogy such as learner comprehension and enjoyment as well as specific aspects of canon such as relevance to learners' cultures. As mentioned in Chapter 4, triangulation of data collection instruments was necessary to allow for a more indepth inquiry into how pedagogy and canon affect adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. This chapter presents the findings from the thematic analysis of the questionnaire that were completed by learners at the end of my school visits. The questionnaire was used to collect data that answered two of the research questions: Research Question 2a (How does the traditional pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?) and Research Question 2b (How does the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?). The discussion that follows the analysis of data links the findings to Erikson's identity theory, with particular focus on adolescents' identity development, and Freire's critical pedagogy, which are the two intersecting theories applied in this study.

As stated in Chapter 4, the questionnaires were filled in by all the learners in the two observed classrooms. That means 90 learners in total. Learners were told to fill in the questionnaire on the last day of my observations. This was meant to capture their true feelings after all the observed lessons. Learners also had to complete the

questionnaire in class to prevent them from copying one another's responses, which was a possibility if they were allowed to take the questionnaire home. The teachers in both classes helped to give out the questionnaire to the learners on each day that the observations were completed. In both classes, learners took less than ten minutes to fill in the questionnaire. In the data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were interpreted using percentages. The major aspects of the questionnaire were the teacher's pedagogy, learner's participation, poetry enjoyment, prescribed poetry's relatedness to learner's personal experiences, and culture as well its influence on learners' creative poetry writing.

6.2 Questionnaire participants' demographics

Table 3 and Table 4 below present the demographics of the learners who completed the questionnaire in the two schools.

Table 3: School A Participants demographics

Gender	**Number**	**Percentage**
Female	30	67%
Male	15	33%
Age groups		
15-17 years	34	76%
18-20 years	11	24%

Table 4: School B Participants demographics

Gender	**Number**	**Percentage**
Female	28	62%
Male	17	38%
Age groups		
15-17 years	37	82%
18-20 years	8	18%

The demographics in the tables above are analysed in the generated themes below.

6.2.1 Adolescents age differences

The demographics for School A and School B where this study was carried out confirm the definition of adolescence that was given in Chapter 1. In Chapter 1, adolescence was defined as the stage that usually occurs from puberty to young adulthood. Steinberg (2002) associates this phase of life with the establishment of social independence. The majority of learners in the two classrooms were aged between 15 and 17 years. This is because in South Africa most learners start going to school from the ages of 6 to 7 years. The smaller percentage in the classrooms observed was aged between 18 and 20 years. The reason why this age group has a smaller percentage is primarily because of the South African progression schooling system and to some extent socio-economic issues. With the progression schooling system, some of these learners might have repeated some earlier grades, which is why they were older than most of their classmates by the time they reached Grade 11. Socio-economic issues such as poverty, child-headed families, teenage pregnancy and crime might also be among the reasons for retarded academic progress among the group that was older and was still doing Grade 11 at the time when the research was conducted.

6.2.2 Gender demographics in the schools

The demographics in the classrooms which were observed show that the majority of the learners in each class were female. As shown on Table 3, 67% of the learners in Class A were female. Table 4 indicates that in Class B females constituted 62%. There are different reasons why there were many female learners in Grade 11 classrooms, particularly in the schools where the research was conducted. One reason is that in South Africa, most households are headed by females because many males neglect family responsibilities (Department of Statistics South Africa, 2022). Having females as role models who are supporting their families might motivate many girls to pursue

studies with the hope that they might have a better future and change their situations at home, especially in the townships where many live in abject poverty. The other possible reason why there were more female learners in Grade 11 than male ones is because girls are believed to be smarter than boys (Jakobsen, 2021). The progression education system in South Africa ensures that a learner only goes to the next grade after passing. Girls tend to participate effectively in class and try to be more responsible, which results in them achieving academically and moving to the next grade. Other reasons to explain the gender disparity can be linked to adolescents' life experiences which are different and lead to different academic outcomes. For example, when some adolescent learners are struggling with school they take comfort in drugs, alcohol and sex. Scott and Laurren (2022) note that adolescent substance abuse remains a problem and a major concern in South Africa. In support of this assertion, during my time as a high school teacher I realised that when most male adolescents drop out of school they get into drugs and the majority end up staying on the streets. On the other hand, girls mostly stay at home even after getting pregnant, and Panday et al (2009) note that girls often get encouragement from caregivers and support from the Department of Basic Education to continue their studies after giving birth. One may argue that the history of gender inequality in South African education has made attention to be directed towards the female learners who were previously disadvantaged but neglect seems to be now evident in the treatment of their male counterparts who are now drowning in drugs and dropping out of school. This could be one of the reasons why there were more female than male learners in the Grade 11 classes where this study was conducted. While the given contextual reasons here are valid, a more obvious reason why there were more girls than boys in the classes that I researched is that in South Africa the female population is higher than the male population. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (2022) notes that globally men count slightly more than women with a ratio of 50.3% to 49.7%, respectively. This is however different for South Africa as the United Nations records show that in South Africa the male population sits at 49.5% compared to the female population of 50.5%. These statistics from the United Nations confirm South African gender demographics which show that the female population is 30.5 million while the male population is 28.89 million (O'neill, 2023). So by implication there will generally be more girls in school than boys and this trickles down to the gender demographics in the classrooms.

6.2.3 Gender demographics in relation to poetry curriculum

Gender representation in the canon is another issue of concern. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the prescribed poems in Grade 11 for the year 2021 only had one black female poet, Gabeba Baderoon, who is a Cape Malay woman generally classified as Coloured. This scenario conflicts with the demographic profiles in the schools where this study was carried out. The tables above show that there were more than 60% of Grade 11 female adolescents and less than 40% male adolescents in each class. This implies that there were more girls in the different classrooms but less females whose poems were regarded by the curriculum designers to be worth studying. This realisation is concerning and calls for a challenge of what defines canon in South Africa. As stated in Chapters 1 and 2, canon refers to a collection of works that are considered demonstrative of a period or genre (Lombardi, 2020). With this definition in mind, there is evidence that the curriculum designers in South Africa do not take the recipients of the prescribed material into consideration. All issues pertaining to the recipients' lives and livelihood need to be experiential. This includes equal gender, age, ethnicity and race representation in the curriculum. Freire (1970) argues that learners comprehend and appreciate the content when they can relate to it and when it is contextualised. The absence of this holistic relatedness in the curriculum prompts a call for new poems in the Grade 11 English FAL curriculum. The old classic poems are mainly written by Western white men. This, according to d'Abdon (2016), is a maintenance of the colonial legacy. In addition, maintaining the outdated curriculum perpetuates the traditional teaching pedagogy which alienates learners and blocks them from making use of their multiliteracies in formal situations (Spring, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to advocate for contemporary poetry in the curriculum. This implies that, among other issues, a male dominated canon which learners grapple to relate with should be addressed so that learners are able to see their role models whom they can relate to by gender. This might inspire adolescents to make meaningful decisions about their career and their future.

The status quo suggests patriarchal supremacy which today's society is opposed to. Matshediso (2017, par. 1) quoted Cyril Ramaphosa who in 2017 was the deputy president of South Africa as saying: "South African men and women must work together to help the country realise a non-sexist society, in which all can enjoy equal rights and opportunities". Ramaphosa went further to say: "it is essential that South Africa works to eradicate patriarchy in all its forms in the country" (Matshediso 2017, par. 3). This speech by Ramaphosa is contradicted by the current English FAL poetry canon. Noting that South Africa is a nation where gender based violence is rampant, a male dominated curriculum shows male supremacy and indirectly perpetuates violence against women. The imbalanced curriculum proves the insensitiveness and negligence by the authorities to address this serious issue from the grassroots. With the girl child not identifying representation in the poetry selection despite the idea that they are the majority in class, it sends a message that they are being given little personal or individual dignity. There are many cases of rape in the schools. For example, in August 2021 a Grade 1 child was reportedly raped in the school toilet and no arrests were made (Sobuwa, 2021). This incident does not only capture the cruelty of the perpetrator but also the mentality of objectifying women regardless of their age. As a society ripped by gender based violence issues, an intervention in the curriculum, particularly in the redefining of the South African poetry canon, will give chances of identity development to the adolescents, both males and females. While the poetry canon has minimal representation for the girl child, the male child has 90% representation in the Grade 11 prescribed poetry for 2021. One would ask: 'What message is being given to the male child?' With the imbalances in the canon, the male children are indirectly taught that they have the upper hand in every facet of life despite being the minority. This issue is perpetuated by the canon which fails to challenge the gender imbalance that South Africa is facing today. Godsell (2019) describes poetry as having the capacity to develop personalities, interest, deep sensitivities and make adolescents aware of their place in humanity. I argue that this self-awareness starts with the correct canon which represents both male and female adolescents equally.

While the 2021 English FAL poetry canon is predominantly male, it is important to note that, on the other side of the coin, male learners cannot be expected to relate to the male dominated canon because the poets, both White and Black, are either dead or

very old. The experiences of these poets are far removed from those of these contemporary Black learners and it takes a teacher who thinks creatively to bring the poems to life and make their meanings relatable. Where the teacher lacks creativity, they will obviously then resort to the traditional teaching pedagogy. Thus, the need to change the canon is crucial in addressing not only a gender issue but also one relating to racial representation.

6.3 School A questionnaire responses

In School A, 45 learners filled in the standardised five-point Likert Scale Questionnaire. For analysis, I combined some categories. For example, “Agree” and “Strongly agree” fall under positive. I left “Neutral” as it is but combined “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree” which I classified as negative. I also combined items that represented similar questions into one single composite category. I did this to declutter the overcrowded table and to maintain focus on the key issues around adolescent identity. Due to the large size of the data, I created categories in order to present and analyse the numbers to prove the general assertions of this study. As a reminder, my chosen analysis method is deductive analysis which means I am reading the data to determine the extent to which my assertions or hypothesis is true. Chapter 5 described the characteristics of the traditional pedagogy which in general positions learners as passive recipients of the information delivered by the teacher. The questionnaire aimed to answer two questions but this first section presents and analyses data that will respond to question 2a) How does the traditional pedagogy affect learners’ sense of identity? Class A is where the teacher used the traditional pedagogy to teach poetry in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom. The categories that I created helped me to give detailed analysis of the responses in order for me to answer the primary research question. Table 5 below presents a summary of the questionnaire findings from School A.

Table 5: School A questionnaire results

Category	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Classroom poetry enjoyment	3	8	34
Classroom participation	3	7	35
Poetry comprehension	4	6	35
Teacher's pedagogy	2	7	36
Confidence boost through poetry	2	10	33
Imaginations creation	6	13	26
Emotional engagement with prescribed poetry	14	11	20
Cultural significance	2	4	39
Relevance to life	3	8	34
Motivation to write own poems	5	2	38

6.3.1 Classroom poetry enjoyment

With the abundance of literature that supports the idea that poetry is enjoyable (Collie & Slater, 1991; Khatib, 2011; Khansir, 2012; Creely, 2019), it is concerning to note

that in a class of 45 learners only 3 learners, which is 7% of the learners, enjoyed classroom poetry. This result contradicts the view by Collie and Slater (1991, p. 226) when they state that poems “offer a rich, varied repertoire and are a source of much enjoyment for teachers and learners alike”, because these learners did not find much enjoyment in the poetry they were taught. This points to a discrepancy between what poetry can do for learners and what poetry actually does to learners, depending on who is teaching it and how they are teaching it. The enjoyment of poetry, as one the benefits of poetry, means that poetry is not only entertaining to learners but to the teacher as well. However, in Class A, the traditional pedagogy employed by the teacher shows that the teacher believed in teaching of poetry as a technique rather than teaching poetry as an experience. There are different reasons that may have made the teacher to choose this pedagogy throughout all the lessons which were observed. According to some schools of thought, the reasons why some teachers stick to the traditional pedagogy are lack of knowledge about the poems being taught, fear of poetry (Vala et al., 2012), focus on examination specifications (Newfield & Byrne, 2020), work overload and time constraints due to the rigid ATP (Nkealah & Simango, 2023) and probably not willing to shift from the way they themselves were taught (Calway, 2008; Creely, 2019). All these aspects lead to inappropriate pedagogies being employed in the classroom. The traditional pedagogy employed by Teacher A made learners passive in the poetry classroom and this created boredom while killing the creativity that learners could have had with poetry for them to enjoy it (Ofsted, 2007). Ultimately, learners’ enjoyment of poetry depends largely on the teacher’s pedagogy.

The lack of enjoyment during poetry lessons is worrisome, considering that these were adolescents whose home language is not English. The majority of learners in this class, which is 76%, showed negativity towards classroom poetry while 17% chose the middle ground. What is concerning the most in these statistics is the thought of what tomorrow may be for the majority of these adolescents. They may end up hating poetry for life, thereby jeopardising their chances of becoming good teachers of English in future.

6.3.2 Classroom participation

It is unlikely for learners to participate during the lesson if they are not enjoying what they are being taught. The result on classroom participation reflects that 7%, which is 3 out of 45 learners, participated during the English FAL poetry lessons. While 7 learners out of 45, which is 15%, chose the neutral ground, 35 out of 45, which is 78% of the participants, indicated that they did not participate during the English FAL poetry lessons. There is a clear link here between their lack of poetry enjoyment and their lack of classroom participation, and both negative results can be attributed to the canon that is not relatable to the learners and the ineffective pedagogy employed by the teacher.

Possibly, the three learners who thought that they fully participated in class were the ones who wrote their work whenever they were given a class activity by the teacher. However, in the context of my questionnaire, participation did not mean taking down notes but making comments verbally. Participation in this study is in the sense of learners expressing their own ideas about the poems they were being taught. Participation in class gives adolescents a sense of being, a voice and some level of critical thinking which helps them to be autonomous people who critically reflect on their world to make it a better place. Stimulating learners' participation also helps the teacher to create a space where authoritative structures are dismantled, so that the teacher makes the learners important stakeholders who make a contribution towards their own learning. The consequences of silence in class are dire and require urgent attention. This silence is not only detrimental to the academic performance of adolescents but it also places the teacher in the comfort zone where innovations and creativity are naturally prohibited.

6.3.3 Classroom poetry comprehension

In most cases, a learner can only comprehend that which they enjoy and participate in. The statistics above show that 9% of the learners in this class could comprehend the poems taught to them in the English FAL poetry class, but 13% were not sure

whether they understood the poems or not, while 78% of the class indicated that they did not understand the poems. This big figure of lack of comprehension is both shocking and concerning. It tells us that there was very minimal learning taking place in this class. There is evidence here that learners become less active in class if they do not understand the subject content. The issue is partly the inclusion of classical poetry in the curriculum which was predominantly the poetry taught during my observations. Classical poetry, one might argue, requires special training for English FAL teachers in order for them to be confident and be knowledgeable as they teach these poems, especially to adolescents who are at a stage of making meaning of the world around them and whose English is an additional language. The 21st century learners are critical and they are conscious of their identities. What they need is relevant poetry and interactive pedagogy. With the poetry characterised by sophisticated and archaic English, the teacher needs to show his or her expertise and help the learners to reach their potential. In Class A, the teacher evidently lacked the expertise to teach classical poetry, and so learners did not understand the poems. It is important to reiterate that where there is no comprehension, there is no learning taking place.

6.3.4 Teacher's pedagogy

The teacher's pedagogy has a massive role to play in the poetry classroom for learning to take place. The teacher should be able to create an environment conducive for the exploration of new ways of teaching and learning. If the teacher chooses to stick to the traditional pedagogy, which is book-centred, it means that all creativity is killed in the classroom. It is the creativity that makes learners to enjoy, participate in and comprehend poetry. This means that pedagogy is the heart of learning in the classroom. Consequently, this process cannot be detached from learners' attitudes and perceptions, which form important components of identity and identity development. In Class A, 80% of the learners in the classroom disagreed with the teacher's pedagogy. This negativity towards the teacher's pedagogy is concerning. It means that the traditional pedagogy is not the favourable method of teaching among adolescents. This figure is worrying and calls for the retraining of teachers for them to be able to employ pedagogies that align with the identities of the generation Z

adolescents. Generation Z refers to people born between 1997 and 2012. This is the generation that grew up playing with parents' phones or tablets. They have grown up in a hyper-connected world and they are the first digital natives. This is the generation that defines the adolescents in this study. Their responses to the teacher's pedagogy provides evidence that the book-centred approach is outdated and should be replaced by the multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies approach. If learners' schemata are activated and poems are contextualised, there are chances that learners will grasp the message of the poem, despite it being written in old English, and will be able to relate that message to their personal life experiences.

6.3.5 Confidence boost through poetry

Poetry is expected to inspire individuals and build their self-esteem and confidence. Adolescents, as discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, are at a stage of identity versus identity confusion. This is a delicate stage where adolescents might make positive or negative life changing decisions. Poetry plays a role in influencing those decisions, because poems tell stories of human experiences which have the potential to change one's perception about one's self (Creely, 2019). Despite this enormous benefit, the results on Table 5 show a high negative response to the boosting of confidence through prescribed poetry. This negativity is indicated by 74% of the respondents, while 22% decided to be neutral and only 4% said that the prescribed poems boosted their confidence. The results show that for stories that are told through poems to be inspirational to adolescents, they should be located within their cultures or personal experiences, thereby enabling them to make connections with the poems. Where the poems are located in a different culture, the teacher needs to make connections to learners' everyday life experiences to be able to boost their confidence. The lack of confidence boost in the learners in Class A can be linked to the absence of participation in the class because the teacher failed to give learners opportunities to share their views about the taught poems.

6.3.6 Imaginations creation

Imagination is a way of seeing the world through a different lens. Imagination in poetry is considered to be one of the most powerful advantages that poetry offers. In response to the question of whether learners were able to create images through prescribed poems, 13% of the learners agreed that they were able to create images, while 29% chose to be neutral on this category. The majority of learners, making up 58%, indicated that the prescribed poetry did not help them to create images in their minds. Putting together the neutral and negative responses gives us a total of 87% of the class that is thrown into confusion. This resonates with the view of Zimbabwean writer Chenjerai Hove who notes that the poems imposed upon him by the colonial education in Zimbabwe had nothing to do with his life and his personal experiences (cited in Lloyd & Abdulatief, 2019). Similarly, Godsell (2020) notes that South African classrooms miss the voices and idioms of African learners. This also aligns with d'Abdon (2016) who advocates for the inclusion of spoken word poetry in the curriculum, mainly because it resonates with African poetry which is embedded in a history of orality. According to Genis (2019), many people in South African townships are still practicing oral forms of poetry. One can then see why the written poems taught to the learners did not help them to create mental images of what they were learning about. This is concerning because imagination works together with enjoyment and comprehension of the poems. Rorty (2017) cautions of the lack of intellectual progress where there are no imaginations and significant meaning making in the teaching and learning process. During observations, I realised that in some poetry lessons, some learners showed that they were mentally absent, probably daydreaming. This shows how important the ability to create imaginations in the classroom is: if not done, learners will be creating imaginations of things not related to poetry. In the poetry classroom, meanings of the poems can be created and concrete connections made to the real world (Vygotsky, 1978). These concrete imaginations aid the development of critical thinking during poetry lessons when learners can understand what they are being taught.

6.3.7 Emotional engagement with prescribed poetry

The emotional power of poetry and its impact on humans' brains is well documented by Khatib (2011) and Ghosn (2002) who describe poetry as a change agent which has the capacity to transform the whole being of a person, change their attitudes by removing prejudices, and help them develop empathy and tolerance. The data presented on Table 5 above shows that 31% of the participants in School A experienced emotional engagement with the taught poems while 45% did not, making 24% neutral. Earlier, it was shown that only 9% of the learners in this class comprehended the classroom poems. While one may argue that learners' emotions only get aroused if they comprehend the content, the difference of 22% here between emotional engagement and poetry comprehension suggests that some learners may not have understood the gist of the poems but may have connected emotionally to a few things said in class. For others in the class, negative emotions may have been aroused. These negative emotions were caused by the pedagogy which eschewed the powerful emotional connections that makes poetry valuable. The results prove that there was a gap between what poetry could provide and what learners could take away from it. This gap is a consequence of the curriculum that is not oriented towards adolescents in the 21st century as well as the dry and emotionless pedagogy employed by the teacher.

6.3.8 Cultural significance

The data analysis indicates that 87% of the participants responded negatively to the question of the cultural relevance of the taught poems. This result proves that, culturally, learners could not relate to the prescribed poetry. Only 4% of the adolescents in Class A indicated that they saw cultural relevance in the prescribed poems while 9% of the adolescents were neutral. This echoes Godsell (2019) who comments that the South African classrooms miss the voices of Africans speaking in their own idioms and writing their own present and past. This shows how concerning this result is, because taking cultural identity into consideration helps teachers to create learning environments that recognise the cultural contribution of adolescents. Drawing from South African history, poetry has always been part of the people's

identity. Gunner (2008) notes that Africa as a whole has from the ancient times believed in the power of praise poetry performed at all social gatherings, including functions like funerals, political rallies and ancestor worship ceremonies. The Black learners in the Grade 11 English FAL class were born and raised in poetry-making communities; it is easier for them to understand Indigenous forms of poetry than classical poetry since Indigenous poetry was part of their community lives. Because the school is a society which has the obligation of replicating the life experiences of learners when they are outside school and help them to shape their future, Savage (2005) comments that teachers must empower adolescents to succeed by providing them with a learning environment that respects their culture, embraces their diversity, and celebrates their differences. By doing this, the teacher will be an agent in the development and fostering of identity development among adolescents. When learners can appreciate their culture in the poetry that they learn, they will be moved to see its importance in their lives.

6.3.9 Relevance to life

The interrelatedness between culture, identity and learners' personal experiences is demonstrated in existing literature on poetry, as shown in Chapter 2. Since adolescents' identity is under construction, Western poetry exposes the South African adolescents to universal humanism but the question of whether they can relate the classroom poems to their personal experiences is vital and is at the core of this study. The results above show that 76% of learners in Class A identified the prescribed poems as not relevant to their lives and this is a number too big to ignore. This result corresponds with my argument stated in Chapter 1 that the poems prescribed for Grade 11 English FAL are not relevant to the 21st century adolescents in South Africa's township schools. It is important that the curriculum designers relook into the curriculum and consider the needs of the curriculum's recipients. Speaking about philosophy as poetry, Rorty (2017) warns that where there is no imagination, there are no words, no morals and no intellectual progress. This implies that the impact of poetry on individuals depends on their context and the content of the poetry. Issues such as context and language are important vehicles for poetry comprehension and relevance to individual groups. If learners are exposed to poetry whose contents they can relate

to, their understanding of the poetry becomes easier, leading to academic success. It is of essence for learners to identify with the subject matter in the poetry. If the South African basic education system has the needs of their young adult learners at heart, then the poetry canon should be redefined and the curriculum be tailor-made to accommodate the adolescents in order for them to find relevance in the curriculum so that their identities can be developed.

6.3.10 Motivation to write own poems

Creely (2019) argues that poetry serves as a good model for creative writing and can stimulate interesting ideas for creativity. The questionnaire responses for Class A show that 85% of the learners were not motivated to write their own poems. This tells us that there was no stimulus in the prescribed texts. It has been found that learners find it easier to write about their personal experiences when the space is created for aspects of human experiences to be penned down and voiced (Mavhiza & Prozesky, (2020). There is a deep emotional connection between personal experiences and poetry writing, and this can emerge in the poetry classroom if learners are exposed to familiar contexts (Mavhiza & Prozesky, 2020). The joy experienced with poetry make learners to author their thoughts and experiences and this moves learners from being passive recipients of information to being co-designers of the curriculum with the teacher.

6.4 School B Questionnaire responses

This section presents and analyses data obtained through questionnaires in School B which is also referred to as Class B. The teacher used the new pedagogy which involved multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies. As a reminder, multimodality in theory and practice refers to ways which look at many different semiotic modes that people use to make meaning. These multiple modes can be visual, print, gestural, dramatic or oral. Multiliteracies on the other hand refers 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. Lastly, new literacies refer to the

technological tools used in the 21st century. These new literacies are commonly used by adolescents and they include social media where adolescents receive and share poetry which shapes their identities.

The table below shows the participants' responses on each category of questions. All 45 learners in Class B filled in their questionnaires and submitted them. The data presented and analysed in this section will respond to research question 2b) How does the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?

Table 6: School B questionnaire results

Category	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Classroom poetry enjoyment	36	6	1
Classroom participation	35	4	6
Poetry comprehension	35	7	3
Teacher's pedagogy	36	5	4
Confidence boost through poetry	21	14	10
Imaginations creation	23	21	1

Emotional engagement with prescribed poetry	13	6	26
Cultural significance	10	15	20
Relevance to life	7	13	25
Motivation to write own poems	14	20	11

6.4.1 Poetry enjoyment

As mentioned earlier, enjoyment is one of the benefits of poetry. In Class B, responses from participants show that 80% of the learners in this class enjoyed the English FAL poetry class. This enjoyment could be a result of the conducive atmosphere that made learners feel safe. The positive atmosphere created by the teacher through an inclusive pedagogy, an open space for learners' voices to be heard and the removal of authoritative structures that hinder progressive learning brought joy in the classroom. This finding affirms the argument by Collie and Slater (1991), Khansir (2012) and Creely (2019) that poetry is a source of enjoyment for both teachers and learners. Newfield and Maungedzo (2006) demonstrated in their study that it is possible to steer away from the monotonous traditional teaching pedagogy to adopt an innovative teaching practice which allows both teachers and learners to embrace multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies in the poetry classroom. This method of learning helps learners to enjoy poetry, as evident in Class B. Poetry enjoyment leads to poetry comprehension and if learners succeed academically, they feel satisfied and that improves their positive associations with the group.

6.4.2 Classroom participation

In Class B, 78% of the learners indicated that they actively participated in the poetry class, while 9% were neutral and 13% showed negative participation. The high percentage of 78% as positive participation is highly remarkable and this implies that learner participation is made possible when learners enjoy poetry. Classroom participation is a critical factor in yielding positive learning outcomes and developing learners' identities. Participation helps learners to build their knowledge of the poems being taught to them. The positive result of 78% participation indicates that the majority of the learners understood the poems being taught in class. This means that learners could engage critically without memorising the content. Such outcome aligns with Dewey (cited in Sikandar 2016) who advocates the empowerment of learners so that they become subjects of their own education rather than objects of the system's educational agenda. In addition, Sikandar (2016) notes that Dewey strongly supported experiential learning which promotes hands-on and collaborative learning experiences. These experiences raise the learners' curiosity and hope, giving them a purpose to carry out school activities (Sikandar, 2016). Thus, in a classroom where everyone has something to say, learners will help each other to grow intellectually and also to be aware of the world that they are living in through sharing knowledge. This is also supported by Kroger (2006) who notes that poetry helps learners to understand the world that they live in.

Even though many learners in Class B indicated that they participate effectively during the poetry lessons, the negative 22% which includes those who were neutral needs to be talked about. This negativity and neutrality towards participation can be attributed to a number of factors. For example, some learners are generally shy and cannot speak out in front of an audience; thus, they enjoy listening to other people's contributions in silence. For others, lack of content comprehension and confidence in themselves cannot be ruled out. Despite the fact that the teacher employed an interactive pedagogy, the issue with comprehension still boils down to poetry selection. The prescribed poetry contributes to lack of enjoyment, lack of participation and subsequently lack of understanding to a large extent. The results presented here show

that participation is closely related to comprehension as comprehension improves communication skills.

6.4.3 Classroom poetry comprehension

Just like the category on participation, results on classroom poetry comprehension shows that 78% of the learners in Class B understood the poems taught in class. To be precise, 35 out of 45 learners indicated that they comprehended the poems. This result cannot be ascribed to many issues, considering that the same curriculum was taught in School A where 9% of the class indicated that they could not comprehend the prescribed poems. This leaves us with the pedagogy employed by the teacher as the main reason why learners in School B had better experiences of comprehending classroom poetry even though the canon was the same as in School A. In Class B, the teacher ceased to be the all-knowing individual and became the facilitator. The space created by the teacher where all learners had an opportunity to contribute to classroom discussions helped learners to understand the poems and to ask for clarity where they could not understand. The application of multimodality in the poetry classroom helped learners to experience liberatory learning rather than a constricted one, and in this way their sense of self was enhanced. The multimodal approach enhanced classroom participation and poetry enjoyment. From the classroom observations, the teacher used pictures, asked the learners to surf for relevant information on internet, played music and engaged learners in discussions where they were free to talk about their experiences and compare and contrast with the experiences in the poems that they were studying. In this democratic classroom, the teacher showed learners how to become informed citizens, how to be good listeners and that there were alternatives and multiple responses to life experiences. The pedagogy promoted critical thinking and through this approach knowledge was gained.

6.4.4 Teacher's pedagogy

As mentioned above, pedagogy is the heart of teaching and learning. The ability for learners to communicate skilfully and to engage with other learners in the classroom

is largely determined by the pedagogy employed by the teacher. In Class B, 80% of the participants indicated that they were happy with the teacher's way of teaching. Teacher B used different teaching methods, which included multiliteracies, multimodality and new literacies, rather than focusing on the textbook. The enjoyment by learners and appreciation of the pedagogy employed by the teacher supports Raj (2014, p. 1) who states that "to equip students to be literate, lifelong learners and global citizens of the 21st century we must successfully integrate ICT into both the English curriculum and English pedagogical practice." This means that learners are equipped for the future when multiple modes of teaching and learning are used in the classroom. Motivating students in the language classroom is not always easy to achieve because it involves a multiplicity of psychosocial and linguistic factors, particularly in an English FAL classroom. As indicated earlier in Chapter 1, learners in the community where this study was conducted are multilingual learners but English is not anywhere close to being a second language for the majority of them. Thus, pedagogy is key to helping them see value in poetry.

6.4.5 Confidence boost through poetry

Poetry is applauded for boosting confidence and self-esteem. However, Low (2006) argues that for poetry to appeal to emotions and lead to expression with confidence, it has to be localised within the learners' cultures and experiences. In Class B, 21 learners out of 45, which translates to 47%, indicated that their prescribed poetry boosted their confidence. This is less than half of the learners who were exposed to the modern teaching pedagogy. The data presented earlier showed that most learners in this class enjoyed poetry, participated in class and comprehended classroom poetry. Despite these positive outcomes, they perceived classroom poetry as something not effectively contributing towards boosting their confidence. The finding here disproves one of the aims of poetry which, according to Creely (2019), is to transport an individual beyond the mind, beyond the heart and into the depth of humanity and heights of spirituality. This transcendence can only happen when a learner reads the poem and becomes aware of the wide range of possibilities and power that exists in poetry. There is evidence that in this class the vehicle of poetry was not as effective as one would assume, since less than half of the class were

reaching their spiritual heights. Spiritual heights can be defined as the highest level of self-esteem, self-recognition and an interconnectedness between the physical and spiritual being.

Confidence on the other hand entails the measure of faith that one has in himself or herself, and poetry has the potential to make learners get into this mindframe when properly selected. This mindframe is not temporary because it paves way for an individual's holistic growth. It then becomes a challenge when less than half of the learners in a class are experiencing this self-awareness and growth through prescribed poetry. The teacher's multimodal pedagogy might be the reason for these few learners to attribute their raise of confidence to classroom poetry. However, looking at the statistics presented, one cannot dispute the fact that poetry selection is to a large extent not contributing to the development of self-esteem and confidence among adolescents in this class. Therefore, my argument is that with the right pedagogy, comprehension can be attained, but little impact can be evidenced if the canon remains unrelatable.

6.4.6 Imaginations creation

From the questionnaire responses, 51% of the learners indicated that they were capable of visualising the content as the poems were presented to them. However, this percentage is not a good enough indicator of imagination stimulation. There is still a concern about the 49% who did not see the poems as activating their senses of imagination. There is evidence in the results of this study that the teacher's pedagogy played a pivotal role in contextualising the poems for learners to be able to create images, but for anybody to create a picture in their mind it means they are familiar with that object or subject. In this case, the creation of images in poetry is one of the social constructs of identity that relate to culture; that is, images provide a sense of cultural identity. Taking cultural identity into consideration helps teachers to create learning environments that recognise the cultural contribution of adolescents. In this respect, Savage (2005) comments that teachers must empower adolescents to succeed by providing them with a learning environment that respects their culture, embraces their

diversity and celebrates their differences. By so doing, teachers will be helping adolescents to develop their identities. Evidently, this was achieved in Class B to a very limited extent.

6.4.7 Emotional engagement with prescribed poetry

Poetry has been said to be a powerful emotional stimulus. The poet Robert Frost once said that poetry begins in delight and ends in wisdom. In contrast to this sentiment, only 29% of the learners in Class B indicated that they were emotionally stimulated by the prescribed poems. The majority of the learners, which is 71%, were negative about this aspect. The results of the study yielded here are concerning. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, Bila and Abodunrin (2020) point to the emotional healing capacity that poetry has. Adolescents in South African townships struggle with socio-economic challenges such as poverty and crime, which leave some with frustrations and unresolved issues that are detrimental to their development. Emotions communicate information about an individual's state of motivation or demotivation. There is a correlation between emotions and self-concept. Melone et al. (2016) note that these emotions can either be positive or negative. This resonates with Hardman and Harrison (2016) who note that life without emotions will be bland and empty. Despite the fact that the teacher in Class B opened the classroom for learners to be able to talk about their own cultures, there is evidence from the results that the learners did not get emotionally engaged with the prescribed poems. This is worrisome, considering that poetry's other strength is that of appealing to one's emotions. It means that in this class learners were engaging with poetry only from an academic point of view so that they could achieve good marks and proceed to the next grade; they did not see the relevance of the contents to their daily lives. This tells us that there is need for a revisit and redefinition of the South African poetry canon.

6.4.8 Cultural significance

The results in Table 6 show that only 22% of the learners in Class B identified the poems taught to them as significant to their cultures. For these ten learners who could identify with the cultural significance in the prescribed poems, it is most likely because

the teacher contextualised the poems that were taught in this class. Because the poems were largely Western poems, the majority of learners felt disconnected from them, even with the contextualisation offered by the teacher. Genis (2019, p. 62) notes that "black South African learners who are taught only according to a Western curriculum may suffer from cultural dissonance that may translate into psychological, physical and spiritual ill health." This isolation from personal, cultural and societal experiences is tantamount to identity confusion for adolescent learners. Ned (2019, p. 229) argues: "This body, mind and spirit cannot be engaged without the ancestral life which is representation of a conscious engagement with one's history and identity…this is important for the success of indigenous learners and for strengthening an understanding of their whole selves and identity." Such engagement is activated by familiar language, contexts and life experiences and aligns with the philosophers of critical pedagogy such as Dewey (1939), Freire (1970) and Apple (1978) who all agree that the school should mirror the society. This societal reflection should be in the curriculum. One learner in Mavhiza and Prozesky (2020) indicated that she performed poems at community gatherings and all the poems that she performed had to do with socio-economic situations affecting South Africans. This aligns with McGiffin (2018) who noted that poets in South Africa said that poetry reminded them of their history, heritage and identity. This means that when poetry originates from South Africa, South African learners can easily relate to it, because they will understand the idioms and proverbs which are common among their own people. The results shown here prove that pedagogy and canon cannot be separated when talking about adolescents' identities because these concepts engage the whole self in the learning process.

6.4.9 Relevance to life

Poetry helps people to understand the world that they live in. However, the results in this study show that 56% of the participants in Class B found the prescribed poems irrelevant, while 16% said that the poems were relevant to their life experiences and 28% of the participants were neutral. Benton (1999) notes that poetry is the printed voice of the poet. This means that the interconnectedness that the reader has with the poet transports the reader to the poet's world where they can do reflections and create relevant visuals in their minds and develop mutual emotions with the poet. However,

this interconnectedness is facilitated by a variety of factors, including experiences, generational timelines, geographical space, culture, race, creed and gender. It is concerning that Grade 11 learners in South Africa who are studying English FAL are largely exposed to poetry emanating from Western countries, is old and dominated by men, with some experiences that are divorced from the 21st century as discussed earlier in Chapters 1, 2 and 5. With such a curriculum, the teacher may be innovative and incorporate multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies but the canon becomes the hindering factor towards poetry appealing to the self.

Even though Benton and Hugh (2009) suggest that teachers should employ engaging pedagogies to help learners in the classroom, the results here indicate that with the right pedagogy and a wrong canon, students' identities can still be negatively impacted. The enjoyment and comprehension of prescribed poems by learners in Class B can be attributed largely to the teacher's pedagogy. The realisation by the learners in this class that the poems were irrelevant to their lives shows the learners' possession of critical skills – their ability to understand, interpret, and re-represent information. This reveals metacognition in learners which helps them to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum as well as to make connections with their lived experiences. Ultimately, the process helps adolescents to develop their identities as they can tell what could guide their learning, know who they are and what they aspire to be.

6.4.10 Motivation to write own poems

In a classroom where the majority of learners can comprehend the poems taught, it should be easier for them to connect with the meanings and let out their feelings and thoughts through reflective writing. However, it was not the case with learners in Class B as only 14 participants out of 45, which gives 31%, indicated that they were motivated by the prescribed poems to write their own poems. There are many reasons why for the learners in this class the prescribed poetry was understood but did not motivate them to write their own poems. Firstly, learners indicated in majority that the poems that they were taught in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom did not relate to

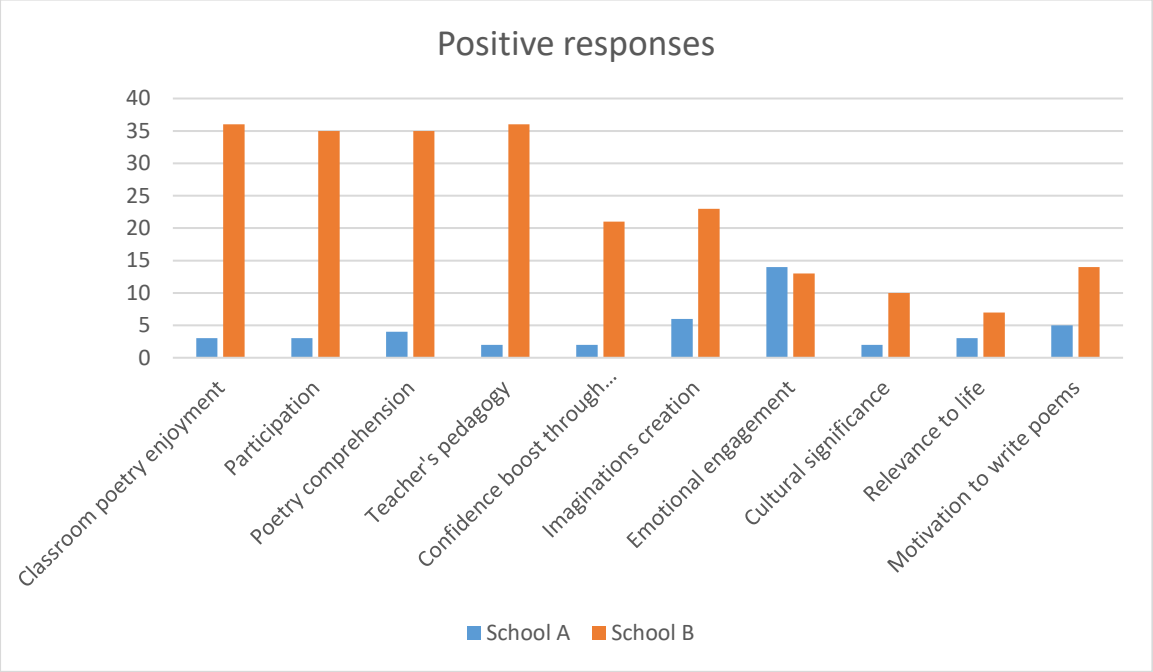
their lives. Secondly, the learners may have viewed the classroom poetry as theory that is not applicable in real life contexts, and thus to them it might have been something that ended in the book and within the classroom walls. Noddlings (2002) notes that a caring school environment is important for learning to take place. Through education, learners are able to be reflective, be connected to others and exemplify the processes of life. These exemplifications can be presented in the form of writing for adolescents. By contrast, there is evidence here that there was not enough support given in the English FAL poetry classroom for learners to write about their daily life experiences, their cultures and their personalities as human beings.

The curriculum is technically silencing the voices of adolescents. When learners feel that there is nothing that motivates them to write their own poems, it is a sign that they are not relating to what they are being taught. In other words, this is a signal that the curriculum is stifling learners' creativity. Creativity is one of the skills that is crucial for shaping adolescent identities and preparing them for adulthood. Class B questionnaire results show that even though the classroom teacher had created spaces for dialogue, the curriculum had not freed the learners. They were still bound to a canon which placed value on bygone concerns rather than contemporary ones. Therefore, for adolescents to be able to have a voice through poetry writing, there is need for a reformed curriculum and an inclusive pedagogy that sees learners as potential poets themselves. This calls for a new way of thinking about education: a canon and pedagogy that constantly reflect on learners' cultural identities is ideal.

6.5 Comparative summary graphs for Class A and Class B

In this comparative analysis, I present summary graphs for Class A and Class B. The graphs provide insights into the positive responses, neutral responses and negative responses to different categories pulled from the questionnaires. By comparing the data, I hoped to gain a better understanding of the affordances and the limitations of the two pedagogies under study along with the canon.

Figure 15: Comparative graph of questionnaire positive responses



The above statistics show the positive responses to all categories. Classroom poetry enjoyment, participation, poetry comprehension and teacher's pedagogy are categories that border around the academic environment and content delivery. The consistency in positivity of these four categories in Class B signifies that when the teacher uses a multimodality and multiliteracies pedagogy, adolescents will enjoy the English FAL poetry classroom more than when the teacher uses the traditional pedagogy which is book-centred. There are distinct differences in the statistics for all categories but for emotional engagement, it is interesting to note that learners in Class A and Class B thought alike. This tells us that expression of feelings is a human need and, as discussed earlier in this chapter, emotions may have either a negative or a positive effect on behaviour.

Figure 16: Comparative graph of questionnaire neutral responses

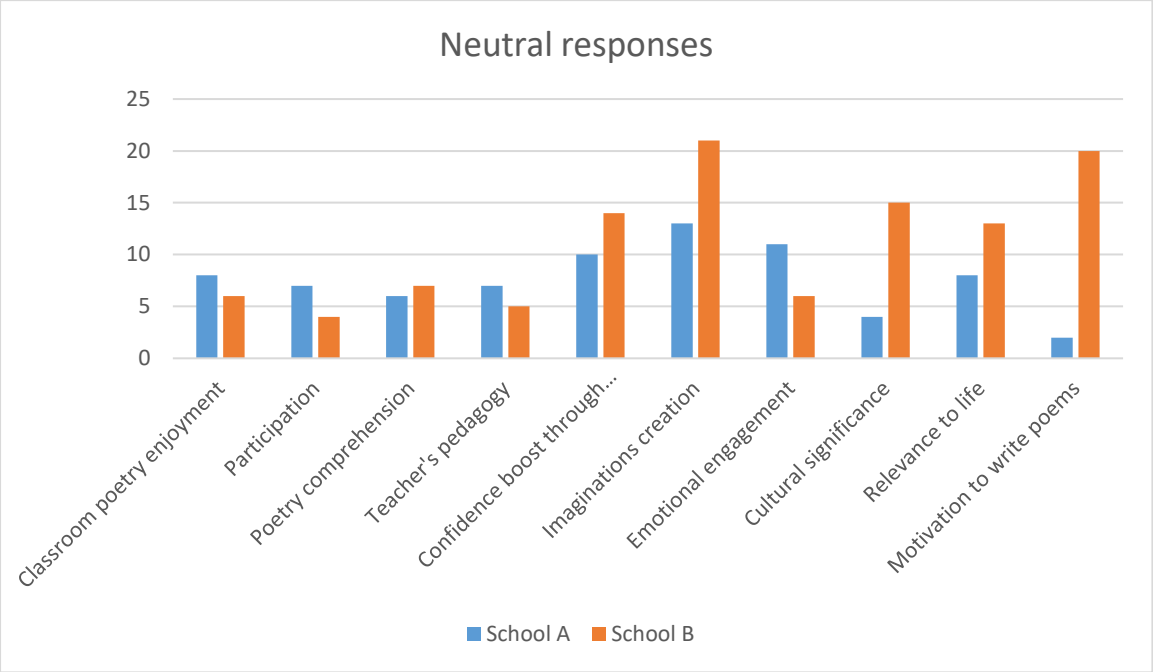


Figure 16 above shows the statistics on the neutral responses given in Class A and Class B on all identified categories. In other words, it shows the responses of those participants who were indifferent about their experiences with English FAL classroom poetry. These middle responses may have many meanings. For some learners, neutrality meant they did not have answers, and therefore they opted for the neutral responses. For other learners, the neutral response meant uncertainty. The results above signify that for many learners who participated in this study, the future might be bleak as they are not certain of what they are, who they are and what their capabilities are. The problem leads us to pedagogy and canon. That there are many learners who were neutral in some categories even in the classroom where the modern pedagogy was employed indicates that if the right pedagogy is not complemented by the right canon, negative effects on adolescents' identity development can be observed. There is therefore need for rethinking pedagogy as well as canon in the South African English FAL poetry curriculum.

Figure 17: Comparative graph of questionnaire negative responses

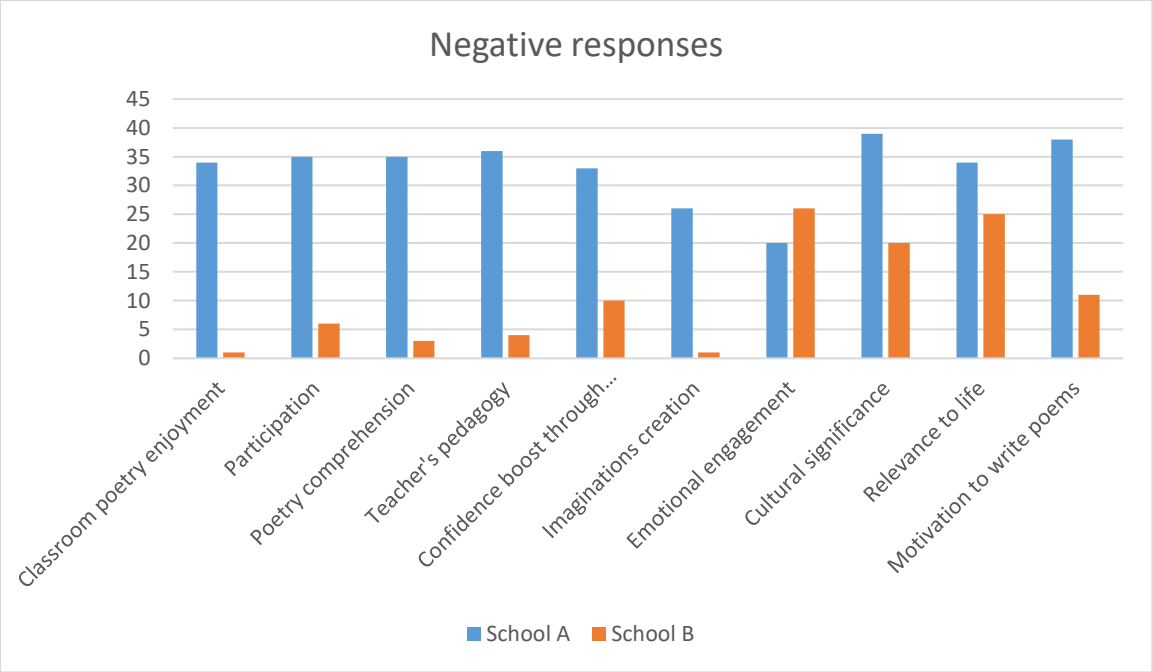


Figure 17 above indicates that the bigger number of participants in Classroom A were negative towards categories that centre around content delivery in the classroom. There is evidence in these results to show that a traditional pedagogy is not enjoyable, does not promote participation and does not aid poetry comprehension, making this pedagogy unlikable among adolescents. One would say that adolescents in Class A suffered a double blow – punches from both the boring traditional pedagogy and the old masculinist canon.

6.6 Discussion of findings

The results of the data obtained through questionnaires and the thematic analysis in this chapter show different outcomes for the different poetry classes. Drawing key concepts from Erikson (1963, 1968) and Freire (1970), I now look at the implications of the questionnaire findings for learners' identity development. The discussion is anchored on six key arguments.

6.6.1 The traditional pedagogy as prohibitive of cultural identity development

Culture is an important factor that contributes to identity development, as discussed in Chapter 3. While traditional pedagogy has been in use around the world in many classrooms for many years, it is a limiting teaching approach which hinders cultural identity development and fails to prepare learners for the globalised society in which they live. According to Erikson (1968), children's development largely happens in response to surroundings rather than being intrinsically steered. This means that Erikson (1968) stresses the role played by community in adolescents' cultural identity development – as role models, motivators, and creators of positive identities. This means that the cultural identities that learners take up is influenced by the societies. The evidence from School A questionnaires where the traditional pedagogy was employed reveals that this approach leaves no room for learners to explore their cultural identities and it stifles their growth and potential as individuals. One of the primary ways traditional pedagogy inhibits cultural identity development is through its emphasis on conformity to established norms and standards which often prioritise Western cultural values. This can limit the exploration and expression of diverse cultural identities in the poetry classroom.

Similar to pedagogy, the findings in this chapter show that participants viewed the prescribed poetry as alienated from their life experiences. This takes us back to the definition of canon given in Chapter 1. There, canon was defined as a selection of literary works classified as skillful, influential and important to a particular place at a given time (Lombardi, 2020). In this definition, it is key to consider the last part which talks about canon being influential and important to a particular place and time. Going by this definition, many of the Western poetry texts cease to be canon in South Africa and in Africa as a whole. The African canon should speak about Africans, Ubuntu, family, celebrations, rituals, resilience, heroes and heroines, heritage, challenges, grief and sorrows. These are some of the aspects of life that matter to Africans. Although the curriculum has a number of poems by black South African poets, it does not represent a truly African canon without the inclusion of poems by poets from other parts of Africa. An African canon cannot be parochial; it must exhibit a pan-Africanist imperative in order to be truly transformative. Africans share cultural values and

practices across and these should form the parametres for the definition of the African canon.

The findings in this chapter illustrate my argument that a canon that is not related to the learners' culture alienates them from the learning process and inhibits their identity development. Similarly, a distant canon attracts a distant pedagogy. Education, according to Freire (1970), is never neutral. It can either domesticate or liberate. Cultural invasion reduces people into mere objects. Freire describes the cultural invader as authoritative and dictatorial, forbidding the invaded from thinking and acting but wanting them to rather just listen to what he says. The idea that the learners do not participate in decision making of the content that they want to learn means that the learners are under cultural deprivation where some Western, dated South African and male dominated poetry constitutes a huge portion of their English FAL prescribed poetry. Participants from both Classrooms A and B indicated that they did not see how the prescibed poems were significant to their cultures. This finding resonates with views expressed by Rorty (2017), Godsell (2020), and Bila and Abodunrin (2020) who all agree that cultural deprivation in poetry denies the learner access to social consciousness, personal identity, critical thinking and poetry enjoyment.

6.6.2 Traditional pedagogy as a hindrance to emotional identity development

The traditional pedagogy as discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 relies heavily on the textbook and it is teacher-centred. Freire (1970) metaphorically refers to this approach as a banking system of education. The results of this study show that this is not the best pedagogy for helping learners develop their emotional identities. The results presented in this chapter reveal that 36 out of 45 learners in Class A were negative towards the traditional pedagogy employed by the teacher. These negative results in the questionnaires for Class A provide evidence of how a traditional pedagogy fails to connect learners emotionally. Erikson (1968) notes that identity provides a sense of continuity within the self and interaction with the self. The findings of this study align with Erikson in proving that where there is no interaction, adolescents' emotional identity development is stagnated. Emotional identity can be developed when

adolescents have a positive relationship with the group and peers, and in this case the group is the class. Beside the learners' negativity towards the pedagogy, their lack of poetry comprehension, low effective participation, little poetry enjoyment, lack of confidence and no creation of imaginations also show that the traditional pedagogy is a hindrance to learners' emotional identity development. As discussed in Chapter 5 and evidenced again in the results analysed in this chapter, this approach expects learners to follow inflexible rules and instructions, leading them to suppress inner emotions and ignore their individuality. This makes learners to be disconnected from the learning process. Michell (2016) postulates that denying spaces for active exploration and playfulness in the classroom threatens learners' socio-emotional growth, and this has a negative impact on their wellbeing. Thus, traditional pedagogy does not allow learners to explore and understand their emotions for them to develop a healthy emotional identity.

6.6.3 Curriculum representation imbalances as a hindrance to pedagogies that enhance gender identity development

Curriculum representation imbalances have long been recognised as a serious issue in education (Govender, Naidoo & Taylor, 2020; Bailey, 2021). This refers to the under-representation of certain groups of people. For example, in this study findings have revealed that women's representation in the canon was almost nil. Even though there were more girls than boys in the participating classrooms, the curriculum was male-dominated and this indirectly signposted to the girls that their place was not in the classroom. This study was conducted in South African townships where the majority of people living there were Black. The classrooms observed had African Black learners and teachers and a majority Black female population. Yet, the curriculum had no Black female poet. The consequences of this problem can be far reaching and can have significant impact on learners' abilities to develop their identities and for teachers to engage a pedagogy that fosters these identities, particularly gender identity. This especially affects the female learners in the classes who were not represented in the canon. Having female authors in the poetry curriculum can lead female learners to form positive and empowering personal identities. Bailey (2021) believes that female

learners are more likely to form positive self-identities when exposed to literature featuring female authors.

Erikson (1968) notes that many adolescents experiment with different identities and they fantasise about roles as they indulge with identifications of people that they regard to be heroes and heroines. They have role models that they imitate. Some teenagers imitate their role models' behaviour as well as their career choices. However, there is evidence in the findings presented in this chapter that curriculum representation imbalances can significantly impact the development of gender identity of the learners since female role models do not feature among the prescribed poets. This can result in confusion, feelings of isolation and alienation for female Grade 11 learners.

Paradoxically, while women do not feature as authors of poems prescribed in the curriculum, they do feature as characters in the prescribed literature texts. However, they are mostly represented as emotional and caring, which is problematic. Girls of the 21st century require more of contemporary poems which do not perpetuate gender role stereotypes. Erikson (1968) acknowledges that women in society are mostly represented in limiting and confining ways, where they are viewed as emotional, nurturing and submissive while men are represented as strong, emotionless and rational. This problem seeps through the poetry canon as well. In Whitman's "I Sit and I Look Out", women are represented as weak and vulnerable. References to "the mother misused by her children" and "the wife misused by her husband" create stereotypical images of women. The repetition of the word 'misused' in lines 5 and 7 presents women as objects and not as humans, because only objects can be used. Therefore, I argue that the lack of diversity in terms of the gender representation in the poetry canon can lead to various negative effects on learners. These negative effects could be difficulties in girls' validating their gender identity and boys' navigating social worlds not conscious of gender equality as a prerogative.

It is necessary to emphasize that the prescribed poetry texts for Grade 11 English FAL are silent about women's empowerment, which possibly explains why the learners in

both Class A and Class B did not find the poetry relevant. Contemporary issues that are affecting a girl child in the South African context are not addressed, starting from the poetry selection which is evidently patriarchal. The exclusion of Black African women from the canon means that learners might miss out on opportunities to talk about the issues of gender oppression, male violence, rape, silencing, patriarchal domination, gender discrimination and domestic abuse that are rife in their communities and which directly affect their identities. These are issues that are mostly addressed through women's poetry as women express their thoughts, experiences and fellow women's ordeals. As stated earlier, female adolescents need role models so that they can value and believe in themselves. Curriculum has a critical role in directing pedagogy. Thus, the two should be equally considered if learners are to be helped to shape and to understand their gender identies and their place in the world.

6.6.4 Multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies as pedagogy for social justice

Multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies have their roots in critical pedagogy which seeks to use education as a tool for social justice. These are the frameworks that have been brought about by the technology revolution and are used by many people in today's classrooms. The results presented earlier in this chapter show that if pedagogy is interactive, learners can comprehend different forms of poetry, even those far removed from their realities. When this modern pedagogy is employed, it benefits adolescents in many ways. According to Freire (1970, p. 90) learners become "thinking subjects, and recognize that they are as much thinking subjects as are the teachers". In addition, "the learners gradually know what they did not yet know, and the educators re-know what they knew before" (Freire, 1970, p. 90).

As Freire notes above, an interactive learning environment helps learners to acquire new knowledge from peers and the teacher. For example, in Class B where the teacher employed multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy, 36 out of 45 learners in the class enjoyed the classroom poetry as well as the pedagogy employed by the teacher. Their enjoyment however does not end in the classroom. When new knowledge is gained, learners approach real-life challenges differently and

they generate fresh thinking which makes them want to pursue social changes. It is from this epistemological perceptive that Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy emerges as the foundation of transformative learning and education for social justice.

Adolescents can form images of ideal circumstances as they embrace their newfound ability to think abstractly and come to conclusions based on logical reasoning. For example, they can have images of what an ideal family looks like. This is particularly true of the learners in the township where this study was conducted. Some learners in this environment do not have knowledge of what it means to talk about an ideal family. As noted in Chapter 1, many of them come from homes ravaged by divorce, crime, death and many other social ills. Therefore, creating a classroom environment which transports these adolescents to an alternative world prepares them to become change agents. Furthermore, as they develop and grow, their ability to solve life's problems increases, depending on their positive learning experiences in the classroom. Since the multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy has been shown to boost learners' confidence, it can be argued that the Grade 11 English FAL learners in this study will be empowered through poetry to fight for social justice in all aspects of their lives. The infusion of relatable poetry in the South African canon may also soothe and heal the adolescents from their daily traumatic experiences. This healing process may position them to choose future prospects in life that will put them in a better stead economically than many of the older generation. In this case, poetry will be assisting them to access better opportunities in post-apartheid South Africa.

The teaching landscape is fast changing and schooling spaces have been invaded by technology which leaves the educators with a mandate to rethink pedagogy. Avermann and Hutchins (2012) note that these 21st century literacies have implications for teaching and learning. The internet wave is not sparing the poetry canon. Ndlovu and Moll (2016, p. 26) note the importance of ICT in the classroom when they state: "An ICT tool can offer a wide range of multimodal texts and media forms in a given teaching and learning environment". The 21st century learners easily adapt to navigating different modes on digital platforms to make meaning of poetry. Ndlovu and Moll (2016) comment on the versatility of ICT in comparison to other

teaching resources. This has made it easy for adolescents to access new forms of poetry like the spoken word, rap, hip hop and rhyming couplets. Contrary to the old poems prescribed for Grade 11 learners, these new genres speak the language that adolescents understand and are familiar with. These linguistic repetoires, when applied in the poetry classroom, offer an appreciation of learners' identities as well as the space to appreciate and identify with their cultures. When learners feel that they are valued, they make contributions and this increases classroom participation. One of the benefits of a critical pedagogy, as Freire (1970) observes, is that it creates active learners who can question the injustices around them.

6.6.5 The modern pedagogy as an enhancer of knowledge co-creation

The data presented in this study suggests that using a multiplicity of knowledges in teaching positively impacts learners' cognitive levels. In Class B, the teacher used many modes to ensure that the learners were at the centre of learning. In addition, the teacher used dialogue which Freire (1970) refers to as a vital tool in liberatory education. Godsell (2020) asserts that poetry can present a non-dominant narrative and this is important for understanding multiple voices. The other tools of engagement that resonate with adolescents are technologies. To a larger extent, the digital world defines the 21st century adolescents' identities. By allowing learners to surf the internet for additional information about the taught poems, looking for pictures related to the poems discussed in class and playing music, the teacher in Class B drew on semiotic modes to edify what was in the poetry anthology. This practice of opening up digital spaces during poetry discussions helps learners to connect and share ideas beyond their immidiate communities. Thus, the majority of learners in Class B could indicate that they comprehended the poems taught. This result gives credibility to the dialogical approach advocated by Freire (1970). Freire emphasises that human nature is dialogical and the process of dialogism is when we create and recreate ourselves. It is also through dialogue that epistememological curiosity is encouraged among learners in search for the truth about the world that they live in. In this search, adolescents interact with others and the teacher, and the result is that communication is created which helps adolescents to think beyond what they see on the printed page.

This study also notes the role that pedagogy plays in the cognitive development of adolescents, which enables them to be co-creators of knowledge. While the evidence shows that traditional pedagogy makes learners passive and that passivity does not enhance learners' cognitive development or help them to be co-creators of knowledge, the modern pedagogy paves a way for learners to voice their opinions and learn from one another and from the teacher. As stated earlier in Chapter 1, Vygotsky (1978) argues that reality in the individual's mind is linked to social and human interaction. This means that effective learning takes place where there is interaction in the classroom. Freire (1970), on the other hand, talked about individual knowledge as constructive and experiential. This is fostered by an environment that promotes dialogical learning. If learning is located in one's creative responses to a situation, that relationship between the individual and the material they engage with helps the learner to engage in the "constant problematizing of their existential situation" (Freire, 1985, p. 59). The existential situation facilitates knowing where learners "pursue the world, with the world and, with each other" (Freire, 1985, p. 58). Contrary to the analogue of the banking system where teachers and learners see knowledge as static, Freire imagines learning as critical, reflective, actioning curiosity, and demanding enquiry. All these virtues contribute to the cognitive development of adolescents, which makes them co-creators of knowledge.

6.6.6 The role of pedagogy in cultural literacy sustenance

Education, according to Freire (1970), is supposed to conscientise people and make them change agents for their communities. Freire (1970, p. 30) states:

> In a culture of silence the masses are 'mute', that is, they are prohibited from creatively taking part in the transfomation of their society and therefore prohibited from being. Even if they can accasionally read and write because they were 'taught' in humanitarian – but not humanist – literacy campaigns, they are nevertheless alienated from the power responsible for their silence.

The results of this study resonate with Freire's view. The learners who participated in this study could write and read but the canon presented to them was unclear, with mystifying views which obstructed the learners' reflection on real life experiences. As a result, the majority of the participants in both Class A and Class B indicated that their prescribed poems did not motivate them to write their own poems. To reiterate, the statistics indicate that 85% in Class A and 69% in Class B did not get motivation to write their own poems from the prescribed Grade 11 English FAL poems. Even though Teacher B tried to contextualise the poems, it is crucial to acknowledge that the production and appreciation of poetry rely heavily on cultural literacy, which is the knowledge and understanding of a particular culture. This is the reason why Mbembe (2015), Naiker (2016), d'Abdon (2016), and d'Abdon, Byrne and Newfield (2020) advocate for the decolonisation of the curriculum. The change in curriculum to take up the Afro-centric approach which is anchored on orality and performance will automatically change the pedagogy in the classroom. Therefore, this study argues that learners' immersion in their culture through canon and pedagogy can develop their identities as writers with understanding of cultural literacy because poetry is often intertwined with a cultural context.

In this study, learners in Class A were denied both voice and cultural literacy through the rigid pedagogy. They were further disadvantaged by not having a voice of their own in the curriculum, just like the learners in Class B. The results show that for these adolescents, classroom poetry is merely intended for them to satisfy government pass requirements and expectations. In Freire's (1970) perspective, this is functional literacy which limits the human being from exploring the true world but only affords them an opportunity to be more efficient, governable and reliable. In other words, this is the characteristic of traditional education that is embedded in the canon. This implies that even if the teacher tries hard to implement the modern pedagogy in class, the learning process will remain a half-baked cake because of the canon which is also imposed upon the teacher to pass on to the learners. Based on the findings here, the canon denies adolescents an opportunity to express cultural literacies through poetry writing.

The failure of learners to write poetry, therefore, can be viewed as a failure to sustain cultural literacy. It is not only a loss for the individual but also for society as a whole. The inability to write poetry reflects a lack of skills and knowledge that can hinder an individual's ability to function effectively in society. This calls for an inclusive canon which can change the pedagogy so that both are culturally responsive.

6.7 Chapter summary

Identity development follows many different paths. The data presented and analysed in this chapter has answered Research Question 2a) How does the traditional pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity? and Research Question 2b) How does the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity? Based on the results of the questionnaires, this chapter has shown that traditional pedagogy has less impact in teaching and learning; therefore, it yields negative results on adolescents' identity development. On the other hand, modern pedagogy helps learners to take full responsibility for their learning and actively pursue their learning objectives. While there is evidence that the modern pedagogy has the capacity to help learners develop competencies to cope with a constantly changing landscape, particularly on the digital side, the findings also revealed that with a Eurocentric canon, learners of English FAL remain culturally disadavantaged.

It is interesting to note that most adolescents in both Class A and Class B felt that they did not get to be emotionally engaged with classroom poetry and also did not see the cultural significance of the prescribed poetry. These results show some shared sentiments among learners in Class A and B. Despite being in different classes where different pedagogies were employed, learners shared common views about the South African poetry canon. Learners in the two classes also expressed the view that prescribed poetry was divorced from their real life experiences. Even though this study is not a comparative study, it was interesting to note the differences and similarities in the results for some of the thematic categories. Some unavoidable comparisons thus emerged. Key findings in this chapter reveal that multiliteracies, multimodal and new literacies pedagogy have greater chances of developing adolescents' identities in

comparison to the traditional pedagogy. On the other hand, it has also been exposed that a canon that is alienated to the learners' living experiences in terms of content, time, space and context does not only have a negative impact on learners' identity development but it also negatively impacts pedagogy. The discussion has shown that while Erikson and Freire's theoretical frameworks may seem dated, they harmoniously blend in their articulation of the necessity of a sound education for young people and remain significantly relevant for the 21st century adolescent in Grade 11 studying English as an additional language. The next chapter will present, analyse and discuss data from the learners' reflective journals.

Chapter 7

Data Presentation, Analysis & Discussion: Learners' Journal Entries

7.1 Introduction

Moving on from the questionnaires, this chapter presents data from learners' journal entries. As explained in Chapter 4, I encouraged learners to reflect on their poetry experiences after every poetry lesson and also to write their own poems. For this chapter, codes and categories were created for both School A and School B. I did a thematic analysis in which I pulled the key themes from each set of the journals, that is, 6 journals from School A and 12 journals from School B. Some participants wrote their reflections in poetry, paragraphs and diary entry forms. For me to do justice to the learners' reflections, I have made the first part of my data presentation and analysis to focus on individual responses to the poems taught. This is done for School A and School B separately. Thereafter, I present a thematic analysis of the participants' personal poems. This chapter concludes with the discussion of findings from the data. The learners' reflective journals were analysed to answer two research questions: Research Question 3a) What challenges to identity formation do learners experience with the current canon of poetry being taught in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?; and Research Question 3b) How do learners' own poetry help them to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities?

7.2 Themes from learners' classroom poetry reflections: School A

In Class A, the teacher used the traditional teaching method in which her voice was the most dominant one while learners received instructions. This means that dialogue was suppressed in this class. Nevertheless, the reflective journals gave learners a voice to express how they felt about the canon and illuminate their preferred themes through expressing their emotions in their own poems. Under this section, data is

presented from the 6 journals retrieved from School A, as stated earlier, with focus on learners' individual responses since some learners did not respond to all poems observed and some chose to respond to the poems taught in class but not observed by the researcher. However, all the collected data was analysed, and pseudonyms have been used in the reporting here. Out of the 6 participants in this class, some wrote poems in English and some in Indigenous languages while others wrote class notes and reflective paragraphs. I followed the practical steps in the thematic analysis process as outlined by Broun and Clarke (2006). Finally, I analysed the data into generative themes, as presented below.

7.2.1 Hope versus despair

As discussed in Chapter 5, "Shantytown" is a South African based poem though the author is anonymous. This was the first poem to be observed being taught. The theme of hope versus despair recurred in participants' reflective journals as they reflected on this poem. For example, Takatso wrote a reflective paragraph in response to the poem acknowledging that he was down for a while, but he was hopeful for a brighter future. In his own words, Takatso wrote, "*I always tell my family and friends that one day I'll drive my GTI and live the life I want to live.*" This shows that as an adolescent, Takatso had future aspirations. He realised that his current position was not admirable but hoped that the future will be different. It is important to note that at adolescence, according to Erikson (1963), children experience many challenges and this is when some get into confusion when they fail to resolve these challenges, while those who manage to resolve them excel in their future lives. Some yield to despair because of these life challenges and fail to realise that the future can be better. The hope shown by Takatso helps adolescence who are in desperate situations not to give up in life but to look at the brighter side even when things do not appear to be good. Takatso also mentioned a very crucial part that the society can play when adolescents are in desperate situations in order to guide them so that they do not end up getting confused. He noted that even though some people laughed at him when he shared his future aspirations, there were some who encouraged him and gave him hope. This shows the importance of social belonging and how it affects adolescents' identity development. With this encouragement from peers and family, the learner is motivated

to stay focused and that fosters their identity development. Takatso's reflection also showed his strong personality. Gorinachaz (2019) notes that social groups are influential in shaping one's identity and in Takatso's situation the nagative responses from people who laughed at him made him stronger and he aspired to prove them wrong, while those who encouraged him positively impacted his morale and ambition. Despite these two different opinions that people around him had, Takatso remained resolute and found relevance in the poem "Shantytown" about which he says, "*This poem gave me hope especially on the last paragraph/stanza*."

The stanza below shows how Takatso was influenced by the poem "Shantytown" to write his own poem. The response here proves Vasudenvan and Campano (2009) right when they say that adolescents come to class with their literacies from home but in class they find a rigid curriculum does not allow use of their home literacies. Should poems like this be recited in class, learners would find classroom poetry enjoyable and inspiring.

My everyday dream

I only laugh alone

My everyday wish

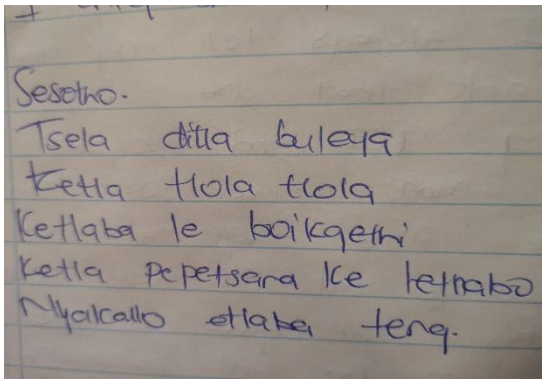
One of the desires

Matter of bling of eye

I only smile for 2 min

In the English poem above, Takatso mentioned his dreams, his daily wishes, his desires and how all this brought joy to his life. The words "dream" and "wish" might be used interchangeably but in this case Takatso used the words distinctly. His dreams relate to the things that he wanted to accomplish or achieve in life while wishes were his hopes and desires for things to happen. This play with words shows Takatso's metalinguistic consciousness which is beneficial for a second language learner in enhancing their academic competence. The words "laugh alone" show the intrinsic motivation which drove him to aim for a better future. When he "*only smile[s] for 2 min*," probably he did this in wonder of what a beautiful future he saw ahead of him.

The other stanza written in Sesotho is pasted below and the translation to English is on the right-hand side.



The road will open

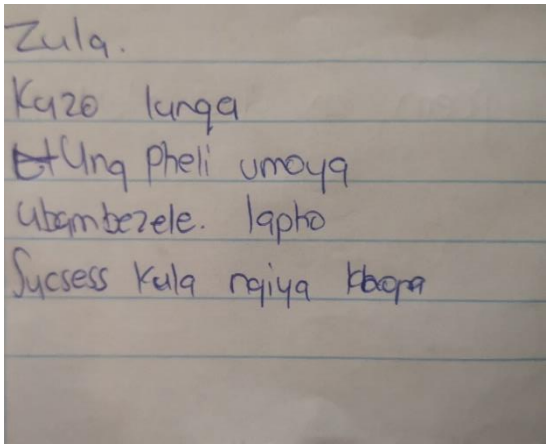
I will jump

I will be proud

I will not be disappointed

There will be rejoicing

The stanza above shows that Takatso had high hopes for a better future. This hope is the same theme featuring in the prescribed poem “Shantytown.” Takatso was positive that the path to success will open and he was going to be proud and rejoice because of the achievements that he was going to accomplish, and this mirrors the last stanza in the poem “Shantytown” where the people of Jabavu are hopeful for a better future despite all the challenges they were faced with. Line 2 translated as “*I will jump*” shows the limitations that direct translation from Indigenous languages to English can have. In this case, Takatso was not referring to the literal jumping but he was expressing the excitement which will overwhelm him when his dreams come true. This positive attitude towards life helps adolescence to shape their identities as well as to remain focused and not be led astray by life’s challenges. In the township where School A is located, people suffer economic hardships, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 1. However, exposure to poems that can soothe the troubled hearts and give hope for a better future may help adolescents to realise that even if things are bad today, tomorrow might be better.



Be simple

It will be well

Don't despair

You must hold on there

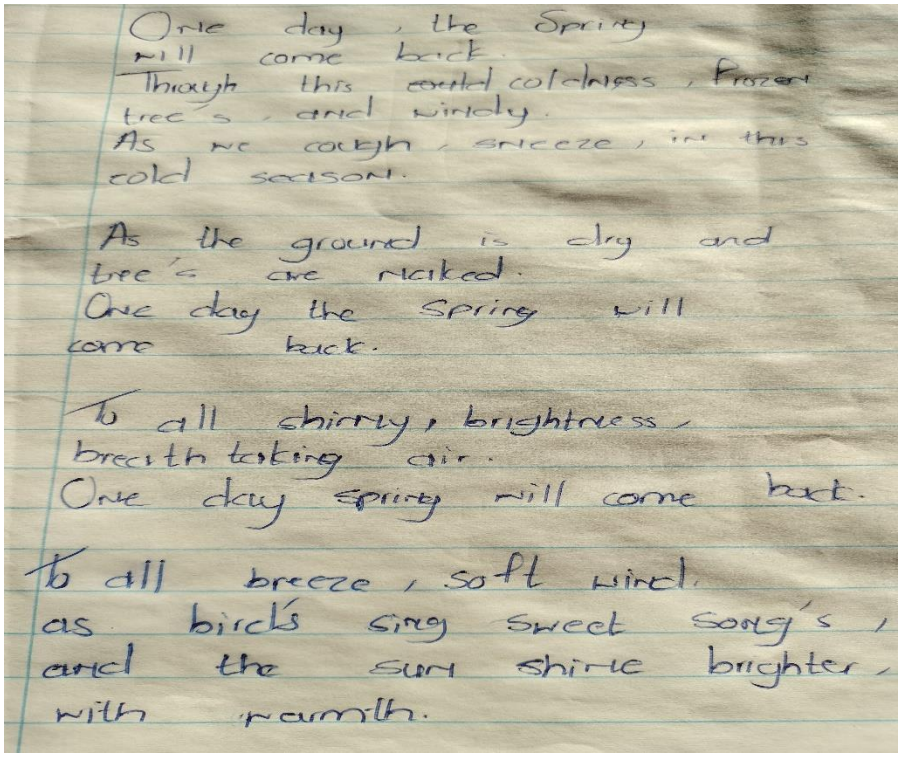
Success is where I am headed.

Takatso wrote another stanza above in isiZulu. The poem illustrates his passion and determination for success. It also shows that this is something that is coming from deep down the learner's heart. The poem has words of self-encouragement and also shows the important role that poetry plays in the lives of adolescents who are at a stage where they need to make concrete decisions about their future. In this poem, there is evidence that the adolescent's sense of identity is strong. He knows who he is, what his current situation is like and can critically engage with imaginations for the future. This is in agreement with Fleming and Stevens (2015) who note greater sense of emotional soothing as one of the benefits of poetry. Takatso's use of different languages in one poem shows the benefits of being multilingual and that this shuttle between languages is an effective resource, as noted by Canagaraja (2011) and Makalela (2015). However, in Class A, the space was not opened by the teacher for all these literacies to be explored.

Considering that Takatso was a learner from a classroom where the teacher used the traditional teaching method, one can argue that poetic expression was a natural part of his African identity. Had this learner been given a platform for poetry discussion, more learners in the classroom could have benefitted from some of the poems taught to them in their Grade 11 English poetry class. Robinson and Aronica (2016) agree that a relevant pedagogy can improve one's self-esteem, invigorate curiosity, stimulate imaginativeness, raise achievement, and inspire positive social behaviour. These elements are identifiable in the above three-stanza poem written by Takatso. There is evidence through his poetry that he was not content with where he was in terms of his

socio-economic status but he did not despair; rather, he acknowledged that the future will be different and brighter.

Just like Takatso, Karabo saw hope for the future through reflecting on the poem “Shantytown”. Karabo’s response was equally in poetry form, with the title “Spring” as shown below.


One day, the Spring
will come back.
Through this cruel coldness, Frozen
tree's, and windy.
As we cough, sneeze, in this
cold season.

As the ground is dry and
tree's are naked.
One day the Spring will
come back.

To all shinny, brightness,
breath taking air.
One day Spring will come back.

To all breeze, soft wind.
as bird's sing sweet song's,
and the sun shine brighter,
with warmth.

Karabo’s poem expresses hope for a better future. As explained earlier in Chapter 5, “Shantytown” speaks about the cold nights experienced by people living in informal settlements. In her reflective poem, Karabo uses the first-person voice even though “Shantytown” is written in the third person voice. The use of the first-person voice in Karabo’s poem allows the reader to be part of the poem and it also shows a sense of urgency and personalisation. The use of the word ‘we’ makes the reader to travel with the persona and also to share in the message being delivered. In the third stanza, Karabo directly addresses the characteristics of spring as if this is a reminder that change is inevitable.

The theme of hope is also brought out by Tshepo, the only participant who responded to the poem “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” in School A. Tshepo saw himself living in a city as beautiful as London pictured in the poem. Even though Tshepo indicated that the poem “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” was difficult to understand, he was mesmerised by the city described in the poem. He wrote in his journal: “*The city truly sounds like a wonder. I’ve always dreamt of living in this kind of place….*” Tshepo’s response to Wordsworth’s poem supports the view by Rorty (2017) that poetry helps learners to create images of another world. This appreciation of poetry may help learners to develop their identities if the poems are culturally relevant. Thus, the curriculum designers need to relook into the poetry selection and consider putting young poets in the canon.

7.2.2 Self-awareness and self-motivation

The second theme pulled from participants’ reflections on poems taught in Class A is self-awareness and self-motivation. This theme is evident from reflections on “Shantytown” and “I Sit and I Look Out.” Even though some learners indicated that they could identify with the poem “Shantytown” and showed resilience and hope for a brighter future, some participants like Phila made critical comparisons of the living conditions for the people in Jabavu and the life that she lived. In her reflective writing, Phila thought that she had a better life than the people living in Jabavu and she had this to say: “*People there wear rags and live in shacks. I live in the city of Johannesburg, never worn rags and live in a comfortable home*.” In this comparison, Phila saw herself as being in a better and privileged position than the people living in Jabavu. This tells us that Phila was aware of who she was and, according to Erickson (1968), this is ego identity where an adolescent is conscious of self. This ego identity may help adolescents to make informed decisions in life because they do not wait for someone to define who they are, as they already know themselves. It is also believed that this sense of self is not static but changes, depending on circumstances and the environment in which the adolescent is exposed. Thus, the adolescence phase helps learners to create imaginations and have aspirations for the future, which can lead to identity development. For Phila, even though she was able to set distinctions between her life and the lives lived by others in Jabavu, her attitude showed little empathy for

the people of Jabavu. This contradicts the claim by Ghosn (2002) that literature changes attitudes and helps eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy. Phila's tone shows that she was distancing herself from those that were suffering because she was privileged. Furthermore, she wrote: "*Though I don't really live in the suburbs and completely safe but one day it will be*." This shows that even though Phila was comfortable in her home, she felt that there was a need for improvement in her life and she desired to live in an environment that was safer. The fact that Phila talked about safety in the South African high-density communities recalls a point raised in the problem statement that the adolescents in these communities encounter gruesome experiences which can affect their identity development. However, if relevant poetry like "Shantytown" dominates the curriculum and if an interactive pedagogy is applied, these learners will have opportunities to share their fears, uncertainties and worries. Through those discussions, some learners will be strengthened, comforted, healed and assured that the future will be brighter just like Phila who noted that one day she will be completely safe.

Even though none of the Grade 11 English FAL poetry learners who participated in this research ever witnessed the atrocities of apartheid, many of them had caregivers who told them stories about apartheid. In her journal, Sebabatso wrote that "Shantytown" intended "*to make a scathing attack on the apartheid system*." This knowledge of the evil of the apartheid system is passed from one generation to the other. Interestingly, after making this comment, Sebabatso wrote: "*As for me there is nothing to compare this poem to, especially in my life*." By this statement, Sebabatso expressed resistance to the stereotyping of Black identities by refusing to be identified as a girl from the squatter camps. She also affirmed a Black middle-class identity in post-apartheid South Africa whereas the poem is enforcing a lower-class identity through its depiction of the shantytown. Although the data as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study has shown that the traditional pedagogy employed by the teacher in School A is problematic for the development of adolescents' identity, Sebabatso's level of self-cognition and repellence toward stereotypical identities confirms that the bigger problem lies in the canon.

In addition to the history of South Africa being narrated by elderly people to their children, South Africa as a nation celebrates youth day every year on 16 June as a commemoration of the youth that died during the Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976 as they protested against an oppressive education system for Black children. This history is frequently re-casted on social media and on state organised youth day events. Thus, it will be surprising for any adolescent to claim that they have no knowledge of apartheid in South Africa. South Africa is only 27 years into democracy as of the year 2023 and this means that most parents and caregivers will have something to tell their children about apartheid. Therefore, one would expect Sebabatso to relate to the poem "Shantytown". Surprisingly, this was not the case. Sebabatso wrote in her journal that she had never experienced cold nights. Just like Phila, Sebabatso felt that she was in a privileged position and this shows that she was conscious of self but did not acknowledge social identity which empathises with the neighbour who might have experienced cold nights like the Jabavu people. Also considering that there are many informal settlements in the community where this research was done, it would be expected for the participants to understand the cold nights experienced by those close by and show empathy for their situation. But then again, in as much as history is important, it appears that learners like Sebabatso and Phila prefer to focus on the present and the future.

Out of the 6 submitted journals, 5 participants reflected on the poem "Shantytown." Some participants just gave a summary and brief comments on some aspects of the poems. For example, Dieketseng wrote: "*Shantytown is all about poverty… where nights are like graveyards*." Placing the words poverty and graveyards together creates a powerful image. This parallelism gives a feeling that being poor is as good as being dead. Research also supports this sentiment by revealing that the poor die earlier than the rich (Wighton, 2018). Dieketseng's thinking points to the daily struggles encountered by people who stay in informal settlements. These challenges include sadness and depression due to lack of parks for children to play in and lack of service delivery. Associating informal settlements with cemeteries shows the long-term effects of apartheid which are still being experienced in the post-apartheid South African townships. The lack of recognition of the poor as humans is something called into question by Freire (1970). It is important to note that humans are known to be social

beings and this helps to form identities, hence recognition of these comparisons may create self-awareness in the adolescents.

Adolescent rage against injustice is brought out in one of the poems which was least responded to in Class A. The poem is titled “This Letter’s To Say.” Even though reflective writing takes long to master as explained by O’Connell and Dyment (2013), this low level of response may be an indirect snub of the canon. Dieketseng was courageous enough to write the following:

> *…The poem is all about those bastards who have money and do anything because they have got power. These people evict the people from their homes telling them that their house is in the fastest lane. I mean who the hell tells a person they’ll evict that person and there is not appeal. Taking you from your place where you had 16 kids and you can do anything to a place where no children under eleven are permitted. Come on there is no such thing as no appeal*.

The use of strong words in Dieketseng’s reflection shows that she comprehended the contents of the poem and in her context this did not materialise. The word ‘bastards’, referring to the municipal authorities, suggests that Dieketseng disapproved of the eviction of people from their homes – places where they have built a life, a memory. Furthermore, the expression ‘who the hell tells a person they’ll evict…’ shows that in her own society this could not happen as such an order was bound to arouse a protest march. The angry tone in the quotation above shows that according to Dieketseng this is despicable, and such things should be contested. In support of this, Dieketseng wrote: *“Come on there is no such thing as no appeal….”* All these words paint a picture of the typical South African scenario where people protest whenever they disapprove of anything. Even though learners could not associate this poem to the history of South Africa where Black people were massively removed from their native lands by the apartheid government, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 6 there is evidence that in the post-apartheid era and in the township where this study was conducted evictions could not be tolerated.

7.2.3 Cultural distancing

Cultural distancing emerged as the third theme in the reflective writing of participants who responded to the poems taught in Class A. For example, in response to the poem "I Sit and I Look Out," participants noted that the poem was about an uncaring society. In her own words, Phila wrote: "*I cannot relate to this poem because in my community, people always help one another*." Phila's words help the reader to understand that the cultural concept of Ubuntu is passed on to young African children so that at an early age they can begin to appreciate the need for communalism. Ironically, though, the same concept is not revealed in Phila's reflections on "Shantytown" discussed earlier. It might then mean that Phila's empathy was selective and did not go beyond her community. She sympathised with the people that she could identify with – her community members. On the other hand, even though Phila showed that she was distanced from people who were underprivileged, her ability to note the differences between her community and other people's communities is evidence that poetry can help adolescents with critical thinking and development of cultural capital. These skills and knowledge which adolescents draw on can give them an advantage in social life. Creely (2019) highlights the role of poetry as that of acting as forms of narrative expressions. Further, Creely (2019) notes that these narratives tell stories about human experiences. It is through these human experiences that individuals can uphold their identities and grow up knowing who they are. This is the role that is played by the society which includes the parents, caregivers, relatives and other elderly people within the communities. As Phila stated, "*we believe that it takes a village to raise a child*." This is an African concept which sees even an elderly neighbour reprimanding a child for doing wrong. Thus, Phila's journal reflections indicate that she distances herself from the human cruelty that is expressed in the poem "I Sit and I Look Out" since her cultural understanding of human relations is premised on *Ubuntu* and the belief in people supporting one another through life.

Just like Phila, Sebabatso also started her reflection by writing a summary of the poem "I Sit and I Look Out". This is important to note because it shows that she understood the contents of the poem despite the passive pedagogy employed in this classroom. What could have helped Sebabatso and few other learners from School A to grasp the

contents of this poem is the fact that it talks about some issues that are related to the South African context. Issues of violence, neglect, poverty and starvation are part of everyday life in South Africa. However, Sebabatso noted: *"This poem is also not relatable to my life."* It is important to note that even though the poem "I Sit and I Look Out" addresses most of the social issues experienced in South Africa today, there are different terms that South Africans use for some of the challenges mentioned in the poem. So there is a possibility that if Teacher A had explained and contextualised the poem for her South African audience, learners' reflections could have been different. With this in mind, it is imperative to take note of Murfin and Ray (1997) and Tenure (2009) who all argue that canon is culture-oriented and this does not exclude language. This means that curriculum and culture cannot be discussed in isolation. Therefore, the idea that some learners failed to make connections with this poem boils down to the poetry selection for Grade 11 English FAL learners. Curriculum designers have an obligation to consider the cultural environments of the learners for whom they prescribe poems. Moreover, a complicated canon attracts a book and teacher centred teaching strategy which is boring as teachers may also find these poems difficult to interpret. Thus, for some teachers, the traditional teaching method becomes easier to work with because it does not require technical expertise nor creativity from the teacher apart from following what is in the book. The ultimate result is the stagnation of identity development among adolescents. Participants' responses showed cultural distancing from the poem because they could not relate with a culture that did not reflect the values of *Ubuntu*. So, the learners drew on their cultural identity to respond to the poem.

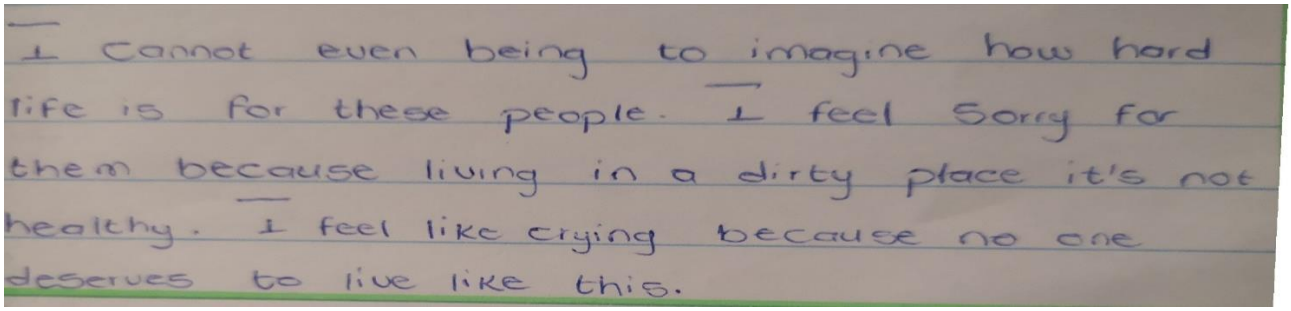
7.3 Themes from learners' classroom poetry reflections: School B

Data from the 12 journals retrieved from Class B is presented and analysed in this section. Just like School A journals, participants have been given pseudonyms to make the presentation, analysis and discussion of data anonymous and manageable. As a reminder, the poems that were taught during my time of observation in School B are "Shantytown", "Composed upon Westminster Bridge", "This Letter's to Say", and "I Sit and I Look Out", which were the same poems observed in School A. The themes below emerged from the School B participants' reflective journals.

7.3.1 Self-awareness, empathy and apathy

Out of the 12 journals submitted by participants in School B, 11 learners responded to the poem “Shantytown.” The themes which emerged out of the participants’ responses centred around self-awareness, empathy and apathy. For example, in her response, Sonia indicated that she could relate to the poem. She stated: *“…this poem just reminds me of what I have been through as a child*.” This knowledge and understanding of self helps adolescents to make connections with the world that they live in. It also helps them to appreciate the different scenarios that life can throw at humans. Sonia took the poem close to her life situations and stated that the poem spoke about her own township because of poverty, though in her case the ground was not bare of grass and cars could be seen moving around. This consciousness of socio-economic challenges in their environments positions learners as thinkers who reflect on the situations in their societies at present and also look forward to a better future, even on behalf of others. In her concluding sentence, Sonia wrote: “*Jabavu will rise as I also managed to rise and shine.”*

In an interesting diary entry, Tiisetso also mentioned that he could relate to the poem because there was a place close by his house where people were living under harsh conditions. The image below shows what Tiisetso said in his own handwriting.


I cannot even being to imagine how hard life is for these people. I feel sorry for them because living in a dirty place it's not healthy. I feel like crying because no one deserves to live like this.

In the excerpt above, there is evidence that Tiisetso expressed empathy. His ability to reflect on how hard life was for the people in informal settlements, feeling sorry for them and feeling like crying because no one deserved such hardship demonstrates what Shellenbager (2013) refers to as cognitive empathy. According to Shellenbager (2013), teenagers are still at a stage where their mental ability to take others’

perspective is still developing and requires a conducive environment with the support of adults to achieve the goal. Considering Erikson's (1968) stages of development, one cannot dispute that adolescents are individuals with different thinking capacities. It is also important to note that cognitive empathy is not universal, neither does this level of maturity occur at the same time for all people. However, exposure to relevant poetry may help learners to develop cognitive empathy as they do critical analysis of their environments in comparison to life portrayed in poems. The table below presents some of the participants' statements expressing empathy.

Table 7: Participants' statements expressing empathy

Mbalenhle	"This poem focuses on poverty faced by those disadvantaged during apartheid. It's sad to note that the separate amenities act that was passed on that time left a huge gap between people. Its effects are still visible even now. Townships are known as settlements for the poor, blacks, coloured etc while suburbs are for those who are rich, white etc."
Bathobile	"I feel pity for the people living in Jabavu. These conditions are still experienced today in the townships. Some children even die because of cold. It is sad."
Betty	"It truly breaks my heart that people out there are poor and suffering from hunger especially children. Some people have no shelter and living in streets which is not a good thing."
Bontle	"This poem has taught me about the difficulties that poor people face. I feel sad but the poem has given me hope that no matter how bad the situation is, things will change for the better."
Kamohelo	"I can relate with this poem and I feel sad that many black people suffered during apartheid and even now we still experience racism."
Neo	"Shantytown is just a sad poem. It reminds me of the evil apartheid."

Mpho	"I can relate to this poem in many ways. Where I stay sewages are always running and this is unhealthy for children because they don't have any idea. It is so bad."
Sonia	"This poem just speaks about my township…It reminds me of what I have been through…I know how cold nights feel."

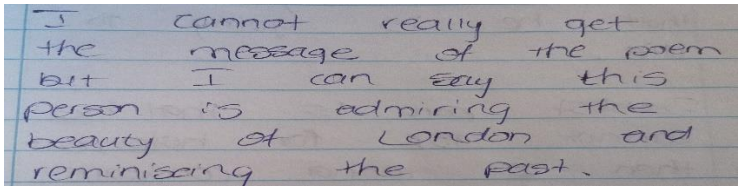
The above statements show how learners felt about the situations that the people of Jabavu were exposed to and extends to their reflections on the evil nature of the apartheid regime in South Africa. The reflective responses above show empathy and also express hope that one day life will be better for the people staying in the informal settlements. However, Basetsane and Bonolo thought differently from the responses above which show empathy.

Basetsane and Bonolo's responses showed apathy. Basetsana said that the poem Shantytown "*gave me an idea on how people live in informal settlements also known as squatter camps. People who live there are really suffering because they placed themselves there illegally*." This response from Basetsane took a different turn from her classmates' thinking. In this reflective piece, Basetsane presented herself as a spectator observing from a distance and making a comment on who to blame for the plight of the informal settlement dwellers. Similarly, Bonolo wrote: "*It made me think about how these people suffer the consequences of their choices and decisions they made for themselves*." The opinions of these two learners show that there are some young people who are detached from realities in South Africa. According to Basetsane and Bonolo, people who stay in informal settlements are there out of choice and they are experiencing hardships because of the wrong choices that they made. This lack of empathy and blame game may create pride, arrogance, selfishness and possibly cruelty among adolescents.

7.3.2 Multimodal pedagogy and cultural alienation

There is evidence in Chapters 5 and 6 that a multimodal pedagogy helped learners in School B to comprehend the contents of the poems taught. The reflective journals

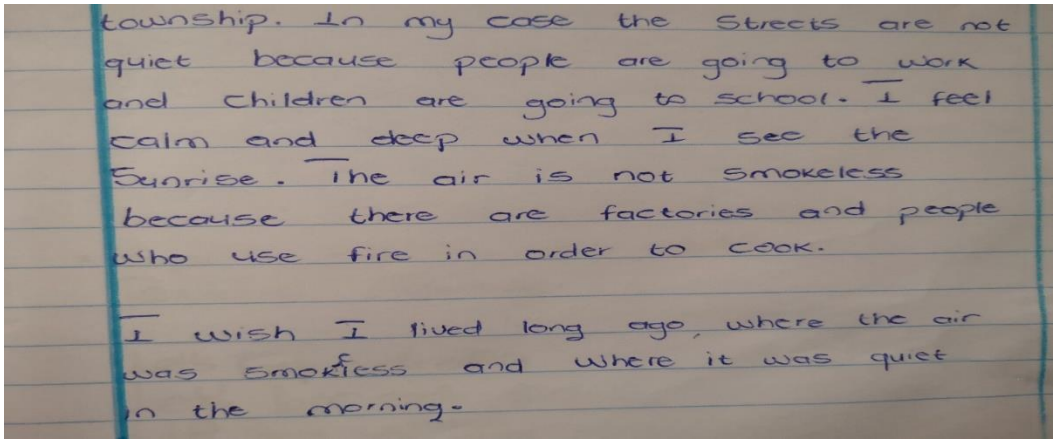
reveal that learners were also moved to do some introspection, particularly with the poem “Shantytown” which enabled them to reflect on their past and to also apply their own thoughts based on what they observed within their surroundings. Multimodality helped some learners to relate to the poem “Shantytown” which is South African based compared to Western poems which foster some degree of cultural alienation and prove to be difficult to comprehend by some of English FAL learners. However, with regard to the poem “Composed upon Westminster Bridge”, two learners from School B made interesting reflections in their journals. Sonia’s reflective piece concluded with her feelings about the poem, after writing some notes like everybody else who responded to the same poem. Sonia wrote:


I cannot really get the message of the poem but I can say this person is admiring the beauty of London and reminiscing the past.

In this reflective piece, Sonia confessed that she did not quite understand the meaning of the poem but she guessed that the speaker in the poem was expressing admiration for the city of London and reminiscing about their past. Sonia’s tone in writing about the poem betrays an element of emotional disconnection from the poem. This suggests that the notes that Sonia and the other participants wrote in class during the lesson were just done for academic purposes; the learners wrote notes without understanding the poem but did it so that they could pass when they write examinations. Sonia was obviously far removed from what was happening in the poem. There is no text and reader connection evident in her reflection. Femer (2003) considers poetry to be authentic texts which convey the aesthetic, historic, and social realities of the target language culture. However, this argument is refuted by the fact that Sonia was exposed to texts that she could not comprehend, hence the reader and text connection was not experienced. Sonia’s reflection aligns with Rosenblatt (1998) who notes idiosyncratic elements such as social, cultural and educational histories that individuals carry with them when reading a text as crucial in aiding the reader’s engagement with a text and its meaning. However, drawing from the 2021 PIRLS results published on 16 May 2023, where 81% of the South African learners were identified as not being able to read a text in any language for comprehension (Department of Basic Education, 2023), there is evidence that apart from canon there

are other factors which require immediate attention in the creation of text and reader connection, starting from as early as the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3). Sonia's response shows that in as much as the teachers might use multimodality to explain the prescribed poems, like what Teacher B did, text comprehension will remain a problem for Grade 11 English FAL learners as long as the experiences and cultures expressed through the poems are divorced from the learners' real lives and cultural orientation.

The majority of the learners who responded to this poem in their journals gave the synopsis notes as discussed in class and also as outlined in their prescribed anthology. Contrary to Sonia who stated in her reflection that the poem was not well understood, Tiisetso responded with a different perception. For example, Tiisetso found the poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" relatable to his context: "*When I climb the stairs at Lindela station on my way to school, I see the beauty or the earth or should I say nature? When I am standing/walking I see mountains and the beauty of my township*." That the teacher made a comparison of the Westminster Bridge to Nelson Mandela Bridge in Johannesburg, as highlighted in Chapter 5, helped Tiisetso to think of a high place within his vicinity – the Lindela Station. It helped Tiisetso to create mental images and to relate to the poem. Even though the comparisons are of two distinct nature, there is evidence that Tiisetso's imaginations were not completely off topic. His connection to the printed voice of the poet is another way that adolescents can develop their own perspectives on the surrounding world, as noted by Benton (1999). In this case, credit can be given to the multimodal pedagogy employed by the teacher in Class B. The approach used in the classroom and the contextualisation of the poem means that there were some learners who understood the poem and created imaginations even though the culture conveyed by the poem was different from theirs. Tiisetso's other reflections are captured in the following excerpt.


township. In my case the Streets are not quiet because people are going to work and children are going to school. I feel calm and deep when I see the Sunrise. The air is not smokeless because there are factories and people who use fire in order to cook.

I wish I lived long ago, where the air was smokeless and where it was quiet in the morning.

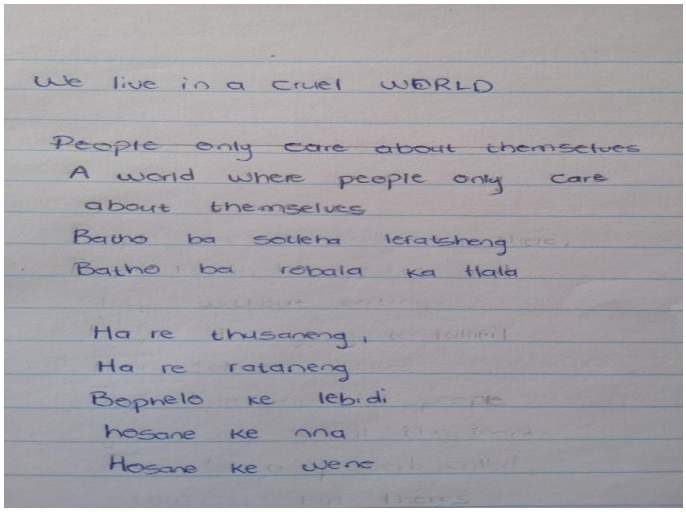
The excerpt above shows Tiisetso's ability to compare the city of London then and his own township in South Africa today and to highlight the peculiar differences between the two. By arguing that his township in the mornings is nothing like Wordsworth's London with smokeless air, Tiisetso was responding to the poem critically rather than just accepting the poem's message as a given. While Bila and Abodunrin (2020, p. 4) describe the South African literature curriculum as dominated by "Anglo-Saxon poetry, which has little relevance to their social environment and circumstances," they also note the important role of the teacher in the poetry classroom. The teacher's role is to help learners realise that their culture adds to their social consciousness, personal identity and critical thinking. The data presented in this chapter shows that even though the poetry taught to the learners during the time of this research was largely Eurocentric, when properly contextualised by the teacher it can inspire learners to have opinions about the poems and the world of the poems, and in relating these to their own worlds they will be fostering their identities.

7.3.3 Disillusionment, *Ubuntu* and worldly woes

The theme of disillusionment and worldly woes emerged from learners' reflections focusing on two poems: "I Sit and I Look Out" and "This Letter's To Say." It is interesting to note that reflective pieces from which the theme above emerged were all written in poetic form. Tiisetso who had written diary entries for the other poems wrote his reflection on "I Sit and I Look Out" in poetic form. Moreso, his poem was written in both English and Sesotho. I find the shift from diary entry to poetry quite interesting. On the one hand, diary entries have an individualised touch which may mean locking one's thoughts in writing that is not meant to be shared by the public.

This to me might signify events in the reflective writing that the participant has experienced in life. The response in poetry form, on the other hand, may signify responding to experiences that need to be shared by the public and may not necessarily be lived experiences by the participant. However, in this case using home language Sesotho and English in the same poem might also mean that the participant wanted the poem to reach a wider audience. In addition, this flexibility with these languages gives an indication of how adolescent learners are negotiating multiple linguistic identities. English is the medium of instruction in school but when learners mix English and their home languages in their writing, they are asserting their dual identities as South African and global citizens.

The poem below by Tiisetso is a two-stanza poem and its brevity is also another aspect that is easily noticeable. The shortness of the poem might mean that it is strictly conveying a serious message that it wants its reader or audience to get immediately, without wasting time.


We live in a cruel WORLD

People only care about themselves
A world where people only care
about themselves
Batho ba sotleha lefatsheng
Batho ba rebala ka hala

Ha re thusaneng,
Ha re rataneng
Bophelo ke lebidi
hosane ke nna
Hosane ke wene

We live in a cruel world

People are suffering in the world
People are starving

Let's help each other
Let's love each other
Life is a wheel
Tomorrow it is me
Tomorrow it is you

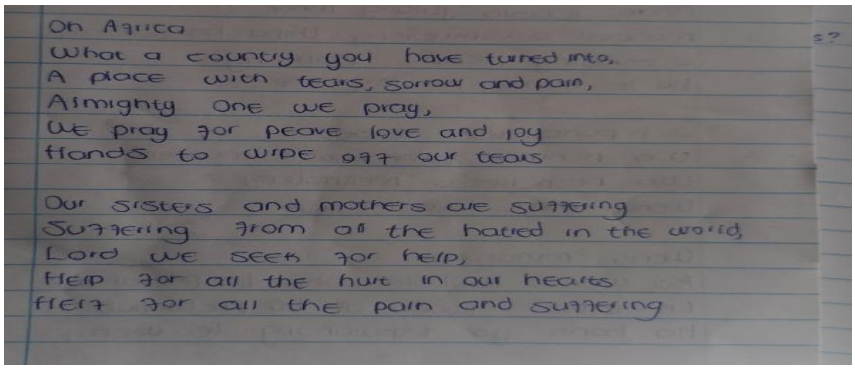
In the poem above, Tiisetso places emphasis on the cruelty of the world and the suffering of its peoples. The title sets the tone of disillusionment from the onset, recognising that there is so much sadness and pain in the world. Tiisetso expressed frustration with the state of things in the world. The use of the pronoun "we" in the title suggests a sense of shared identity that humanity is part of as people everywhere face the harsh realities of the world. In addition, the first stanza above is a loud cry to the

world to alert people that there are other people who are suffering. Tiisetso felt that there was too much selfishness and cruelty in the world, and people were hungry. This awareness of the suffering of people in his surroundings shows Tiisetso's cognitive development. It also exemplifies his cognitive empathy in response to the suffering conveyed in the poem "I Sit and I Look Out". Writing this poem is a form of social responsibility, which means Tiisetso was taking action to voice out problems that affect people in his environment, such as starvation.

The English language was used to show that the issue of cruelty and selfishness among humanity is not only experienced in South Africa but is a worldwide challenge. Because it is a global challenge, Tiisetso wrote the title of the poem and the first two lines in English to grab the international community's attention. The last two lines in stanza 1 were written in Sesotho to elaborate how people are suffering in the world. Stanza 2 is written in Sesotho to show that the issue of hunger is limited to specific countries. According to Actionagainsthunger (2022), the countries that are mostly hit by hunger are African and Asian countries. In their estimation for the 2022, Actionagainsthunger (2022) note that about 43 million people in 38 countries were at risk of famine or a serious food crisis. However, countries with the highest levels are African. Writing about this issue in an Indigenous South African language sounds like Tiisetso is addressing fellow South Africans specifically.

Ubuntu also emerges as an important aspect in the poem above. For example, the last stanza gives a commonly used expression in Africa, *"life is a wheel."* This is derived from the concept of *Ubuntu* which encourages people to look after one another. The metaphor *"life is a wheel"* means that life is not straight or static but it is a circle and it moves, just like a turning wheel. At one point a person may be at the top, being succesful in life, and at another point they may fall down to the level of poverty. Therefore, the implication is that when you are at the peak of your success, help those that are down so that they will also help you when misfortune befalls you. The second stanza of Tiisetso's poem emphasises that as human beings, we do not live in a vacuum; we need other people.

Similarly, Bontle's poem below is a sincere expression of concern for the current state of affairs in Africa.


Oh Africa
What a county you have turned into,
A place with tears, sorrow and pain,
Almighty One we pray,
We pray for peave love and joy
ffands to wipe 99ff our teaus

Our sisters and mothers are suffering
Suffering from all the hated in the world,
Lord we seeks for help,
Help for all the hurt in our hearts
ffelf for all the pain and suffering

Bontle's poem above shows a tone of sadness as the poet laments the tears, sorrow and pain that has come to define the continent. There is a sense of urgency in the prayer for peace, love and joy, as if Bontle is calling on the divine to intervene and help stem the tide of violence, suffering and chaos in Africa. It is worth noting that the poem portrays women as particularly vulnerable to suffering in a world that is full of hatred. Echoing the poem "I Sit and I Look Out" in which mothers are abused, Bontle pointed out in her poem that women bear the brunt of conflict and violence and are often denied their basic human rights. While Bontle's poem above is not complex in terms of its form and language, it is a powerful expression of concern for Africa, a continent that has been ravaged by many misfortunes such as civil wars, poverty and natural disasters. The repetition of the word "help" in the poem serves as a reminder that action needs to be taken. The woes experienced in Africa do not require only prayer but the intervention of the whole world to effect change.

In response to the poem "This Letter's To Say", some reflections from learners brought out interesting elements of disillusionment. In the post-apartheid South Africa, citizens living in the townships expect better housing, youth employment and good service delivery, but often these are in short supply, leading to disillusionment. Expressing such disillusionment, Mpho commented: "*I couldn't relate to the poem but the experience that I got from this poem is very huge more especially about politicians, they are very good at convincing and promising but not keeping the promises*." Some of the promises by politicians include better living conditions and economic recovery for many, as explained earlier. However, the majority of people, particularly in the

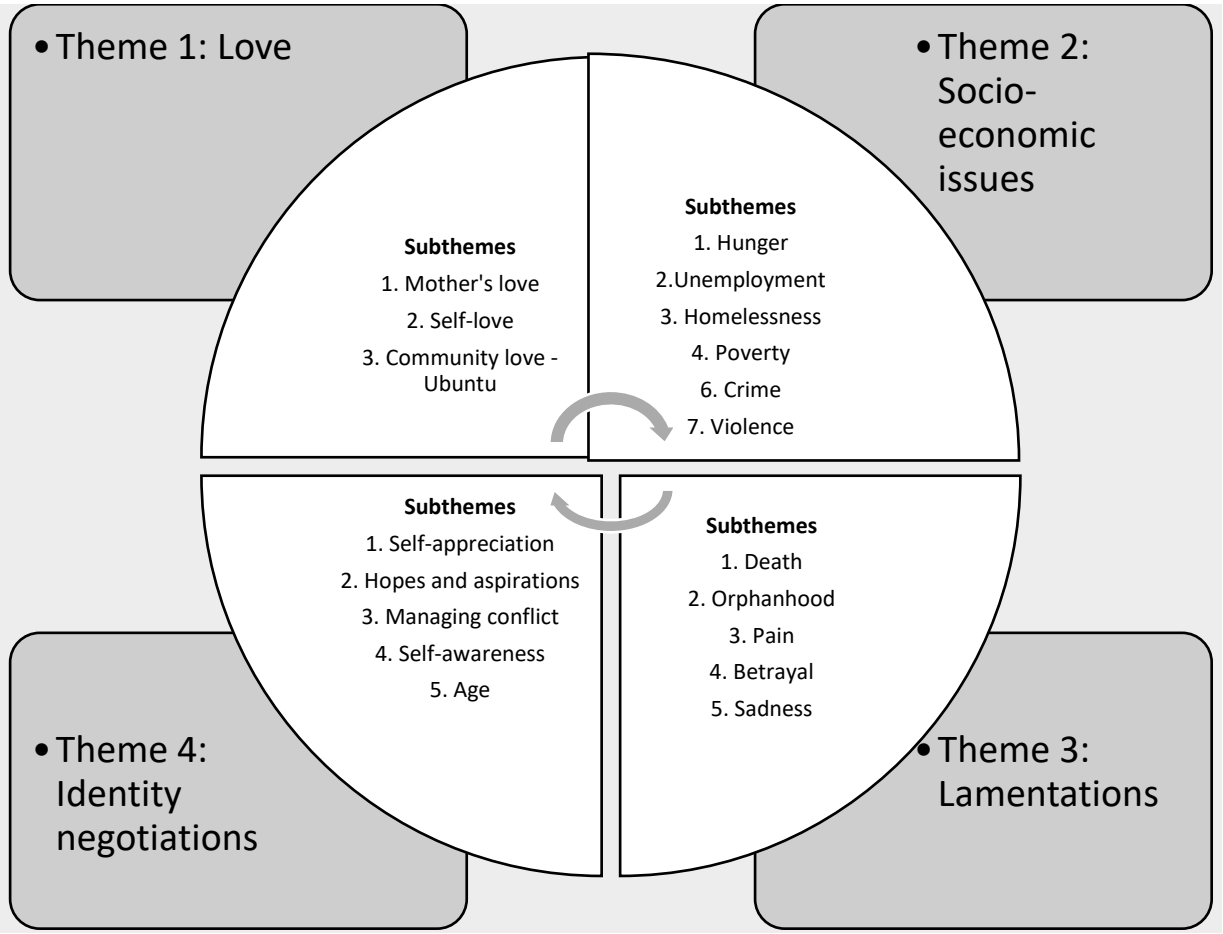
Black communities, are still suffering and they feel that they have been let down by the politicians. It is because of this feeling that many youths engage in protests and try to fight back so that they also have a share in the economy, which they think is benefiting a few corrupt politicians. Interestingly, Basetsane wrote that even though the poem was not relatable, it "*taught me that our country might be the most corrupt country but still has reasonable rules that are followed*." For Basetsane, the corruption by politicians might create disillusionment for the youth but there was hope in the fact that the law was fairly effective in maintaining order in society. These responses show that these adolescents were aware of the politics of their country. In turn, this awareness shows that the adolescents were developing social identities as members of their community and were positioning themselves as disillusioned citizens alongside their parents and guardians.

Considering the issues raised in the poems "I Sit and I Look Out" and "This Letter's To Say," one expected many responses because issues related to corruption, selfishness, anguish, hunger, hate, and many forms of cruelty are rampant in South Africa today. Therefore, few responses to these poems may be attributed not only to the idea that the poems were unrelatable but also that the diction was not familiar to the South African Grade 11 English FAL learners. While there is evidence from learners' poems presented in this section that some African values like *Ubuntu* are passed on to the adolescents so that they uphold their beliefs as a community, looking back into the curriculum there is no correlation between school and home literacies. Therefore, the curriculum seems not to help adolescents foster identity development. Adolescents may feel like they are living in two different worlds – the school world and their home communities – and these two do not meet. This may create identity confusion for learners rather than foster their sense of self. However, it is gratifying to see from learners' journals that their sense of *Ubuntu* remained strong despite the challenges posed by the curriculum.

7.4 Emerging themes from learners' own poems written in the journals

The sections above presented and analysed data from the learners' reflections on the prescribed Grade 11 English FAL poetry for the year 2021. This section presents the themes that emerged from an analysis of learners' own poems written independently, not in response to prescribed poems. As mentioned earlier, the instruction to learners was to reflect on their prescribed poetry in any language of choice and also to write their own poems. The purpose here was to identify the poems that learners engaged with outside the school curriculum and to analyse how these poems help adolescents affirm their identities. The following themes and subthemes were drawn from the learners' own poems which were submitted in the reflective journals. These themes were pulled from all the submitted journals, from both School A and B.

Figure 18: Themes generated from learners' own poems, School A and B

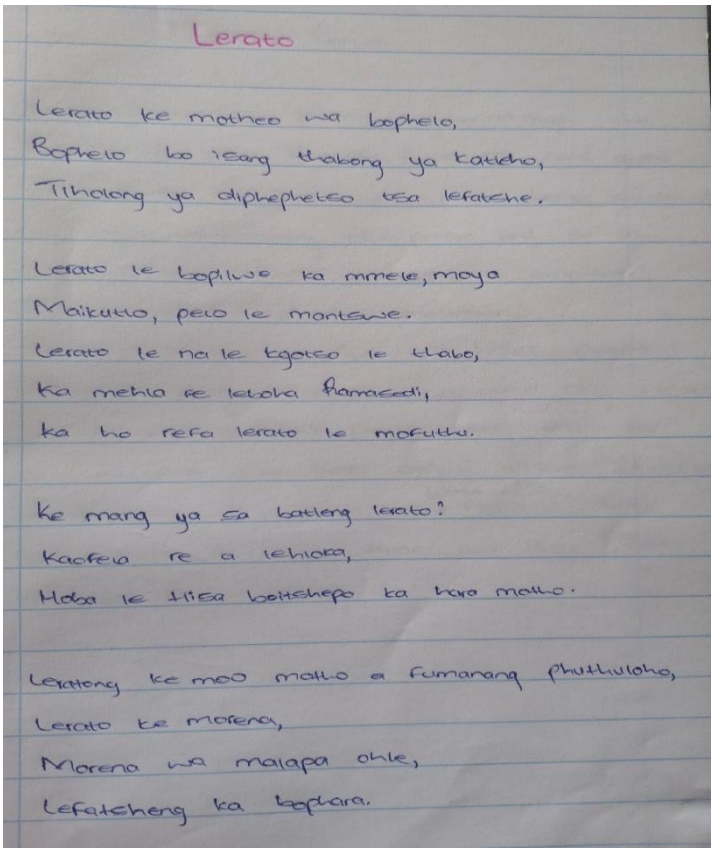


The themes and subthemes above demonstrate the issues that South African Grade 11 English FAL learners in the context where the research was done might want to see addressed in their prescribed poetry. These themes were pulled from all the data collected using the journals. The following section presents a thematic analysis of the data based on the themes indicated above.

7.4.1 Theme 1: Love

Love is one of the most recurring themes in the poems written by most participants. Different types of love have been identified, which are: love in general, love from and for mothers, and self-love. As discussed earlier in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, adolescence is the stage when adolescents sometimes experiment with love for the opposite sex or same sex. Erikson (1968) notes that during adolescence, people become extremely self-conscious about themselves and the way others see them, and this can result in self-discovery and experimentations. It is often expected that during this time, learners experiment even with romantic love as they navigate their identities. However, considering that the adolescence stage is delicate as adolescents try to seek approval and acceptance in their search for self, their experiments with romantic love may result in emotional pain or hurt feelings. Consequently, we see the themes of dating, violence, pain and betrayal, which will be discussed later under this section, emerging strongly from the learners' poems.

To start with the theme of love, the interesting poem below is written in Sesotho and the English translation is on the right hand side.



Love

Love is the foundation of life

A life that leads to happiness

In the face of global challenges

Love is made up of a body, soul,

Emotions, heart and words

Love has peace and happiness

We always thank God

For giving love and affection.

Who does not need love?

We all need it

Because it brings confidence into a person

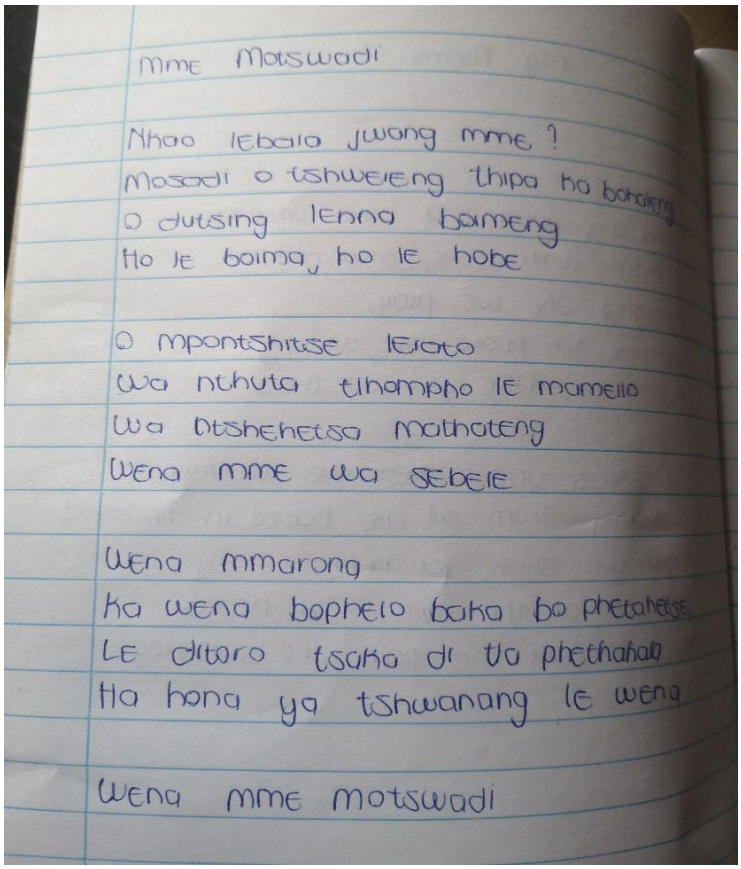
In love there is a feeling of relief

Love is a king

King of all families

The poem above by Betty expresses the power of love among humanity. The use of Indigenous language here is significant for it is evidence of the preservation of Indigenous languages and showing pride in one's identity. Jocson (2006) notes the importance of out-of-classroom poetry activities which encourage the articulation of student voice and the development of student identity. Betty recognises that love for humankind conquers in a world that is full of hatred.

On the same wavelength, another participant, Bontle, expresses love for a mother in Sesotho. The poem is presented below with the translation in English.



A Mother

How can I forget a mother?
A woman with a knife in her hand
She is sitting on the floor
It's hard, it's hard

You have shown me love
You have taught me respect and patience
You have supported me in my troubles
You are a real mother

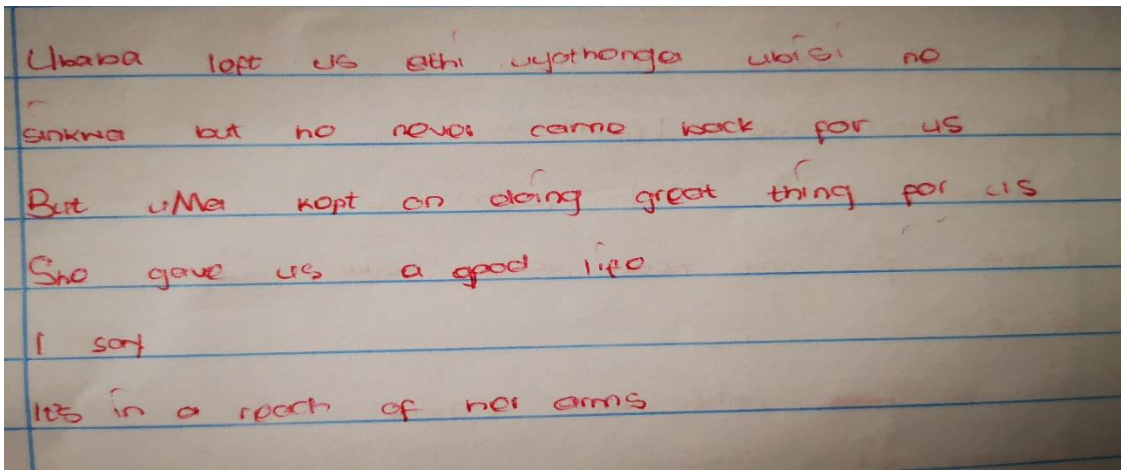
You are a mother
Through you my life is complete
And my dreams will come true
There is none like you

You are a mother

While Erikson (1968) purports that during this delicate time for adolescents, the family is the most secure emotional support base, Pfeifer and Berkman (2018, p. 2) contest this view by arguing that "during adolescence, youth seek autonomy, particularly from parents." The data from my study proves that adolescents appreciate their mother's support during difficult times. Stanza 2 of the poem above points to the typical nature of mothers. Mothers are known for being disciplinarians as well as protectors, with a knife being used in the poem as a weapon to defend their family or as a tool to discipline the naughty children. Thus, children often place trust in their mothers or other female guardians like grandmothers.

Just like Bontle, Bathobile and Bonolo also wrote poems in appreciation of mothers. Bathobile described her mother as a phenomenal woman who woke up early in the morning to go and sell at the train station to make money for her children to go to school. Stating that "*paraffin is her perfume*" is an indication that the mother might be selling food that she prepared at the station. This appreciation for a hardworking

mother shows that adolescents understand their backgrounds, who they are and where they come from, and in some instances this awareness helps them to shape up their behaviour to avoid disappointing their hardworking mothers. In the same poem, Bathobile wrote the following:



Bathobile's stanza above, written in both isiZulu and English, says "*father left us saying that he was going to buy milk and / bread but he never came back for us."* This is how some families break up, particularly in the townships where this research was conducted. Some men just abandon their families. For some it is the fear of responsibility while for others it is new women in their lives. This leaves the burden of looking after the family on women. Being raised by single mothers affects the way these adolescents think about family, and Bathobile's poem shows how her mother has shaped her identity or her sense of self.

Similar to Bathobile, Bonolo narrates in her long poem (Appendix G) how important her mother is. She also talks about her mother being a blessing to her and someone irreplaceable in her life. Just like Bathobile, Bonolo uses translanguaging in her poem. In stanza 2, there is a shift between English and isiXhosa. In English, the first two lines can be rendered as follows: "*your love, mother, breaks through all rivers and you love me for not doing anything"*. The translanguaging theory posits that in a bilingual person's mind, languages are not separated; the bilingual individuals can employ these linguistic resources whenever they are needed for communication purposes (Makalela, 2015). Makalela (2015) notes that there is a relationship between language

and identity. Bathobile and Bonolo's poems show the shuffle between different spaces of self to articulate thoughts in different languages. The reflective journals gave learners an opportunity to decide who they wanted to become at any given time through using their linguistic repertoires.

Under the theme of love emerges friendship as a topic the learners featured in their poems. While some of the adolescents experienced challenges with friendship, there were others whose friendships blossomed. For example, Kamohelo (Appendix H) appreciated the friend's care, kindness, reliability, and non-judgmental attitude. As postulated by Cherry (2021), friendship with peers is positively related to adolescents' identity development because it inhibits sluggishness in the identity exploration process. Kamohelo's poem seems to harmonise with this assertion. Kamohelo stated in the first stanza of her poem: "*I can rely on you whenever I fall / I know you shall lift my mood up*." In these lines, she was clearly expressing how much she valued her friend. It also shows the importance of having someone whom you can rely on during difficult times. This kind of support helps adolescents who are passing through difficult times to have comfort when they need it the most. However, they should also not entirely depend on peers because if they fail to develop their unique identities, they may not be able to resist peer pressure and negative influences. Cherry (2021) notes the importance of analysing a group's behaviour because failure to do so may lead to some adolescents indulging in delinquent behaviour. Kamohelo's poem shows that even though there was support from the friend, there was also a sense of independence as they sometimes fought with each other or had arguments, as stated in stanza 4 of the poem. This is evidence that inasmuch as adolescents crave peer approval, they also value a sense of individuality in thinking. Adolescence is a complex process as adolescents explore different aspects of life in relation to societal expectations. While this is a continuous process, it helps adolescents to develop the essential skills needed for a strong sense of self and navigate the world in a more authentic and fulfilling way.

As discussed earlier in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, adolescence is a challenging time as children go through physical and emotional changes in their lives where they are trying

to figure out where they fit. Self-love poems which were written by some participants show that they had been hurt in the past and they were doing introspections in the process of identifying who they were. For example, Bathobile had this to say: "*I know I am crazy / crazy in love with myself / no one loves me better than myself / this I have realised.*" Similarly, Bonolo wrote: "*I looked in the mirror / I saw a beautiful and innocent girl / a reflection of my past / accomplishments mixed with mistake*s." This is an indication that these adolescents had experienced some difficult times as they grew up. Pfeifer and Berkman (2018) note that adolescents are concerned about others' perceptions of them and also frequently report of self-consciousness. However, the poems by Bathobile and Bonolo indicate that these adolescents have learned self-love as a mechanism for dealing with personal challenges.

7.4.2 Theme 2: Socio-economic issues

Mbithi-Dikgole (2021) points out some of the socio-economic challenges faced by South Africans. Many of these, which include poverty, violence, unemployment, pain and suffering, recur in the learners' independent poems. Some of the poems were discussed under section 7.4 above as they were responding to some of the prescribed poems. For example, the poem by Ayanda brings out the issue of child neglect and homelessness that South Africa is battling with. This relates to the subtheme of violence. In the poem written in isiZulu by Ayanda, she comforts herself about the violence committed on children. Repeatedly, Ayanda wrote: "*Once they have taken him away they will not bring him back*." Even though this poem was responding to a prescribed poem taught in class, it is worth revisiting here because it speaks directly to the issue of violence and sidelining it would not do justice to the analysis of the socio-economic theme. In South Africa, a child goes missing almost on a daily basis. Some children's bodies are later found dumped, mutilated and sexually abused while others are never found. The caregivers patiently wait knowing very well that once a child is taken, the chances of being brought back alive are slim; but they stay hopeful until they face reality. To vividly capture the trauma of this experience, Ayanda kept repeating "*xola ntliziyo yam*", meaning "be at peace, my soul". Lorrain, Betty and Bonolo also bring out the issue of the suffering of children in their reflective pieces. Bonolo and Betty took a slightly different approach where the children's suffering is

caused by unconducive living conditions. Bonolo wrote: "*Children are in danger because of their weak immune system.*" This might mean that this is violence against children perpetrated by the authorities who do not take the children into consideration when it comes to service delivery in high-density suburbs. In addition, Bonolo talked about children who suffer because of domestic violence. In her writing, Bonolo stated: "*The mother and father fight but all frustration is offloaded on the child*." The domestic abuse of children is a serious problem in South Africa. Stories are in the media most of the times of men that kill children together with their mothers. It is evident that this issue affects and concerns adolescents and they respond to it through poetry.

Violence in general is a serious concern in South Africa. These violent crimes are in different categories. The 2021/2022 crime statistic report from South Africa included in contact crimes (i.e. crime against the person) only murder and bodily assault and reported a total number of 145 120 cases, which sits at 60.6% (Republic of South Africa, 2022). These violent crimes are not sparing the adolescents; neither are these adolescents' eyes blind to what is happening around them. In a heartrending poem, another participant vividly illustrated how dangerous weapons fuel violence, capturing the nature of crimes committed in South Africa. A stanza of the poem is presented below.

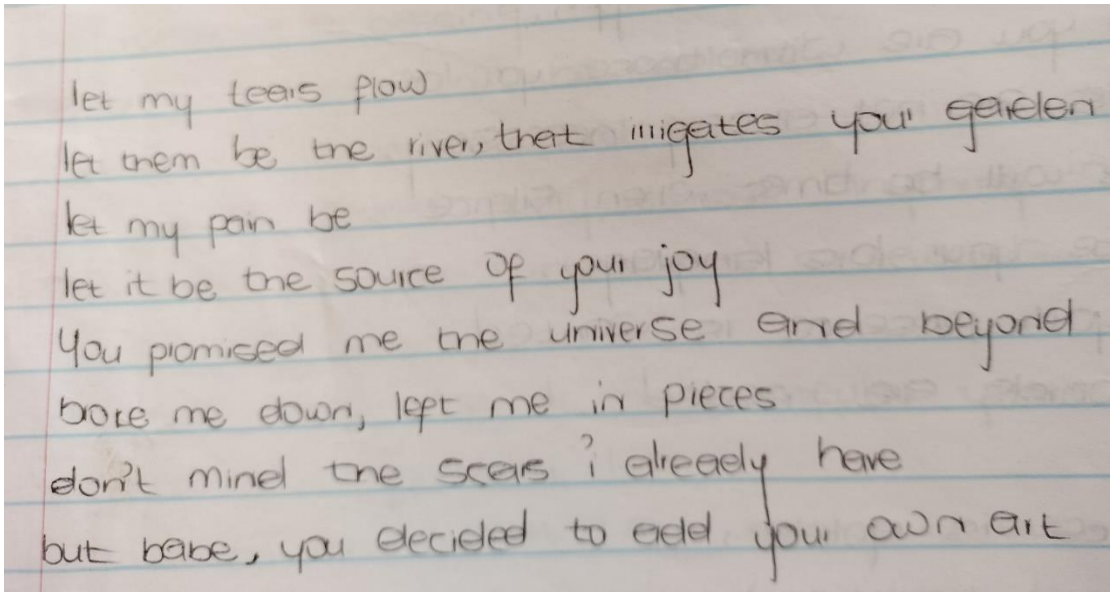
It can strike you without warning
No warning like a gunshot from behind
Yet it is all the same
It all hurts

This stanza reminds us of the Promulgation of Dangerous Weapons Act of 2013 which considers knives of different types to be dangerous as they are capable of causing death or serious bodily harm. Sonia's poem shows how serious crime is in South Africa. The stanza above sends shockwaves when people think about how unsafe they are in South Africa. It shows that one can never be smart enough to look after themselves because violence can strike anytime and it does not give warning. Sonia also likens a knife to a gun and these are the weapons that are usually used in South Africa to commit crime.

Gender-based violence is another subtheme that persists in the poems that participants wrote. Republic of South Africa (2022) recorded a total of 12 702 for the period April 2021 to June 2022 under the sexual offences category. To show how serious this problem is, the South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, has verbally condemned gender-based violence against women and even declared it a national crisis – another pandemic alongside Covid-19. This means that the voices raised in the poems by the adolescents who participated in my research are worth listening to. Violence of any nature is characterised by deep pain, as narrated in Mbalenhle's long poem titled "My apologies dear sister" (Appendix H). In this poem, Mbalenhle apologises to a sister whom she could not help. Gender-based violence is a widespread problem in South Africa. Mbalenhle laments her powerlessness and cowardice which sees her incapable of defending a suffering sister. This poem indirectly advocates for women to fight for one another and condemns the sister's husband for not being "man enough" and for not being "open minded." These quoted phrases illustrate the comments that women tend to direct at abusive men. However, many women fail to take action other than feeling sorry for themselves and giving a shoulder to the 'sister' victims to cry on. The question is: does feeling sorry for yourself and the 'sister' victim end gender-based violence? Obviously, not. There is need for all stakeholders to fully participate in demonising gender based violence. The awareness campaigns should not leave out the curriculum. As discussed in Chapters 1, 3 and 6, the way the English Grade 11 poetry selection is done excludes women from the definition of canon. Black African women were completely excluded from the poetry prescribed for Grade 11 learners in the year 2021. Without role models and representation in the curriculum, girls' identity development is not fostered as they are indirectly made to continuously believe that they are living in men's world, where men rule and make decisions while women abide. This means that lack of confidence in the girls is perpetuated by the canon that sidelines women from the English FAL poetry curriculum. The poems written by these adolescents showing the problems of gender based violence suggest that poetry by young South African women needs to be included in the curriculum. It is one way to make the curriculum relevant in the lives of these adolescent learners.

Gender based violence is generally recognised as a public concern while little attention is given to dating violence among adolescence. This is another subtheme that features prominently in the personal poems written by the participants for this study. It therefore suggests that this is an area that will require further research. Before discussing the learners' poems, it is necessary to contextualise dating violence as it happens among the age group that was at the centre of this study. In their study, Gardner et al (2015) discovered that sexual violence was largely perpetuated by males associated with the traditional patriarchal system. Nkealah (2013) explains the nature of patriarchy, that it keeps women's behaviour under constant surveillance while men possess all power and privilege. Therefore, dating violence predominantly sees girls as the victims. African cultures tend to place value in the male figure of the society while women are expected to be submissive. Data from the reflective journals show that because of this honour given to males, boy children seem to take authority over their female counterparts from early ages. Therefore, the gender based violence being condemned in the society today may mean that we are treating the symptoms rather than the cause. Moreso, preaching against gender based violence without addressing the imbalances in the poetry curriculum is hardly effective. If the poems with the same themes emerging from the data presented in the journals were studied in the Grade 11 English FAL class, an awareness of the evil of any form of violence would sink in the boys' minds. Patriarchal boys might change the way they see the world. In support of this argument, Kroger (2006) acknowledges that poetry helps people to interpret the world the way they experience it. Therefore, the learners' reflective pieces, irrespective of the genre in which they are presented, are a call for help.

The journals gave the participants a space to express their hidden emotions. For example, Bonolo in her long poem (Appendix I) narrated the pain of dating violence. In the first stanza, she equated the flow of her tears to the river that irrigated the boyfriend's garden. Juxtaposing tears and garden shows that in this relationship, there is one who is benefiting while the other is suffering. The poem suggests that girls are trapped in relationships where they later suffocate but do not have a way out. A stanza vividly showing the pain of dating violence was written by Bonolo as follows:



Bonolo's poem above shows that some girls might be lured into relationships by the promise of material gifts. They fall for the trap assuming that their lives may be better. All of the participants in this study were learners who came from townships where people experienced severe economic hardships. Some boys get into gangs and steal from the affluent suburbs nearby. Having taught in this area for more than 10 years, I have had experiences with learners writing essays on their stealing escapades. I encouraged them to maintain moral values even in their creativity, only to learn from them that this was not creativity but their real-life experiences. Township schoolboys are also popularly known for money games such as dicing and cards. Scott and Barr (2013) in their study showed that this money game was the major source of income among the unemployed. Because it is sometimes a violent game, girls normally do not do gambling. They fall in love with the boys with money, thinking that the few rands received might help them. In addition to the social belief which holds boys at a higher esteem, the scenario of a girl without money being at the mercy of a boy with money gives that boy more power. The words in the above stanza, *"broke me down," "left me in pieces"* and "*scars*" point to the physical abuse and emotional violence that girls suffer in the hands of boys while dating. Further, Bonolo says, "…*scars that I already have / instead you chose to add your own art*". This shows that some girls get into relationships with burdens thinking that these will be alleviated but not knowing that they will be worsened. These burdens include unwanted babies from rape or previous relationships, broken hearts, loneliness, and abject poverty. These burdens and a

curriculum that is silent about them do not help girls to have the strength to move out of abusive dating relationships. Instead, they solemnise the abuse. For example, Bonolo refers to the added scars as art. These added scars could be referring to physical bodily injuries and the girl chooses to lighten it up by calling it art. Art is something beautiful that one would want to fix their eyes on, not injuries. However, this tells us that we might be looking at a society that needs a total revamp so that girls see their worth.

Camouflaging girls' experiences of abuse in the hands of partners as art does not mean that the girls did not see how wrong this was. In stanza 2, Bonolo referred to the partner as having "*demons of ego, selfishness and anger*" that were all feeding on her life organs. This is a heartbreaking observation which implies that many girls are giving up on their lives in the name of love. In a calm tone, Bonolo stated: "*Do it again love / if it gives you peace / do it again babe, and watch me fade away*." These words are meant to instigate some consciousness in the perpetrator's mind so that they do an introspection and withdraw from their ill-behaviour. However, it is unfortunate that this hardly ever happens. In a society where many women die in the hands of men, this poem paints a vivid picture of the women's traumatic experiences before they die. The pleas that do not receive the positive response denote how these perpetrators dehumanise women and think that they can just kill them willy-nilly.

There is evidence in Bonolo's poem that many young women in South Africa, particularly in the context in which this study was carried out, are led to their graves because of lack of self-awareness and boldness to stand up for themselves. There is also evidence of verbal abuse in relationships as Bonolo wrote, "*you deepen the knife of your betrayal / with pointy sharp words*." Surprisingly, Bonolo referred to the boyfriend as "babe" and "love." One can tell that even though the girls can tell that the people that they are dealing with are psychopaths, they think that they will change if they are shown love, hence the showering of sweet nothings amidst violence. Bonolo wrote: "*continue if that makes you human again*." This realisation of lack of human behaviour in the men's behaviours is a big step in the right direction towards creating sanity in the society which is tainted by gender based violence. Some of the reasons

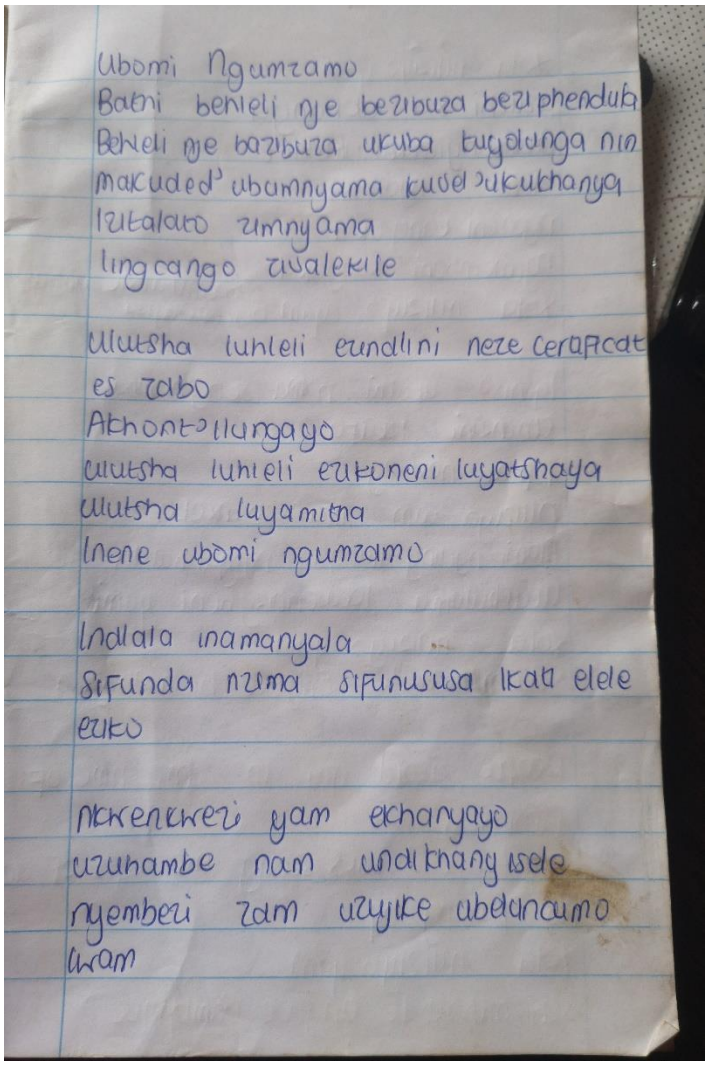
why the girls seem to be glued to these violent relationships is lack of confidence and failure to realise their value. Benton (1999) points to poetry being the printed voice of the poet and a narrative account of their own ideas, feelings and impressions. Therefore, connecting to the voice of the poet is one way that learners can do a self-examination and develop their own perspectives on identity and the surrounding world. This means that the Grade 11 English FAL poetry canon should be restructured so that it takes cognizance of its recipients. A relevant canon can give adolescents real life lessons on how to address some of these challenges.

In a different poem by another participant, Bathobile (Appendix J), there is evidence that some girls are dumped by boyfriends for no good reason. This is also another form of violence experienced by these teenagers. This may go back to the patriarchal system which allows the male figure to escape accountability in situations that involve dating as the male is seen to be supreme and can date as many women as he wants without considering their emotions. The females in these types of relationships tend to blame themselves for being left by the partner. This could also be another reason why girls in Bonolo's poem hold on to abusive relationships. In Bathobile's poem, the persona speculates that maybe she had been left because she did not keep her hair neat or she loved too much. Similarly, Mbalenhle (Appendix K) wondered what wrong she did to the partner who never said anything but just showed hatred in his eyes. Every second line of the three stanzas is a question: "*What did I ever do to you*?" Mbalenhle also wrote that she searched for clues to find out what wrong she did but found nothing. She even went to the extent of asking for forgiveness for the wrongdoing that she was not aware of. Just like Bonolo, Mbalenhle and Bathobile, Neo also pictured love as enslaving and dangerous (Annexure L). Neo wrote of being "chained" and "pinned" in a relationship where impossibilities were expected from her. Neo blamed her ignorance on the characteristics of love. She grew up to see love as suffering and pain because this is the definition that she got in her early dating experiences. Neo's poem reiterates the issue of self-blame that has been identified in other participants' poems, because she concluded her poem by saying: "*I've just been a love idiot*." All these pains are added to the turmoil that adolescents are grappling with during this delicate stage of their lives. The recurring of this theme illuminates the rampant dating violence that girls go through. To heal these pains, a relevant canon

for Grade 11 English FAL poetry is a necessity, because poetry appeals to the hidden emotions and heals the soul. Without addressing the canon, South African adolescents may continue to experience different forms of violence. Otwambe et al. (2015) found out that violence among adolescents in South Africa is on the rise. Therefore, a solution is required urgently.

Still on the subtheme of dating violence, Bontle in her poem pleaded with God to provide her with peace, love, joy and hands to wipe off tears (Appendix M). Bontle saw this problem as a continental crisis which has gone beyond human control and now requires divine intervention. In her poem, Bontle suggested that children and women are the most people suffering. Violence is something that people cannot give a blind eye to. This tells us that having poems with relatable themes that deal with socio-economic challenges may help adolescents to connect with the world and to see themselves as change agents rather than instruments that can be used to fuel violence. On the other hand, Bathobile's different poem titled "Betrayal" (Appendix N) shows another form of violence between friends. During adolescence, people value friendship and always want to be a part of a group (Erikson, 1963). Bathobile blamed the friend for having an evil heart and leaving her alone in this cruel and selfish world. However, this poem takes a turn and shows elements of coping with loss of friendship and the boldness to leave a toxic relationship. Bathobile wrote: "*You broke my heart and spirit / Always it's better with you gone infront / of me because I won't get hurt / I learnt to hold my heart carefuully because of you*." This shows that girls adopt a different approach to bravery and self-protection in same gender friendships as opposed to dating relationships with men. The poem points to maturity, self-awareness and healthy conflict-resolution strategies among women. One then wonders where the curriculum designers are getting lost by not considering women's poetry, particularly Black African women's poetry, for inclusion in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry curriculum. Should these young women be properly guided by the curriculum and have role models of strong women represented in poetry, they may be inspired to stand up against gender based violence. At present, the patriarchal curriculum is not helping both boys and girls to develop their identities.

Poverty is another subtheme that kept recurring in learners' poems. For example, the poem below written in isiZulu narrates the life challenges faced by young people.



Life is an endeavour

They just sit there wondering

They just sit wondering when it's going to be alright

The streets are dark

The doors are locked

Youth are sitting on their certificates

Nothing is coming alright

Young people sitting in the corners smoking

Teens get pregnant

Indeed, life is an endeavour

Hunger is shameful

We study hard to chase away the cat sleeping

At the fireplace

My shining star

Walk with me and enlighten me

Turn my tears into my smile

The poem above brings out the reality of youth unemployment in South Africa despite young people possessing academic qualifications. This could be one of the reasons why South Africa experiences high crime rates. Due to unemployment, many end up taking toxic substances as mentioned by Otwambe et al. (2015), while girls get pregnant. All this leads to abject poverty. This poverty is best described in the idiom "*… ikati ilele eziko*", meaning that when the fireplace is not in use, a cat can sleep there to warm itself. In the African traditional kitchens, the fireplace can only be hot if there is fire made to cook something. The poem therefore suggests that when youth cannot find employment after studying hard to acquire degrees, they become disillusioned and degenerate into criminals.

7.4.3 Theme 3: Lamentations

Learners' passionate expressions of sorrow, pain and grief is evident in the data collected through the journals. As discussed in Chapter 1, adolescents carry heavy baggage on their shoulders. In the communities where this study was conducted, death has ravaged many homes and thrown some children into despair. These turbulences may require a benign sanctuary provided by poetry, as well as an avenue for these strong emotions to be let out. Letting out these strong sensations is not only therapeutic but can also provide an academic advantage. For example, in the poem written by Ayanda titled "A Bridge With Bad Memories" (Appendix E), there is evidence that the learners used poetry as an outlet for strong emotions. Metaphorical language is used in this poem, signifying that one of the benefits of poetry writing is the improvement of learner's creative writing skills. This affirms the view by Creely (2019) that poetry can improve creative writing skills among additional language learners. The poem suggests the learner's encounter with a bad experience, most likely death because line 2 talks about the souls being taken. The sunset in stanza 1 might also be referring to death. The inclusion of the isiZulu line *Umhlaba awunoni* in line 4 shows the learner's deep emotion in response to death. This African expression can be translated to English to mean that the earth does not grow fat. In other words, a grave is like an open mouth that keeps swallowing but never gets satisfied. This refers to the insatiable desire of death: it keeps taking everyone, irrespective of their age or gender. Death is among the challenges that young adolescents in the townships battle with on a daily basis. As stated earlier in Chapters 1 and 6, some of the families in the communities where the selected research sites were located were child-headed families because the parents had died. These adolescents from these communities therefore battle with feelings of loss, pain and sorrow. They need something to soothe their troubled hearts and poetry can provide this comfort. This is the reason why this thesis advocates for poems that speak to these adolescents' life experiences. With comforting poems that speak to the heart, these adolescents might have the strength to face the future with hope.

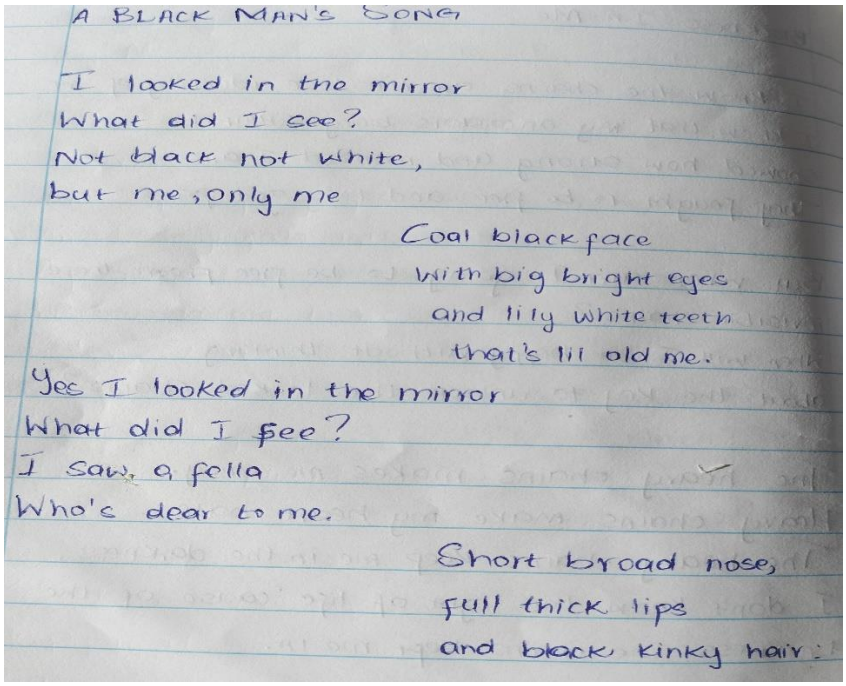
While other participants wrote poems in appreciation of their living mothers, showing how they are their pillars of strength as analysed earlier under theme 1, and some participants wrote poems of grief mourning the deaths of their beloved ones. Under the theme of lamentations is Ayanda's emotional poem titled "Dear My Child" (Appendix F). What is unique about this poem is that it is the deceased's voice that is heard. In stanza 1, the deceased mother says to her child: *"I am saddened and broken as I write to you / I'm sorry I could not get a chance to raise you*". Poetry, as stated in Chapter 2, helps people to express the inexpressible. It gives the writer an opportunity to express hidden emotions. Parents are important in every child's life because they help the child to develop their identities and when children struggle emotionally, parents are there to calm and guide them. However, this is not the case with many South African children. Department of Statistics South Africa (2022) notes that about 21.3% of children below the age 17 years do not live with their parents. Ayanda's poem is a reflection of the South African predicament where children are left to fend for themselves after the death of their mothers or fathers while the children are still very young. These children suffer trauma which might be perpertuated by a curriculum that is mum about these social issues. This thesis is therefore justified to lobby for a new poetry canon for English FAL – a canon that mirrors South African learners' lived experiences and has the potential to help adolescents who are facing life difficulties to heal. There is evidence in this data that poetry writing among adolescents can furnish them with a safe space that allows them to accept themselves and share their personal experiences (Jocson, 2006). This means that with a relevant canon and multimodal pedagogy, adolescents can have conducive spaces that enable their voices to be heard rather than being stifled in a canon that is old and male-dominated.

7.4.4 Theme 4: Identity negotiations

The data shows that the Black adolescents who participated in this study knew their identity, appreciated who they were and saw themselves in a more positive light. South Africa is a nation with a disturbing racial discrimination history. Even though, in principle, people talk about the rainbow nation, in practice there are many reports of racism in the media. These racial attacks are being experienced even in some schools, even though the schools where this study was carried out are not included because

there are no white people living in these townships. However, the adolescents hear stories of their fellow Black learners being ill-treated in schools that are white-dominated. Responding to these real-life experiences in poetry shows how these adolescents are developing their identities and finding positions for themselves. Erikson's (1968) stage 5 of identity versus identity confusion states that adolescents who are able to answer the questions who am I, what do others think about me and what right choices can I make will successfully develop their identities.

Notably, four poems out of the total 18 journals from School A and B focus on the theme of identity. In Chapter 1, I gave a plethora of definitions for identity including one by Johnstone (2008) who asserts that most research has drawn gender, nationality and race as the most important aspects associated with social identities. Furthermore, identity is looked at in terms of one's performance which highlight one's responsibility towards their actions, and their personal identity is found to be complemented by the social. Based on this interconnectedness of personal and social identities, adolescents' identity development can be viewed as an authentic individual personality which enables an adolescent to move with purpose and direction in life. Self-awareness is the root of identity development. Neo's poem below titled "A Black Man's Song" is in appreciation of the self.


A BLACK MAN'S SONG

I looked in the mirror
What did I see?
Not black not white,
but me, only me

Coal black face
With big bright eyes
and lily white teeth
that's lil old me.

Yes I looked in the mirror
What did I see?
I saw a fella
Who's dear to me.

Short broad nose,
full thick lips
and black kinky hair:

The use of a song to express one's self poetically is consistent with Johnson (2012) who acknowledges that the traditional African community used poetry and song to attend to daily life activities, to give sounds to joy and sorrow, to orient a child to the community, to give a comment on life, and simply to entertain. The same genre is used by 21st century Hip Hop musicians whose music is poetic, such as Kasper Nyovest mentioned earlier in Chapter 1. The nature of Neo's poem also aligns with spoken word poetry which has its roots in African oral poetry (d'Abdon, 2016). The ABAB rhyme in the first stanza and the use of a rhetorical question shows the ability of the learner to manipulate language for a purpose. In addition, the full description of a Black man in the poem shows how the speaker is proud of who they are with their "*coal black face / short broad nose / full thick lips / and black kinky hair*".

Neo's self-appreciation is complemented by Bontle in the poem "You Are Beautiful, Child" (Appendix N). Bontle points out how people are beautifully unique, regardless of race, religion or body shape. The third stanza of the poem encourages the child to be proud in their skin and to shine bright in their body. Kamohelo in a free verse poem titled "A Young Black Woman" wrote:

I might not have the longest hair

But I am the strongest girl

Of all the voices in the world

Mine might not be the loudest

Of all the faces in the world

Mine might not be the brightest

But I fight for being the darkest.

The racial identities brought out in the poems by Neo and Bontle show what learners would want to hear in their English FAL poetry classrooms: their proud Black identities. In a society that is polarised by the legacy of the apartheid system and the effects of racial segregation are still in existence, poems like these empower a Black child who has always been seen as inferior and less human. In a long self-love poem (Appendix I) discussed under 7.5.1, Bonolo insists on loving one's self and tracing back to see

where one might have lost themselves, pick themselves up and love who they are. This is important, particularly among Black adolescents who are fragile and can easily break if they do not get support during this phase of life.

All the themes analysed in this section show that the Grade 11 learners were being subjected to poetry that was divorced from their everyday life experiences. Their own written poems indicate that they were concerned about love – love for their family members, self-love and love for their communities which is linked to *Ubuntu*; they were distressed by socio-economic issues such as hunger, youth unemployment, child homelessness, poverty, crime and violence; they lamented about their experiences of loss, death, pain and betrayal; and finally they expressed self-appreciation and self-awareness as part of their identity negotiation. These are important poetry subjects that are stifled in the Grade 11 English FAL canon and this calls for action.

7.5 Discussion of findings

The data presented and analysed in this chapter has revealed several key findings. Overall, the data has revealed that the adolescents who participated in this study had challenges with the prescribed Grade 11 English FAL poems. However, the adolescents had some ways of escaping these curriculum challenges, such as writing their own poems. This section interprets the findings from the learners' journals in light of the literature and theoretical frameworks.

7.5.1 Unrelatable canon as a hindrance to adolescents' ego identity development

One of the key findings in this chapter is that the Grade 11 English FAL learners involved in this study struggled to relate to canonical poems, as evident in their journal entries analysed above. Their inability to relate to the canon therefore posed a hindrance to the development of their ego identity. Erikson (1968) points out that identities are formed starting from infancy and these are built upon and modified as people grow up. However, if wrong decisions are taken during adolescence, they may

lead to failure in life. This failure may be in relation to academic performance, everyday problem solving, and relationship management. Thus, children's background is crucial in their ego identity formation. This background carries along the school setup which is expected to mirror learners' societal experiences (Freire, 1970). There is evidence in the presented data that to a larger extent, adolescents in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom were exposed to a canon they could not relate to. The poems in their prescribed textbook addressed issues that were divorced from much of their lived experiences. For example, even though the majority of participants could relate to the poem "Shantytown" which is South African based, some learners like Phila and Sebabatso from School A expressed different opinions in their journals. When Sebabatso said, "*As for me there is nothing to compare this poem to, especially in my life*", this sentiment suggests that the poem did nothing to enhance the learner's sense of self. It means that this type of canon limits adolescent learners' opportunities for exploration, self-discovery and growth. From a theoretical point of view, as discussed by Erikson (1968), identity can mean a conscious sense of one's uniqueness, an unconscious striving for continuity of experiences or a solidarity with a group's ideals. Ego identity then is formed from childhood and nurtured by society. This ego identity helps the adolescent to make meaning of their past and present and to connect this with their sense of reality, of the self and social reality. However, if adolescents are made to study poetry that limits their imaginations owing to its presentation of alien experiences, this can affect their ego identity development. Thus, the absence of learners' experiences in the curriculum creates a wall between academics and real-life experiences. Because of this, learners fail to associate with this classroom poetry and consequently miss all the benefits that poetry offers.

From the analysis presented earlier, only a handful of learners indicated in their journals that they could relate to the poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge", by comparing early morning London to early morning life in the townships. Their comparisons could however be seen as forced, or as a desperate attempt on their part to make the poem meaningful in their context. The Western canon therefore makes adolescents struggle to form a robust sense of self as they feel pressured to accept the dominant messages and perspectives in the canonical poems, even if these do not resonate with their own experiences and values. The results presented in this

chapter illustrate that if adolescent voices, perspectives and experiences are excluded from the dominant narratives of a culture, valuable insights that help adolescents to understand themselves and the world around them better can be missed. The slanted imaginations in poetry can be a hindrance to adolescents' ego identity development, in accordance with Hanratty (2008), Rorty (2017) and Godsell (2019) who all agree that imagination and language can be the base of all human advancement.

In addition, the results reveal that the canon that is not relatable also presented incomprehensible language. An example is Sonia's reflection on the poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" where she stated: "*I don't really get the message of this poem*". This is not surprising because the poem is old; even those who reside in London today may struggle to create images of a smokeless London. This is even more difficult for a Grade 11 English FAL learner from a South African township whose longest journey might have been to get into Johannesburg city. A canon that emphasizes the importance of other cultures at the expense of learners' own cultures does not only make adolescents to feel that their own perspectives and beliefs are invalid but it also hinders them from developing their ego identity.

7.5.2 Poetry canon as the reason for adolescents' identity stagnation

When adolescents fail to develop their ego identity due to a canon that is overly reliant on old men's poetry, they may experience identity stagnation. They may feel disconnected from and uninvolved with the society. According to Erikson (1968), identity stagnation means that the individual has no ambition and lacks a sense of fulfillment in life. With a distant canon that does not speak to the South African English FAL learners' experiences, the learners may struggle to explore their individuality. There is evidence in the results presented in this chapter that the masculinist canon leaves little room for learners to delve into subjects that are important for their identity development, such as gender based violence. Examining this from Erikson's (1968) theoretical point of view, one can argue that the canon imposed upon the Grade 11 English FAL learners conflicts with the adolescents' needs. The canon is not in support

of the adolescents' identity development, as evidenced by the entries in the learners' journals.

A total of 18 out of 90 learners who participated in this study wrote and submitted their journals. On the one hand, this can be seen as an indication that the majority of the learners did not have anything to reflect on, hence they snubbed the activity. On the other hand, it can also be read as evidence of the learners' identity stagnation as a result of the canon.

7.5.3 Poetry canon as perpetuating adolescents' identity crisis

The results presented in this chapter show that adolescents can have identity crisis because of the prescribed canon. According to Erikson (1968), a time of identity crisis is when an adolescent gets into confusion and fails to identify their role in the society and to develop a sense of self. This confusion can be caused by failure to express their innermost feelings, emotions and experiences. The classroom environment in which many adolescents in South Africa find themselves, especially classrooms where the teacher uses the traditional pedagogy, show little appreciation for the learners' perceptions. This is perpetuated by the canon that is prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL learners. As previously discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, canon refers to the set of poems considered to be most important and influential in a particular time and place. These texts are regarded worthy of appreciation and cultural emulation. However, the results of this study show that the poetry texts prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL learners in the year 2021 were not only old and masculinist but they were also not worth emulating as ideal art. Hence, the majority of learners who participated in the writing of journals indicated that they did not relate to the prescribed poems taught to them and thus some of them wrote their own poems, using their own styles which included the embedding of song into poetic composition.

The data shows that poetry was not new to learners in the classes where this research was conducted but the prescribed poetry did not align with the learners' experiences,

creating a crisis of identity as learners did not see themselves reflected in the canon. As mentioned in earlier chapters, some of these Grade 11 adolescents had a poetic background and understanding, which enabled them to appreciate some of the poetic devices and to enjoy the sound of the taught poems even without comprehending the meaning. Tshepo, for example, admired the use of figures of speech and the rhyming patterns used in the poems. This was not surprising because many of the adolescents were attuned to Hip Hop music which is rhythmical in nature. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, the learners in the community where the research was conducted took the popular musician Casper Nyovest as a role model and most of them mimic his music. During the time that I carried out my master's research in the same community, learners who were participants in the research indicated that they "express their emotions through music and their music is written in stanzas or verses with rhyme and rhythm just like poetry" (Mavhiza, 2019, p.43). It is for this reason that scholars like d'Abdon (2016), Genis (2019), and d'Abdon, Byrne and Newfield (2020) are calling for the infusion of Indigenous poetry practices into the South African English curriculum. Such a transformation of the canon is one step towards curbing the identity crisis that the current canon is creating among adolescent learners.

7.5.4 The English FAL poetry curriculum as ideology

There is evidence from the data presented and analysed in this chapter that the design and implementation of curriculum is intrinsically linked to the ideological and political beliefs of those who hold power. Individuals can only grow where societies are democratic. This growth, according to Freire (1993), does not favour the oppressor; therefore, manipulation through intellectual censorship is one way the oppressor ensures that they maintain power. While CAPS notes that the English FAL curriculum intends to introduce learners to a diverse range of poetic forms, styles and themes (Department of Basic Education, 2011), there is evidence from the results presented in this chapter that this curriculum has biases and limitations which make it ideological.

One of the findings of this study is that the poetry canon prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL learners is Eurocentric. This Eurocentricism can be seen as a form of

colonialism where Western poetry is used as a benchmark for what is considered intelligent and valuable. The Eurocentric curriculum signals to the English FAL learners who participated in this study that their own poets and poetry are not worthy of study or appreciation. The poetry in the canon does not align with values that are considered acceptable by the South African Black learners. South African adolescents have many personal and socio-economic challenges that they experience, as discussed in Chapter 1. To address these challenges, the canon should broaden its horizons to include more contemporary poetry that supports learners' socially acceptable values and beliefs. There is need for a canon that is relevant and one that speaks to the South African adolescents' lives. Freire (1970, p. 173) believed that education could create a "world of possibilities" for learners. However, this can only materialise if learners are given an opportunity to contribute to what they want to learn and how they want to learn it in class. This means that the canon should mirror the social issues that adolescents battle with in their everyday lives. In contrast to this, the 2021 canon proved to be more ideological than practical.

7.5.5 Poetry writing as an enhancer of transformative learning

There is evidence in this study that poetry writing can lead to personal growth and transformation for learners. Writing of own poems provided learners with safe spaces to express hidden emotions and for the audience to gain access to the usually unheard voices of these learners. These are the same voices that are suppressed in the curriculum. This chapter has however presented evidence that Grade 11 English FAL learners can write their own poems; they are quite capable of expressing their thoughts and emotions in poetry using various languages. This escape from the rigid curriculum helps adolescents to converse in writing about issues that they experience on a daily basis. Issues such as death, loss, unrequited love, unemployment, poverty, violence, sadness/sorrow, pain/grief, and betrayal are some of the key issues emerging from learners' own poems. In addition, through their own poems, learners raised their voices and asserted their identities. Findings in this study prove that the prescribed poetry was difficult even for teachers, thus attracting a book-centred teaching approach. If the poetry curriculum proves to be grueling even for the good teachers,

then it cannot be easy for learners. However, there is evidence in the data that learners' own poems helped them to break through these curriculum barriers.

Giving the adolescents opportunities to write their own poems helped them to break away from the curriculum. The data presented and analysed above shows that Indigenous languages that are often pushed to the periphery in pursuit of learning the targeted language of learning and teaching, which is English, were brought to the fore in the learners' journals. This process of analysing and interpreting the world through poetry writing does not only positively influence adolescents' identity development but it also provides adolescents with the tools to challenge their existing beliefs and explore alternative perceptions (Freire,1970). This can lead to transformative learning as it challenges the learners to think beyond what they see in their prescribed poetry. In a way, the prescribed canon suppresses learners' voices but through their own poems there is transformative learning. As Freire (1970, p. 69) states, "dialogue cannot occur...between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them." Through expressing their desired themes, learners showed willingness to engage in a dialogue where they could contribute to their own learning.

7.5.6 The role of poetry writing in promoting learners' critical consciousness

Poetry is an important tool for critical consciousness. This study has shown that through metaphorical language, linguistic play and emphasis on personal experiences, poetry can enhance adolescent learners' critical consciousness. There is evidence in this study of learners challenging the dominant narratives. The use of their own Indigenous languages in poetry writing and the articulation of their own subjects of interest, which were not found in the prescribed canon, was a challenge to the established norms. Learners' poems also allowed marginalised voices to get an audience. According to Freire (1970, p. 53), this unveiling of "challenging reality" is the object of the oppressed's transforming action. The results presented in this chapter have revealed that the Grade 11 English FAL learners were imprisoned in the canon but they found a way to get out. Metaphorically, Robinson and Aronica (2016) point to

the schooling system as a prison that has failed young people. The learners' journal reflections demonstrate their understanding of the dichotomy between the world of the canon and their own real world, which is why they wrote their own poems about the things that mattered to them. This act shows their courage to challenge the canon; it demonstrates their critical consciousness.

The reflective journals allowed learners an opportunity to express themselves in their Indigenous languages, which is also evidence of their critical consciousness. Embracing multilingualism does not only give learners a voice but it also gives them an opportunity to identify who they are. Erikson (1968, p. 22) notes that "identities are influenced by culture, history and power and located in the core of the individual and the core of her communal culture." This means that language being part of human culture plays a significant role in identity development. A famous quotation by South Africa's former president Nelson Mandela reads: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." This means that when learners have opportunities to express themselves in their own languages, the space is created for them to realise that they have a culture and an identity beyond the prescribed text. Where there is acceptance of one's culture, it shows the humanism that Freire (1970) talks about. Poetry written in Indigenous languages is important because it helps in promoting multilingualism which is valuable, especially in South Africa where most classrooms are multilingual and multicultural. Contrary to Soudien (2007) who purports that most of the 21st century adolescents are moving away from their culture, the poems written in indigenous languages, which included African idioms and proverbs, show that African adolescents, especially the ones who participated in this study, still hold their languages in high esteem. That they see value in using their indigenous languages for poetry writing indicates their level of critical consciousness in not deferring to English at the expense of their mother-tongues.

7.6 Chapter summary

The data presented in this chapter intended to respond to my Research Question 3a (What challenges to identity formation do learners experience with the current cannon of poetry being taught in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?) and Research Question 3b (How do learners' own poetry help them to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities?). The data anlysis revealed that adolescents who participated in this study struggled with the rigid canon which is Eurocentric, outdated and masculinist. These challenges negatively impacted learners as these poems did not align with the adolescents' lived experiences, cultures, beliefs and values. The other most important finding is the language barrier in the current canon which stagnates English FAL poetry learners' identity formation and negatively affects the teachers' selected pedagogy. However, the results in this chapter have shown that through writing their own poems, choosing their most relevant themes and expressing themselves in their own languages, the adolescents were able to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities. The next chapter will discuss the key findings across all three data sets and their implications for pedagogy and canon.

Chapter 8

Cross-data Discussion of Findings

8.1 Introduction

The presentation, analysis and discussion of individual data sets in this study were provided in Chapters 5 to 7. Chapter 5 focused on the poetry lesson observations, Chapter 6 on participants' questionnaires, and Chapter 7 on participants' reflective journals. This chapter discusses the major findings of the study from all three data sets. In other words, a cross-data discussion of the study's findings is offered in this chapter. Overall, the study sought to find out how pedagogy and canon in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom affect learners' identity formation. This study was underpinned by Erikson's adolescents' identity development and Freire's critical pedagogy theories. Important concepts were drawn from these theories to interpret the research findings. This chapter consolidates the study's findings and interpretations. A revisit of my hypothesis will conclude this chapter.

8.2 Drawing together major findings and exploring the aim of the study

This study sought to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. With this aim of the study in mind, I present below a summary of the two pedagogies which were investigated in this study and then discuss their limitations and affordances for adolescents' identity development.

8.2.1 Traditional teaching method in School A

In School A, as stated before in Chapters 1 to 7, the teacher used the traditional teaching method. This teaching pedagogy is known as the old method or former way

of teaching. The approach views the teacher as the centre of knowledge and learners are on the receiving end. This means that the approach is a one-way flow of information (Khalaf, 2018). In Class A where the teacher used this approach, I observed that learner engagement was very limited. The teacher mainly focused on the book and gave learners instructions to answer some questions from the anthology or the ones that she wrote on the board. Because learner-teacher interaction was limited, this resulted in some learners not doing their work as expected. The pedagogy also negatively affected their attitudes towards English FAL poetry. In Class A, the majority of participants indicated disapproval of the pedagogy employed, found poetry unenjoyable in class, did not participate in class activities, lacked comprehension of the prescribed poetry and failed to recognise its applicability to their daily lives, as indicated in the questionnaires. The teacher used the banking method of teaching which Freire (1970, p. 213) describes as follows: "instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorise, and repeat." However, contrary to the obedience of learners alluded to in Freire's statement, some learners in Class A resorted to rebelliousness and resistance where, instead of patiently taking and implementing instructions from the teacher, they chose to do their own things – things which had nothing to do with poetry during the English poetry class. Some learners decided to whisper, chat with friends, do their Maths homework, sit idly, or play on their smartphones. The study shows that the teacher's role was clearly defined as she posed as the authority while learners were viewed as empty vessels waiting to be filled. As indicated in the questionnaires, 80% of the participants in Class A expressed disapproval of the teacher's pedagogy. This shows that the pedagogy employed yielded some negative results in learners' identity development.

8.2.2 Limitations and affordances of a traditional pedagogy

Traditional pedagogy may have some affordances even though its limitations outweigh them. To start with, within the South African English FAL curriculum, where the teacher is faced with loads of work and teaches for assessment, one would agree with Teacher A that this curriculum can best be managed with a traditional pedagogy. The traditional pedagogy can also be said to be effective at exerting authority over learners, thereby

curbing learners' ill-behaviour. This argument is however highly contested by the learners' behaviour in Class A, as observed in the lessons that formed part of this study. The learners were quiet, but they still did not do the work that the teacher gave them; instead, they focused on their phones, played with their hair, and chatted with friends. To drive the authoritative objective, the teacher continued to read poems and notes even when learners showed that they were not focusing. This shows that this pedagogy is not learner-centred, meaning that it constructed learners as objects who could not think on their own. Freire (1970, p. 63) notes the negative effects of this pedagogy on learners' sense of self: "So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness". This approach makes learners to withdraw and lack self-confidence, as indicated by the results of the questionnaires where 74% of the participants in Class A indicated that the prescribed poetry did not boost their confidence and this boils down to the pedagogy that the teacher employed. Thus, the lack of confidence boost is detrimental to adolescents' identity development.

There are far too many limitations associated with the traditional pedagogy. This study has revealed that traditional pedagogy does not only objectify adolescents but it also takes away their potential for self-discovery. This means that there is oppression on these learners as they are denied freedom to be who they want to be, and this is seen as a violation of human rights. According to the Bill of Rights Chapter 2 Section 16(b), every person in South Africa has freedom of expression and is "free to receive and impart information or ideas" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 7). This means that these adolescents also have the right to express their opinions on what they are learning in class. This process in class may afford these adolescents a chance to affirm their group identities through sharing information on discussed topics. Thus, denying learners an opportunity to express themselves in class is an infringement on their rights. In addition, Freire (1970) points out that when A objectively exploits B or obstructs their quest of self-affirmation as a responsible person, it is a sign of oppression. Learners' responsibility in class is shown by their participation and contribution towards their own learning. However, the traditional pedagogy employed by the teacher in School A did not give learners the space to demonstrate this sense

of responsibility. Thus, Freire elaborates that “such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human” (Freire 1970, p. 55). In the traditional pedagogy, the teacher assumes that they have all the knowledge and that they are being generous by sharing what they have with the learners who are empty vessels. This is what Freire describes as false generosity. Such false generosity is in fact egocentric as it comes in the form of content narration where the teacher “presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence” (Freire, 1970, p.72). This method of teaching hinders learners from developing as critical thinkers, thus alienating them from the world that they live in as they view themselves as mere spectators who have no contribution to make. All three data sets reveal that this method also creates distance between the teacher and the learners. This distance is unhealthy as learners do not feel comfortable to ask for help; rather, where they feel that they do not understand the content, they focus on other things not related to the lesson.

According to Erickson (1968), adolescents develop through social interaction and this constantly changes, depending on new experiences. Adolescents are humans with emotions but the findings of this study reveal that learners in Class A were not given opportunities to interact so that they could develop social consciousness which helps them to position themselves within the society. Some people may argue that the traditional pedagogy could help the learners to master academic content individually and also practice independent learning, which prepares them for tertiary education where the lecture method is mainly employed. However, I argue that for identity development to be fostered, an interactive approach is more appropriate because it helps learners of English FAL to interact and to develop skills they will need at university, such as logical reasoning, communicative competence, confident expression and persuasive argumentation. This pedagogy supresses learners’ voices. All that the learners could do was to listen to the knowledgeable teacher and follow instructions. Overall, the biggest limitation of the traditional pedagogy is that learners with learning barriers find it difficult to cope with how the lessons are delivered. Above-average learners are also disadvantaged because the lessons are not challenging enough. This means that learners in both categories are greatly disadvantaged by this

pedagogy and this affects them academically and, in some cases, leads to lack of identity development in relation to their emotional, digital, cultural and social lives.

Education, according to Freire (1970), is never neutral. It can either domesticate or liberate learners. Cultural invasion reduces learners to mere objects. Freire (1970) describes the cultural invader as authoritative, dictatorial, and one who forbids the invaded from thinking and acting and wants them to just listen to what he says. The idea that learners do not participate in decision making about the content that they want to learn means that the learners are under cultural deprivation. In other words, the decision-makers have the power decide on what is termed specialised knowledge which is largely western poetry, while local poetry that features the cultural experiences of learners is sidelined in the curriculum. Participants from both Classrooms A and B indicated in the questionnaires that they did not see how the prescibed poems were significant to their cultures. This finding resonates with Rorty (2017), Godsell (2020), and Bila and Abodunrin (2020) who all agree that cultural deprivation in poetry denies the learner access to social consciousness, critical thinking, and poetry enjoyment.

8.3 Multimodal teaching methods in School B

In School B, the teacher used the modern pedagogy which was interactive. The teacher moved beyond the prescribed curriculum by exposing learners to think of more challenging problem-solving questions and alternatives about their societal issues and those problems that humanity in general face. Meanings of the poems were discussed for understanding and not for meeting examination demands. The teacher used the prescribed anthology as an instructional appendage, not the determiner of the curriculum. Furthermore, the teacher applied cultural responsive pedagogy which according to Ladson-Billings (2021) works on three propositions: academic achievement or student learning, cultural competence, and socio-political consciousness. Observing these propositions, Teacher B made appropriate linkages between what learners knew and what they did not know. The teacher did this through giving familiar examples, comparisons and contrasts. The teacher challenged

learners' minds by opening the space for them to contribute to the production of knowledge in the classroom. Different teaching strategies were applied which placed learners at the core of learning. The teacher gave the learners escape moments from the prescribed textbook so that they could reflect on real life situations and engage in discussions, thus developing their identities as active members of their societies. The application of multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies such as contextualisation of poetry, whole class discussions, note taking, using music, ordinary daily stories, pictures, PowerPoint slides and encouraging learners to research for relevant information using their smartphones made the lessons interactive and lively. Different poetry reading strategies were also employed in class. Firstly, the teacher asked the learners to read the poem individually and silently. In the second instance, he read the poem himself in a dramatic way. During the third lesson observation, the teacher asked for a volunteer to read the poem for the class. Finally, the learners took turns to read stanzas of the taught poem. Such variety of teaching strategies enabled the learners to experience poetry in a multimodal way.

8.3.1 Limitations and affordances of a modern pedagogy

The modern pedagogy is one that involves the use of different modes in making meaning and the inclusion of out-of-school literacies that learners possess. The different modes involve making use of technology, pictures, music, and the chalkboard to help learners comprehend the content of the poems. There are numerous advantages associated with this modern pedagogy, even though minor limitations are noted. The minor challenges with the modern pedagogy include time constraints. The time spent on activities and in searching information on the internet makes it difficult for the teacher who works with the ATP to make a balance between teaching for personal growth and teaching for assessment. However, this study found that the modern pedagogy was the most preferred teaching method among 21st century adolescents of all abilities. Experimenting with new teaching methods energizes learners and breaks the monotony of the textbook.

The modern pedagogy is dynamic and this is one of its greatest affordances. It gives learners an opportunity to use their personal and social capabilities to cooperate and collaborate effectively with peers in learning activities. Findings from all three data sets indicate that the modern pedagogy allowed learners to assess their own abilities, susceptibilities, and strengths, with the result that they could develop a range of interpersonal skills such as teamwork, negotiation, communication, and peer support. In the class observations, these abilities were displayed through classroom interactions; in the questionnaires, participants indicated the impact that the pedagogy had on their learning process, while the reflective journals allowed learners opportunities to reflect and express themselves in the way they prefer to be taught and to showcase the content they want to see in the curriculum. The modern pedagogy is empowering because it allows learning to take place through challenging learners' minds so that they improve their ability to think. This finding gives credibility to the view by Khathib (2011) that a well-chosen literature teaching approach makes poetry come alive for adolescents. The modern pedagogy is a learning strategy that promises to solve the problem of historical academic underperformance of learners in the township schools of South Africa as a result of educational inequalities instituted by the former apartheid government.

The other affordance of the modern pedagogy is learner involvement and poetry enjoyment. Findings from the questionnaires show that 80% of the participants in Class B enjoyed classroom poetry and 78% participated in class. This is evidence that if poetry is made alive in class, it helps learners to make connections between what they are learning and what happens in their daily lives. Seeing relevance in the poems taught and enjoying poetry create a positive environment which helps learners to participate in class and share their experiences without fear. For learners who are passing through the fragile stage of adolescence which, according to Erikson (1963), is a stage of pyshchological development that can lead to success or confusion, this pedagogy is a neccesity so that adolescents can develop a sense of self, openly share experiences, find solutions to their own challenges through peers' contributions, and improve their confidence as agents of change in their communities. Learners in this study perceived that many of the integrated innovative semiotic modes and the incorporation of their multiliteracies in the class discussions were supportive of their

learning. These semiotic modes did not only help learners to comprehend the poems taught but also increased their enjoyment as they engaged in discussions with their peers and the teacher.

8.4 Enhancers of and inhibitors to learners' identity development

This study has proven that classroom participation can enhance learners' identity development. While classroom participation has been noted in this study as important in helping adolescents to share knowledge and also develop their communication skills which prepares them to be active community members in future, the lack of it creates boredom, low confidence, disassociation with the teacher and classroom activities, and lack of comprehension that eventually leads to academic failure. Once learners fail to make connections between the content learnt in the classroom set up and how applicable it is to their lived experiences, they tend to believe that the content taught to them is of no value and sitting to work on such content may be a waste of time and energy. Thus, all data sets have shown that an unrelated, outdated and male-dominated canon stands as an inhibitor to adolescents' identity development. However, learners' own poetry writing has been noted as an enhancer towards adolescents' identity development. Lastly, the teachers' pedagogy has the capacity to help learners make connections between what they are taught in class and the world that they live in. As indicated earlier, the modern pedagogy is more favourable among adolescents as it brings about enjoyment, participation and poetry comprehension. All these aspects help in developing adolescents' identities.

8.5 Towards a bouncing system of education and in-flux identity

While the Freirean and Eriksonian concepts discussed in Chapters 5 to 7 provided a framework for interpreting the findings of this study, the key findings prompt the expansion of the discussed concepts to include the notion of a bouncing system of education. The study has revealed that the banking system of education, which Freire (1970) says creates passive learners, can inadvertently lead to a bouncing system of education where learners are resistant rather than passive. To illustrate, the use of the

traditional pedagogy in Class A led to learners showing resistance to the teacher's instruction by failing to do the work required of them. In a sense, the tasks were returned to the teacher without being completed, just like when a person throws a ball at someone to catch but they bounce it back to them without catching it. In this case, rather than the banking system creating passive learners who simply accept everything told to them by the teacher, the pedagogy created resistant learners whose decision to do their own things and ignore the teacher's instructions inconspicuously produced a bouncing system of education. Through the extension of Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy to include the bouncing system of education, this study has revealed that adolescent identities are not static. Instead, they are always in a state of flux, influenced by a wide range of factors that are constantly evolving as individuals grow and experience different life encounters.

The education system includes curriculum and pedagogy. Canon forms part of the curriculum. The theoretical lenses through which the data of this study was analysed – Erikson's (1968) theory of adolescents' identity development and Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy – indicate that an adolescent who fails to comprehend the knowledge they are given is less motivated, gets alienated, cannot critically think and make meaning of their world, and eventually is thrown into confusion where their identity is not developed. While there are a number of factors that shape identities, which include cultural backgrounds and experiences, adolescent identities can be greatly influenced by the education system. Thus, this study points to the realisation that the understanding of poetry depends on the time, space and context from which the poetry emanates. This means that for poetry to be meaningful and impactful on the identities of adolescents, it should be relevant to their context, written by authors whose ages are close to theirs, share the same language and present a similar cultural outlook on life. This study has noted that a culturally responsive canon and pedagogy can develop adolescents' identities holistically. The concepts of in-flux identity and bouncing system of education open up possibilities for further poetry investigations, for the benefit of Grade 11 English FAL poetry learners and teachers in South Africa. As noted throughout this study, poetry selection is important in the curriculum because it also informs the pedagogy.

8.6 Drawing together major findings and answering the research questions

In this section, I do a cross-data discussion that draws the major findings of the study together to answer the research questions. My primary research question was: What is the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom? To satisfactorily respond to this question, I worked with six secondary research questions:

1a) What instructional practices characterise traditional pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

1b) What instructional practices characterise multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

2a) How does the traditional pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?

2b) How does the multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy affect learners' sense of identity?

3a) What challenges to identity formation do learners experience with the current canon of poetry being taught in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom?

3b) How do learners' own poetry help them to break through curriculum barriers and assert their identities?

8.6.1 Question 1a: Characteristics of traditional pedagogy

The data from the lesson observations and the participants' questionnaires yielded several findings, as shown in Chapters 5 and 6. Data confirmed Marsh and Willis's (2007) claim that traditional pedagogy is only one approach to learning. The lesson observations in School A where the traditional pedagogy was employed proved that learners were passive. Teacher A stood as the authority who read the poems when she felt like it, read notes from the anthology, and gave instructions for learners to answer the class activities from the prescribed textbook. No contextualisation of the poems was done. Teacher A sometimes asked closed-ended questions which

required learners to simply answer Yes or No. The other characteristics of traditional instruction are the absence of learners' voices, little or no classroom participation by learners, and the dominance of the textbook in teaching and learning. In the questionnaires, 80% of the participants indicated that they disliked the teacher's pedagogy. The teacher mainly interacted with the poetry anthology, killing all the creativity that poetry potentially affords. This means that the findings concur with Freire (1970) who perceives the teacher in the traditional classroom as a bank clerk. The teacher, just like the bank clerk, makes no contribution to the knowledge being disseminated but acts on instructions to please the master. In this case, the master is the curriculum.

8.6.2 Question 1b: Characteristics of modern pedagogy

The modern pedagogy was used in School B. The findings in Chapter 5 show that Teacher B used modern technology like the smartboard, internet and smartphones in the teaching of poetry. Lessons were learner-centred, with the teacher playing the facilitation role. Learners were allowed to surf the internet for information related to the poems discussed. Different modes were used to enable understanding of poems and this engendered the smooth flow of classroom discussions. Through lesson observations, learner questionnaires and learner reflective writing, a superfluity of findings informed the characteristics of a multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacy classroom. Evidence from the data shows that a modern pedagogy is entertaining, encourages learner participation, and allows learners to draw knowledge from their out-of-school experiences and literacies to make connections with their classroom content. A modern pedagogy creates what Freire (1970) terms a dialogical classroom where learners and the teacher share knowledge, thus dismantling autocratic structures.

8.6.3 Question 2a: Effects of traditional pedagogy on participants' sense of identity

There is evidence in the key findings that there is a multiplicity of emotions among adolescents in response to the traditional pedagogy. In School A, the pedagogy

created boredom for learners, and subsequently learners resorted to murmuring which is a sign of rebelliousness. These reactions are reflective of the unstable behaviour of adolescents that Erikson (1968) speaks about. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, adolescents are human: they have needs and they are at a critical stage in life where their identities are being formed as they interact with their surroundings. Because the school community is a central part of their environment, it inevitably contributes in shaping their identities, whether positively or negatively. In School A, the learners' murmurings were a sign of dissatisfaction with the pedagogy employed by the teacher, but the teacher failed to interpret the gestures and took this as a sign of poetry dislike and learner laziness. Evidence from this study shows that this traditional pedagogy reduces adolescents to objects, to people who cannot think and who have no contribution to make in improving the societies they live in. Being denied expression of thought in the classroom is being denied an opportunity to position one's self in the world. Instead, the teacher defined the world for the learners through the rigid curriculum. This is what Freire (1970) refers to as dehumanisation of the oppressed. No critical thinking nor knowledge creation was promoted in Class A. The lack of dialogue reduced learners to empty vessels that were waiting to be filled in by the teacher who posed as the all-knowing instructor.

The traditional pedagogy did not recognise the adolescents' thirst for acceptance, encouragement and recognition during this fragile period that they are going through. As a result, this pedagogy failed to foster adolescents' ego and social identities which, according to Erikson (1963), allows individuals to understand the world that they live in and be active members of their communities. Instead, this pedagogy promoted identity stagnation. The concept of identity stagnation, as Erikson (1963) proposed it, was identified in the learners' unwillingness to participate due to lack of supportive insight from their surrounding environment. The surrounding environment included the pedagogy employed in the classroom. The environment was not supportive for learning to take place. Therefore, the traditional pedagogy has proven that it does not promote epistemological access to new knowledge, which is made possible through the activation of the learners' schemata. Finally, the lack of support for learners' creation of knowledge, stimulation of imagination and culturally relevant response to

poetry makes the traditional pedagogy a hindrance to adolescents' holistic identity development.

8.6.4 Question 2b: Effects of modern pedagogy on participants' sense of identity

Findings in this study across all data sets show that a multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy is the most preferred pedagogy among adolescents. This concurs with Stein and Mamabolo (2005) that multiliteracies, multimodality and new literacies help learners to make connections between home and school literacy practices. There is evidence in this study that when learners draw on many modals for meaning making, they construct literate identities and show how they build and negotiate their education and literacy pathways through school and community life. In relation to the fragility of adolescence as highlighted by Erikson (1968), the findings in this study confirm that the poetry classroom is crucial in creating an environment where individual learners feel treasured and are enthusiastic to learn new things, build on relationships with peers without fear, and develop their identities. Because multimodality in the classroom creates an environment conducive for learning and teaching to take place, it provides possible paths through which learners' critical thinking is developed while learners and the teacher share ideas in making the poetry texts come to life. Thus, Hooser (2020) supports the application of Erikson's theory of adolescents' psychosocial development in the classroom through deploying interactive teaching approaches. These interactive teaching approaches are also advocated by Freire (1970). The findings of this study reveal positive responses of adolescents through the journal entries where learners who were exposed to the modern teaching pedagogy expressed their voices authoritatively in different writing genres and languages. The journal writing brought to the fore learners' Indigenous languages, practices and personal experiences which were ignored in the traditional pedagogy classroom. The multimodal and multiliteracies pedagogy enhances inclusivity and proves true the view by Dymoke and Hughs (2009) that when poetry is moved out of the confines of the single mode, it gives opportunities for adolescents to develop their identities. Multimodality, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy hones the evolving identities of adolescents who are immersed daily in new media – the cultural tools of their time – and redefines their literacy practices. This modern

pedagogy gives adolescents the freedom to express their sense of self – their ego identity – which the poetry canon suppresses.

8.6.5 Question 3a: Current canon challenges to participants' identity formation

The canon of poetry prescribed for the Grade 11 English FAL learners during the time this study was carried out (2020–2022) was composed of 10 poems. The data collected illustrates that learners had many challenges with this canon. Key findings from all data sets revealed that learners did not relate to the canon. Based on the canon, which is outdated and male-dominated, I argue that the 21st century adolescents' socio-economic challenges were sidelined by the curriculum. Learners' identity formation was not promoted because the poems in the curriculum did not speak to the learners' real lives. Some learners, particularly in Class B where the modern pedagogy was used, enjoyed the poetry and had better understanding of the poems taught because the teacher created an atmosphere which helped learners to understand. This was made possible by the teacher's use of many modes of meaning making as well as their contextualisation of the poems. However, there is evidence from the questionnaires that even if the teacher uses multimodality in the classroom, there are some poems which are not easy to contextualise due to the alien nature of the experiences being described in them. Therefore, this canon does not foster learners' identity development but often throws adolescents into confusion.

8.6.6 Question 3b: How participants' poetry helps to break through curriculum barriers

African adolescents in particular face the problem of cultural alienation as they have to absorb Western middle-class mores and aesthetics, because the educational system is geared towards Western modes of thought. The findings from this study reveal that Grade 11 English FAL learners who were exposed to a canon that was outdated and male-dominated did not relate to most of the prescribed poems. The problem was compounded where a traditional pedagogy was employed in teaching the poems. However, this did not mean that with the modern pedagogy, the unrelatable canon was any better. The results show that even with the application of

multimodality, there were some poems that were difficult even for the teacher to contextualise, as the poetry contents were far removed from the teacher's experiences. Contrary to Soudien (2007) who asserts that African adolescents' cultures and traditions are rapidly being eroded as they get assimilated by Western education, evidence from the data in this study shows that learners are capable of asserting their African cultural identities when an opportunity is afforded them.

Erikson (1968) recognises that adolescents pass through physical and emotional turbulences as they desperately try to be what they are expected to be in the school environment and at the same time try to be themselves. In the context of the learners who were involved in this study, I argue that adolescents want to find positions within their communities but the lack of role models and a curriculum that is not in sync with their real life experiences let them down. The desire of adolescents to express themselves, to have their voices heard and to vent out their emotions is vital to their identity development. To break through the curriculum that lacks relevance in their lives, adolescents write poems about their social issues, their challenges and their struggles, poems that also appreciate the heroes and heroines in their lives. This study shows that poetry is not a new genre in Africa but the curriculum has created a dichotomy between home poetry and classroom poetry. This dichotomy leads to inflexible teaching styles because the teachers also struggle to interpret and contextualise the prescribed canon of poetry. The intimate connection with poetry outside the classroom walls helps adolescents to express themselves freely in their own personal poetry writing and to affirm their identities. As demonstrated in Chapter 7, adolescents in their own time wrote beautiful poetry which expressed their hidden emotions and the social issues affecting their daily existence.

The data from this study challenges the assertion by McLaren (2020) that the common goal of the current curriculum is for its recipients to see what is not there. By seeing what is not there, McLaren (2020) refers to the 'deceptive' nature of the curriculum which purports that it aims for learners to learn sophisticated English through poetry when it presents some poems with vocabulary that is not spoken in South Africa. For example, "I Sit and I Look Out", "This Letter's To Say" and "Composed upon

Westminster Bridge." While it is important to learn from others, Freire (1970) suggested an educational praxis which combines both action and reflection as part of the education process. Freire (1970) further proposed a collaborative process of curriculum design where learners contribute to what they want to be taught and how they should be taught. The content should relate to the experiences of the learners. Freire (2005, p. 38) noted that "the role of man was not only to be in the world, but to engage in relations with the world – that through acts of creation and re-creation, man makes cultural reality and thereby adds to the natural world, which he did not make". Based on Freire's views which this study endorses, I argue that in contrast to McLaren's view, learners can actually see what is there – an irrelevant curriculum that alienates them from their cultures – and they show their rejection of the canon by writing their own poems to re-centre African languages and cultural experiences in the knowledge production project.

8.7 Revisiting the hypothesis

My hypothesis for this study was that there is a good chance that poetry can become a powerful tool in enhancing adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL classroom if the modern pedagogy and a new canon are incorporated. In support of my hypothesis, key findings from all data sets employed have shown that adolescents of the 21st century in a democratic South Africa can enhance their ego identity, personal identity, cultural identity and other social identities if the poetry canon is relatable and the pedagogy relevant; on the other hand, they can experience identity stagnation, boredom, lack of confidence and low imagination where the canon remains alien and the pedagogy is traditional. Adolescents in contemporary South Africa have their unique issues which are different from the issues experienced by the adolescents who lived before and during apartheid. The use of traditional teaching methods in apartheid South Africa was intended to help the colonialists to hold on to power as the teacher was the only voice to be heard in the classroom. In the 1970s, the Black Consciousness Movement led African people to protest against this oppressive system of education. A prominent example of these uprisings against colonial heavy-handedness in the education system is the Soweto uprisings of June 1976. Even though some changes to the curriculum for black learners were made after the

uprising, these were not adequate. The colonial way of thinking about education has trickled into the post-colonial education system. The findings of this study prove that poetry canon cannot be copied from the past and pasted in the present. In a democratic society, there are issues that should be considered before decisions are made and these include a survey to see what adolescents would want to learn as well as an investigation on what in the curriculum makes an impact on adolescents' identity development. This study has revealed that poetry is not static or universal and meaning is varied, depending on where, who and when a poem is read or recited. Thus, maintaining an outdated and male-dominated canon in the curriculum does not help in fostering adolescents' identity development, particularly in the township where this study was conducted and among Grade 11 learners who are studying English as an additional language. The absence of other African poets and inclusion of some western poems instead reverberates with d'Abdon (2016) who noted that holding on to the Western canon at the expense of Indigenous poetry is perpetuating the colonial legacy. In other words, my viewpoint is that sidelining other African poets, South African contemporary poets and Black women poets is demeaning. Bearing this in mind, it is also important to note that while employing the modern pedagogy in the classroom and considering more of the sidelined poets for the English FAL curriculum is vital, poetry has to do with space, time and context. This means that poetry meaning making is relative, and therefore space, time and context are critical considerations for the meaning-making process.

This study has illustrated that poetry describes what is not easily captured in words, but it is written in words that create associations in the mind of the reader. Poetry requires a keen multisensory response to the surrounding world, as well as the ability to ask questions and see images in that world. Language is an important tool that the reader uses to explore phenomena and situations that they find compelling in poetry. Participants' own poems in this study have shown that when deeply connected to the poetry, the writer can experience an emotional impact that is beyond words, and this gives the writer a unique possibility of perceiving the world; this can be mutually shared with the reader if they are in the same space and time. However, this experience of engaging with poetry requires deep comprehension of the poem first. Even though a multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy increases learners' understanding of taught poems, the data in this study has revealed that more than just

the right pedagogy is needed in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom to foster adolescents' identity development. There is a need for curriculum designers to go back to the drawing board and reselect the prescribed poems for Grade 11 English FAL, so that they choose a canon that represents the lived experiences of adolescents in this time. A relevant canon will also help the teacher to make meaningful pedadogical choices.

8.8 Chapter summary

In a nutshell, key findings discussed in this chapter from all three data sets confirm that there are challenges in the pedagogy employed by some teachers in the teaching of the prescribed Grade 11 English FAL poetry. In addition, the canon of poetry imposed upon the learners is difficult and alienated from the learners' real lives, making it hard for this canon to foster these learners' identities during their critical period of adolescence. The adolescent participants' voices through their own poems should change the point of view of the curriculum designers and all stakeholders on what should form part of the curriculum, because these voices are redefining canon in the South African basic education system. This is critical for South Africa because the South African Grade 11 English FAL poetry canon should empower adolescents by allowing them to find their voice and connect to their lived experiences. The reconsideration of canon will give adolescents some space, which will aid the development of their identities. Freire (1970, p. 173) believed that education should create for learners a "world of possibilities" rather than imprison naturally inquiring and curious minds in cells of silence and submission. The findings of this study across all data sets have shown that adolescent learners in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom are resisting a constricting education and creating their own possible worlds through poetry writing.

Chapter 9

Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

This study has explored the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. The research questions guiding this exploration focused on the characteristics of the traditional and modern pedagogies, the effects of traditional and modern pedagogies on adolescents' identities, the challenges that adolescents encounter with the current canon of poetry, and how writing their own poems help adolescents break through curriculum barriers and assert their own identities. Using a double case study design, this research therefore sought to understand adolescents' identity development through pedagogy and canon in two separate classrooms and schools using different teaching pedagogies but same canon of poetry prescribed for Grade 11 English FAL. The analysis of the data collected and the interpretation of the findings were informed by identity development and critical pedagogy theories, as evident in Chapters 5 to 7.

The previous chapter deliberated the key findings of the study, drawing on all three data sets: the lesson observations, learner questionnaires, and learners' reflective journals. In this final chapter, I draw on key insights that have emerged from the study to outline the contribution that this research makes to the body of knowledge. In addition, I point to potential areas for further research and offer recommendations suggesting alternative pedagogies in poetry teaching and the themes in poetry canon that could assist learners in South Africa to develop their identities. The following section is a recap of the key findings.

9.2 Summary of key findings

- Traditional pedagogy takes away adolescents' opportunities to explore their personal identities. Where the modern pedagogy is employed, learners enjoy

classroom poetry and participate enthusiastically in lessons. However, the prescribed canon makes even the interactive pedagogy less effective on adolescents' identity development because their emotions are not aroused by the Western poems taught to them.

- The prescribed canon, which is outdated and male-dominated, is not in sync with the 21st century adolescents' lives and experiences. These adolescents have unique personal experiences and burning social issues that they are dealing with. These challenges can be addressed through poetry, but the Grade 11 English FAL prescribed poetry is mum about these experiences and challenges. Thus, reader and text connection is not often experienced. Some learners may comprehend the poems taught because of the employed pedagogy, but in the end the prescribed canon deprives them of learning about their own cultures, inhibit their emotional engagement with poetry, and does not promote critical thinking. Effectively, the canon does not help in fostering adolescents' identity development.
- While learners tend to study poetry mainly to regurgitate information at examinations, the adolescents who participated in this study showed that writing their own poems is a safe way of expressing hidden emotions and addressing socio-economic experiences which are not addressed in the prescribed English FAL canon. Adolescents' own poetry writing provides spaces for them to vent out and for the audience to hear their usually unheard voices.

9.3 Contributions to knowledge

1. Insights for poetry selection

This research has contributed towards providing insights on classroom poetry by addressing the effects of canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. I do not dispute that some effort has been made to change the curriculum from how it looked during apartheid and immediately after, but a new turn must be taken. The new turn should start by responding to the crucial questions: (a) how do we define canon in an African context?; (b) who is the recipient of the canon?; (c) how can the canon of poetry be taught meaningfully in the Grade

11 English FAL classroom?; (d) and what impact does the canon of poetry have on the learners' sense of identity? It is important to reiterate here that adolescents are at a stage where they are struggling with complexities of emotions. Therefore, poetry becomes a valuable tool for helping them develop their identities, because it offers opportunities for self-expression in culturally meaningful ways. Additionally, the geographical terrains have changed and adolescents of the 21st century have needs and aspirations that are different from what adolescents prefered a century ago. All this contributes to the way a poem is received and interpreted, and determines the possibilities for sensory evocation in the reader. This study has shown that poetry can be used by adolescent learners to express the inexpressible. When learners are exposed to familiar poets, including those whose ages are closer to theirs, they can be motivated, relate to the content, and enjoy what they learn as they can see its relevance in their lives. With that said, the concepts of in-flux identity and the bouncing system of education presented in the previous chapter are important to consider when thinking about poetry selection in an ever evolving world.

2. Propositions for conceptual extension

The findings presented in this study call for a more robust curriculum approach to addressing the identity challenges faced by the 21st adolescents in schools. The concept of in-flux identity or identity in flux denotes that adolescents' individual identity is constantly changing as a result of internal and external factors. This concept captures the complexity of modern society and the role that society plays in shaping adolescents' identity development. The complexity of the modern world, which is characterised by rapid technological advances, globalisation and cultural diversity, has created a more interconnected and dynamic world. This world makes it difficult for adolescents to conform to a single and static identity as they are constantly exposed to new ideas and experiences that can alter their perceptions of themselves and move them to define the world around them differently. Cognisance of this important knowledge about adolescence should be prioritised in the dvelopment of curriculum and particularly in poetry selection.

The bouncing system of education discussed in Chapter 8 points to a need for collaboration between curriculum designers, teachers and learners. This collaboration entails consultations among the three stakeholders before policy and curriculum decisions are made. Data collected through consultations can be used to tailor the curriculum to meet the specific needs of English FAL learners in South Africa. For example, since 21st adolescents are technologically-driven, the curriculum can be designed to include the use of digital poetry in the classroom to enhance learning and to prepare adolescents for the digital world of work. Because this approach to currriculum design empowers learners to take ownership of their own learning, it helps in developing their critical thinking, increasing their self-confidence and boosting their imaginations in poetic composition.

3. Methodological insights on adolescents' own poetry interests

One of the reasons why curriculum designers prescribe material that is not related to the learners' real life experiences for study is because they do not have information on what the recipients of the curriculum would want to learn. It is important to note that one of the aims of teaching literature is to expose learners to the world they have not experienced themselves, because the more they encounter the 'other' the more they will understand themselves. However, an important finding from this study is that a poetry canon that is not related to the learners' culture alienates them from the learning process and inhibits their identity development. While South Africa is democratic, the education system is still undemocratic as an outdated and male-dominated poetry canon is imposed on Grade 11 English FAL learners. The learners' own poems, captured in this study through the use of the reflective journal as a methodological tool, is a big contribution that this study makes to knowledge about poetry in the English FET phase. Learners who participated in this study communicated in their journals the themes that they would want to see in the poetry canon. These are themes of love, lamentation, identity negotiation and socio-economic hardships. If the curriculum designers include these themes in the prescribed poetry selection for Grade 11 English FAL learners, then the curriculum will be better placed to help the adolescents develop their identities.

9.4 Suggestions for further research

This study not only proposes the concepts of in-flux identity and the bouncing system of education, but also suggests further research on poetry selection and teaching strategies that can help learners to think about the world and life issues in positive ways. This means further investigations should be done on exploring the benefits of learners' out-of-school poetry practices and the impact these practices can have on learning when they are brought into the English FAL poetry classroom. More research is needed on how to create culturally responsive English FAL poetry classrooms in a multilingual and multicultural South African education context. In addition, investigations on why some teachers are holding on to the traditional pedagogy should be explored. New studies can explore the use of social media in poetry teaching and the benefits that can result from the inclusion of diverse poetic voices in the poetry curriculum.

9.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, various recommendations are offered for the benefit of English FAL teachers, English FAL FET facilitators, teacher training personnel, curriculum designers and all concerned stakeholders in the Department of Basic Education.

1. Teacher training

   Teacher training institutions have a major role to play in producing competent teachers who can quickly adapt to new methods of teaching poetry for the benefit of learners. Higher education institutions need to equip student teachers with pedagogies that are relevant in the poetry classroom. This research has shown that sometimes even the teachers who are good at using ICT in the classroom find it difficult to contextualise poems for the understanding of the learners. Teachers should therefore be adequately prepared for the teaching of English; this means they should be knowledgeable about subject content and also have skills that can help learners to think critically. Teachers need to be

trained in the production and use of multimodal texts. Teachers who are confident can share their skills with other teachers and their ideas with learners, with the result that both parties will in turn experiment with the new ideas and enjoy new opportunities of teaching and learning poetry.

2. On-the-job training and development

   This study has revealed some gaps in poetry teaching pedagogy. Some of the gaps could be resulting from reluctance or ignorance on the part of teachers to continuously develop themselves and move away from the way they themselves were taught. The English FAL facilitators and subject specialists should plan on-the-job workshops that can help teachers to update their teaching strategies and skills so that they move with time. Prescribed poems should also be discussed in teacher cluster meetings before the individual teachers teach their learners. Results from this study concur with Creely (2019) who notes the lack of knowledge and skills in poetry teaching as the reason why learners have negative attitudes towards poetry and consider it incomprehensible and distant from today's world. Therefore, teachers need continuous training to be able to teach poetry in skillful and diverse ways that help learners to experience the joy of poetry and not just to learn how to answer examination questions.

3. English FAL poetry curriculum redesigning

   Curriculum designers should think deeply about the role of education in the society, which is to produce critical thinkers who can name their world, develop self-awareness, self-realisation and self-reliance, and above all transform their world from an oppressed one to a liberated one. According to Freire (1970), curriculum planning should be so learner-oriented that it starts with the learners' expectations and desires. While Freire (1970) argues that curriculum transformation is not a one-day event but a continuous process that requires the participation of both teachers and learners, it is important to note that in the South African context the teacher and the learners are excluded from decision-making about the curriculum. Because of this, some teachers resort to the traditional pedagogy where they add nothing and take nothing from what is printed and provided by the Department of Basic Education. However, this

method of teaching does not foster adolescents' identity development as it is not in alignment with the objective of education to produce a self-reliant rather than a 'ready-made' person (Freire, 1970). Based on Freire's thinking and the characteristics of a traditional pedagogy outlined in this study, it is recommended that teachers and learners be included in curriculum decision making, especially in relation to poetry selection. This will not only empower the teachers and the learners to teach and learn poetry effectively but it will also foster adolescents' identity development when they learn what is relevant to their lives.

Revolutionising the English First Additional Language Grade 11 poetry curriculum and pedagogy to meet the demands of the 21st century starts with collaboration with the Department of Basic Education. Research of this nature may be the starting point. Therefore, the key findings of this study will be shared with the Department of Basic Education. Additionally, I would propose pilot programmes or partnerships to showcase the positive outcomes and impact of implementing modern pedagogy strategies in select schools. The other way may be to organise workshops or seminars to educate policymakers, educators and administrators about the benefits of modern pedagogy and a carefully selected canon for the English additional language learners. Learners' own poems can be shared with the concerned stakeholders so that they understand the themes that should inform the poetry curriculum.

4. Change in teacher-learner roles

This study recommends that the role of the teacher in the poetry classroom be redefined. The teacher cannot think for learners, said Freire (1970). Learners are individuals, they are human beings, and they have brains to think on their own. By denying learners an opportunity to share their thoughts about taught poems, the teacher using the traditional pedagogy perceives learners as non-human, because it is only through communication that human life holds meaning (Freire, 1970). The monopoly of power in the traditional pedagogy promotes memorisation of content by learners as teachers lack the recognition that learners are conscious beings. To change this status quo, the teacher

should cease to be the bank clerk looking at learners as empty vessels, but should rather start looking at them as conscious humans who can contribute to the wellbeing of the society and who can also resist knowledge they find irrelevant. For these roles to change, there is need for the realisation that "liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information" (Freire, 1970, p. 79). The traditional pedagogy is characterised by the transferral of information from the teacher to the learners. By contrast, in a liberatory pedagogy, the teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches but the one who is himself/herself taught in dialogue with the learners, and the learners also teach while being taught (Freire, 1970). Furthermore, in a modern pedagogy where there is dialogue, the teacher and the learners "become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (Freire, 1970, p. 80). When the teacher grows in knowledge together with the learners, they both benefit. While facilitating learning for the learners, the teacher will realise that solidarity requires true communication. Once this happens, roles can change where learners can start to see themselves as co-creators of knowledge. Power structures in the classroom will be neutralised, giving room for learners to bring multiliteracies to the fore and for the teacher to scaffold the contents for the benefit of the learners who will realise achievement academically and improve on their identity development as they will feel satisfied and foresee a brighter future through education.

9.6 Limitations of the study

This study intended to illuminate the weaknesses and strengths of the two pedagogies under study with respect to how they enable adolescent learners to develop and assert their identities. The fact that this study is based on a double case study at schools and classrooms located within the same district is both a weakness and a strength. The strengths have been outlined already in the justification of the schools' selection in Chapter 4. However, due to the complexity of the concept of adolescents' identity development, an extension of the number of case studies to include schools that are on the privileged end of the spectrum could have yielded different findings. Secondly, the study focused on pedagogy and canon, but the kind of training teachers receive,

the institutions they attend, and their ages and personalities can all influence how they teach, which will in turn determine the effect their teaching may have on adolescents' identity development. Thirdly, it is necessary to acknowledge that while this double case study was not set up as a comparative study between the two participating schools, a certain degree of comparative analysis became unavoidable. Lastly, although this study focused on the effect of the traditional and modern pedagogies and the canon on adolescents' identity development, it could have been beneficial to understand also the reasons for the teachers' pedagogical choices.

9.7 Conclusion

In summary, the aim of this study was to explore the effect of pedagogy and canon on adolescents' identity development in the Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom. Such effect could be positive in terms of encouraging learners' self-expression or negative in terms of destroying their self-esteem. The key findings in this study showed that a multimodal, multiliteracies and new literacies pedagogy which is learner-centred is the most effective pedagogy for teaching adolescents, in contrast to the traditional pedagogy which is book and teacher-centred. The key findings presented in this thesis provide insights into pedagogies in poetry teaching and also highlight alternatives to the poetry canon that could assist learners in South Africa to develop their identities. The recommendations provided in this study enlighten English FAL poetry teachers and curriculum designers that adolescents enter the classroom with their own identities and cultures and tapping into these literacies will provide adolescents some space to navigate their identities and establish who they are in the world that they are living in. I have argued in this study that canon informs pedagogy and pedagogy is influenced by canon. Therefore, the South African curriculum designers should take redefining canon and changing the curriculum for Grade 11 English FAL poetry as a task that cannot be procrastinated, as well as a moral and educational obligation that can no longer be postponed. For this transformation to be successfully achieved, curriculum designers should start by identifying the needs of the English FAL poetry learners in South Afrca, understanding their real life experiences, and providing them a platform for their voices to be heard. What needs to be transformed is not only what kind of poetry is taught in the South African educational system, but also how it is

taught, why it is taught and for whose benefit ultimately. Poetry can be a powerful tool to conscientise and empower adolescent learners in the English FAL classroom. However, its relevance to learners' lives is crucial for it to have an impact on their identity development as well as for it to enable teachers to make use of engaging pedagogies for learners' benefit.

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Appendix A

Ethical clearance

CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE IN RESEARCH ETHICS

Name: Grace Mavhiza

Student/Staff No: 1233706

Date of Certification: 15 July 2020-14 July 2023

TRAINED BY:

PROFESSOR JASPER KNIGHT (RESEARCH ETHICS)

SIGNATURE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

ISSUED BY:

DR ROBIN DRENNAN (DIRECTOR: RESEARCH OFFICE)

SIGNATURE

This certificate is confirmation of successful completion of a training course in Research Ethics for Non-Medical human research, based upon achieving a minimum level of competence in different assessment tasks. This certificate is valid for a period of three years from the date stated above.

2

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Mavhiza

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H20/11/38**
PROJECT TITLE	Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mrs G Mavhiza
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Education/
DATE CONSIDERED	20 November 2020
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk Level: Minimal
EXPIRY DATE	14 December 2023

DATE 15 December 2020 **CHAIRPERSON** _____
(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Professor N Nkealah

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.**

_____ 17 / 02 / 2021
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

GAUTENG PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: A. Hutton
Tel: 011 389 6220
Ref: EOS: P&P 24/20

To: District Based Support Team

Subject: Research Approval

Please be advised that the Gauteng Department of Education has given Ms Grace Mavhiza permission to conduct research. The research is purely on a voluntary basis and the researcher would be interviewing teachers and learners. The research at the schools will be conducted during Term 1 of 2021.

The research title is:
"Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom."

B.P. Luthuli
District Director
8 December 2020

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR: EKURHULENI SOUTH
Tel: (011) 389 6000
02 Robin Close Infinity Office Park, Meyersdal Alberton 1447 I Private Bag X8001, Alberton North 1456
Email: Busi.Luthuli@gauteng.gov.za
www.gautengonline.gov.za I Hotline: 08600 11 000

10 December 2020

Dear Principal

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

I am doing research on the topic **Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom**.

I request permission to contact my research in your school. My research involves four poetry lesson observations, a questionnaire for a Grade 11 class in your school and poetry journal entries from the same class. Filling in of questionnaires and writing in the journal entries will be done after school in the learners' classroom or at home. I am inviting your school to participate in this research. I believe that this study may help my colleagues in the Education field to employ pedagogy that can help adolescents to develop their identities. It may also help learners to express themselves through their journal entries and this also will give them an audience.

The research participants will not be 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 5 years after completion of the project.

I will abide by all covid 19 protocols and observation data will be collected remotely with your permission.

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

Yours sincerely,

GRACE MAVHIZA

gmavhiza@gmail.com

0832765365

10 December 2020

Dear Learner

My name is GRACE MAVHIZA and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project under the supervision of Dr Naomi Nkealah. The title of the research is **Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom** and it aims to find out the ways in which the poetry canon and pedagogy in English First Additional Language classrooms affect the identity development of Grade 11 learners.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in lesson observations, questionnaires, and a journal entry write up. Questionnaires and journal entries will be filled in after school or at home while observations will be done during the poetry lesson once per week for four weeks. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I request that I use the technological tools that are most convenient to your teacher. This can be Zoom, WhatsApp video call, Microsoft Teams or Facebook video call. Secondly, I request you to keep a poetry journal. To facilitate this, at the beginning of the research, your teacher will hand to you a notebook and 1GB flash drive for recording and saving your poems and reflective pieces. You are free to choose writing your reflective paragraphs, and poems in the journal or type and save to the USB. You can also record your own performances of your poems and save to the USB. You will be allowed to use both items if you wish. These entries will not be for assessment. Therefore, you can write independently and be able to express your emotions freely. Thirdly, I request you to fill in a questionnaire. The questionnaire is on the poems that you are learning and requires your opinions on the methods that are used to teach the poems. The questionnaires will be user friendly, as I simply request you to tick appropriate boxes. The notebook, USB and the questionnaire will be collected by your teacher at the end of the four-week lesson observations in your school.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project. You will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw from the study. You may withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop and resume another time. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password

protected safe and will be kept for 5 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

GRACE MAVHIZA

Researcher:

GRACE MAVHIZA, 1233706@students.wits.ac.za, 0832765365

Supervisor:

Dr NAOMI NKEALAH, naomi.nkealah@wits.ac.za, +27 717 3177

10 December 2020

Dear Parent

My name is GRACE MAVHIZA and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project under the supervision of Dr Naomi Nkealah. The title of the research is **Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom** and it aims to find out the ways in which the poetry canon and pedagogy in English First Additional Language classrooms affect the identity development of Grade 11 learners.

As part of this project, I would like to invite your child to take part in lesson observations, questionnaires, and a journal entry write up. Questionnaires and journal entries will be filled in after school or at home, while observations will be done during the poetry lesson once per week for four weeks. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I request that I record your child as he/she sits in the English poetry classroom where I will observe the lesson using a technological tool that is more convenient to the teacher. With your permission, I would also like to record the lesson observation using digital device. Secondly, I request permission that your child may keep a poetry journal for four weeks. To facilitate this, at the beginning of the research, I will give your child a notebook and 1GB flash drive. Your child will be free to choose writing his/her reflective paragraphs and poems in the journal or type and save to the USB. Your child will be allowed to use both the notebook and the USB. They can also record their own performances of their poems and save to the USB. These entries will not be for assessment. Therefore, your child may write independently and be able to express his/her emotions freely. Thirdly, I request permission for your child fill in a questionnaire. The questionnaire is based on the poems that your child is learning and his/her opinions on the methods that are used to teach the poems. The questionnaires will be user friendly and with your permission your child will be requested to tick appropriate boxes.

There will be no personal costs to you if your child participates in this project. You will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if your child chooses not to participate or decides to withdraw from the study. She/he will be reassured that she/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. Her/his individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected safe and will be kept for 5 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

GRACE MAVHIZA

Researcher:

GRACE MAVHIZA, 1233706@students.wits.ac.za, 0832765365

Supervisor:

Dr NAOMI NKEALAH, naomi.nkealah@wits.ac.za, +27 717 3177

10 December 2020

Dear Teacher

My name is GRACE MAVHIZA and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project under the supervision of Dr Naomi Nkealah. The title of the research is **Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom** and it aims to find out the ways in which the poetry canon and pedagogy in English First Additional Language classrooms affect the identity development of Grade 11 learners.

As part of this project, I request your permission to conduct research in your English FAL Grade 11 poetry classroom. The study will entail observing you teaching poetry, questionnaires for learners, and a journal entry write up for learners. Questionnaires and journal entries will be filled in after school or at home while observations will be done during the poetry lesson once per week for four weeks. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I request that I use the technological tools that are safest for you and the learners. This can be Zoom, WhatsApp video call, Microsoft Teams or Facebook video call. With your permission, I would also like to record the lesson observation using digital device. Your face will be blurred to protect your identity. Secondly, I request your learners to keep poetry journals for four weeks. To facilitate this, at the beginning of the research, I will give you notebooks and 1GB flash drive for your Grade 11 English FAL class. Your learners will be free to choose writing their reflective paragraphs and poems in the journal or type and save to the USB. They can also record their own performances of their poems and save to the USB. They will be allowed to use both items if they wish. These entries will not be for assessment. Therefore, you can allow the learners to write independently and be able to express their emotions freely. Thirdly, I request your learners to fill in a questionnaire. The questionnaire is based on the poems that they are learning and their opinions on the methods that are used to teach the poems. The questionnaires will be user friendly as I will merely request that learners tick appropriate boxes. Would you please collect the notebook, USB and the questionnaire at the end of the four-week lesson observations in your school?

There will be no costs to you if you participate in this project. You will not receive direct benefits. 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.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password

protected safe and will be kept for 5 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

GRACE MAVHIZA

Researcher:

GRACE MAVHIZA, 1233706@students.wits.ac.za, 0832765365

Supervisor:

Dr NAOMI NKEALAH, naomi.nkealah@wits.ac.za, +27 717 3177

LEARNER ASSENT FORM

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study on the topic: **Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom**.

My name is: _____

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	**Circle one**
I agree that my poetry journal 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 videotaped

I agree to be videotaped during the interview or observation lesson	YES/NO
I know that the videotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO

Permission for questionnaire

I agree to fill in a question 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 videotaped
- My face will be blurred on the video to protect my identity.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 5 years after completion of the project.

Signature_____ Date_____

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 on the topic: **Adolescents' identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom.**

I, _____ the parent of _____

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	**Circle one**
I agree that my child's poetry journal 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 videotaped

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

Permission for questionnaire

I agree that my child may fill in a questionnaire 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.

- she/he does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- she/he can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotaped
- she/he will have her face blurred on the video to protect her/his identity
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed 5 years after completion of the project.

Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix B

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

SCHOOL……

CLASS…….

LESSON NUMBER……...

TITLE OF POEM……...

Content/Planning & format	Yes	No	Comment
1. Is the teacher drawing on learners' experiences?			
2. Does the teacher encourage learners' participation?			
3. Does the teacher display special knowledge of the poem?			
4. Are the terms and concepts in the poem explained?			
5. Is pair work or group work encouraged?			
6. Do learners respond effectively?			
7. Is curiosity being stimulated?			
8. Is the poem contextualised?			
9. Does the teacher use ICT?			
10. Does the teacher involve learners in the use of ICT?			

11. Methods used to teach poetry……
……
……
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
12. Type of discussion held in class……
……
……
……
……
……
……
13. Is there evidence that the learners are enjoying?
……
……
……
……
14. Is there evidence that learners are not enjoying?
……
……
……
……

Appendix C

JOURNAL ENTRIES – LETTER TO LEARNERS

Dear Grade 11 Learner

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project titled “Adolescents’ identity development through literature: A study of pedagogy and canon in a Grade 11 English FAL poetry classroom”. To enable me complete this project effectively, I would like to encourage you to keep a journal or diary right from the beginning of our interactions. In your journal, I need you to do the following:

1) After every poetry lesson, write a reflective piece about the challenges to your identity that you experience with the poem that was taught in class. You can reflect on things like the poem’s relevance to your culture, age, race, social class, language, religion, and gender.

2) Create your own poem in any language and format that you prefer.

Accompanying this letter is a notebook and 1GB flash drive that you should use to record your reflections and poems. You can choose to write in the notebook or type on a computer and then save to the flash drive. If you produce spoken word poetry or any form of multimodal poetry, then please record it and then save it to the flash drive. You will return both the notebook and flash drive to me at the end of four weeks from the commencement of this research.

Please note that this exercise is not for assessment purposes and your teacher will not have access to your journal/diary. Please write as freely as possible.

Yours sincerely

Grace Mavhiza

Appendix D

Questionnaire

Fill in the questionnaire below to the best of your ability.

AGE……..

GENDER…….

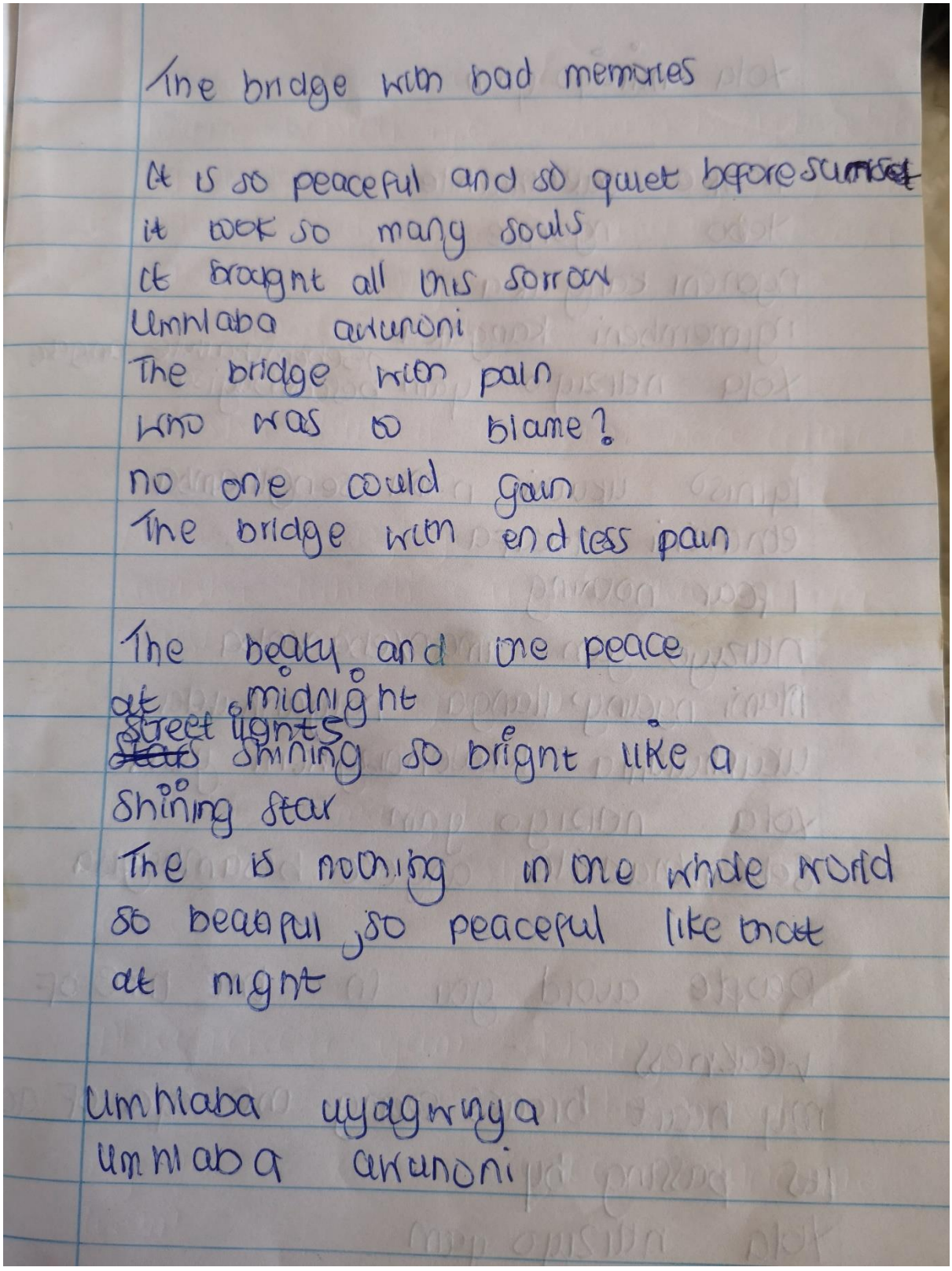
GRADE……..

SCHOOL…….

Components of analysis	Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I feel happy during the English FAL lesson					
2. I understood the subject/theme of the poem clearly.					
3. I could relate the poem to my personal experiences.					
4. I think the poems that we learn in class are relevant to my life.					
5. The teacher helps me to visualize the subject/theme of the poems taught in class.					
6. The teacher teaches poetry in a way that makes me feel that my culture is valued by the Education system.					
7. The teacher identifies and uses figures of speech which I can also use in my language.					
8. The teacher uses other methods of teaching except the line by line analysis.					
9. I feel happy when poems are explained to me through different ways other than focusing on the book.					
10. I prefer learning poetry through acting it out, through music and pictures.					

11. I enjoy the way my teacher teaches poetry.					
12. I get emotionally engaged during the poetry lesson.					
13. I participate during the class discussion.					
14. I could follow the way the teacher presented the poem without difficulties.					
15. I feel confident about my understanding of the poems taught in class.					
16. I am active in class because the teaching methods are engaging.					
17. I am motivated to express my culture, religion, gender, class, race, and sexuality during class discussions.					
18. I can easily write my own poem using the same subject of the poem discussed in class.					
19. The teacher's style of teaching motivates me to write poems in my own language.					
20. I prefer using technology to write my own poems.					
		Thank you for participating in this survey			

Appendix E



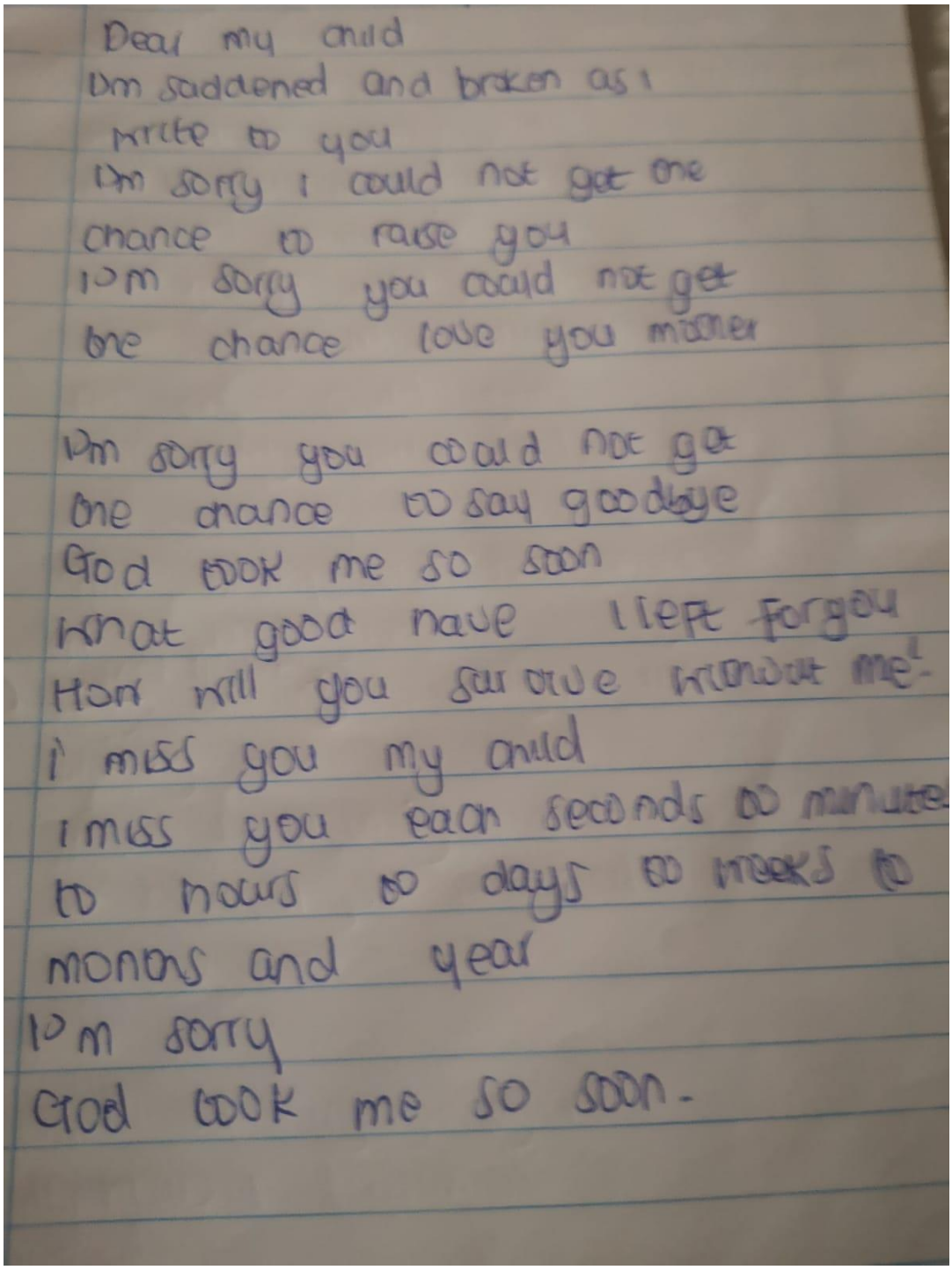
The bridge with bad memories

It is so peaceful and so quiet before sunset
it took so many souls
it brought all this sorrow
Umhlaba akunoni
The bridge with pain
Who was to blame?
no one could gain
The bridge with endless pain

The beauty and the peace
at midnight
street lights
~~stars~~ shining so bright like a
shining star
The is nothing in the whole world
so beautiful, so peaceful like that
at night

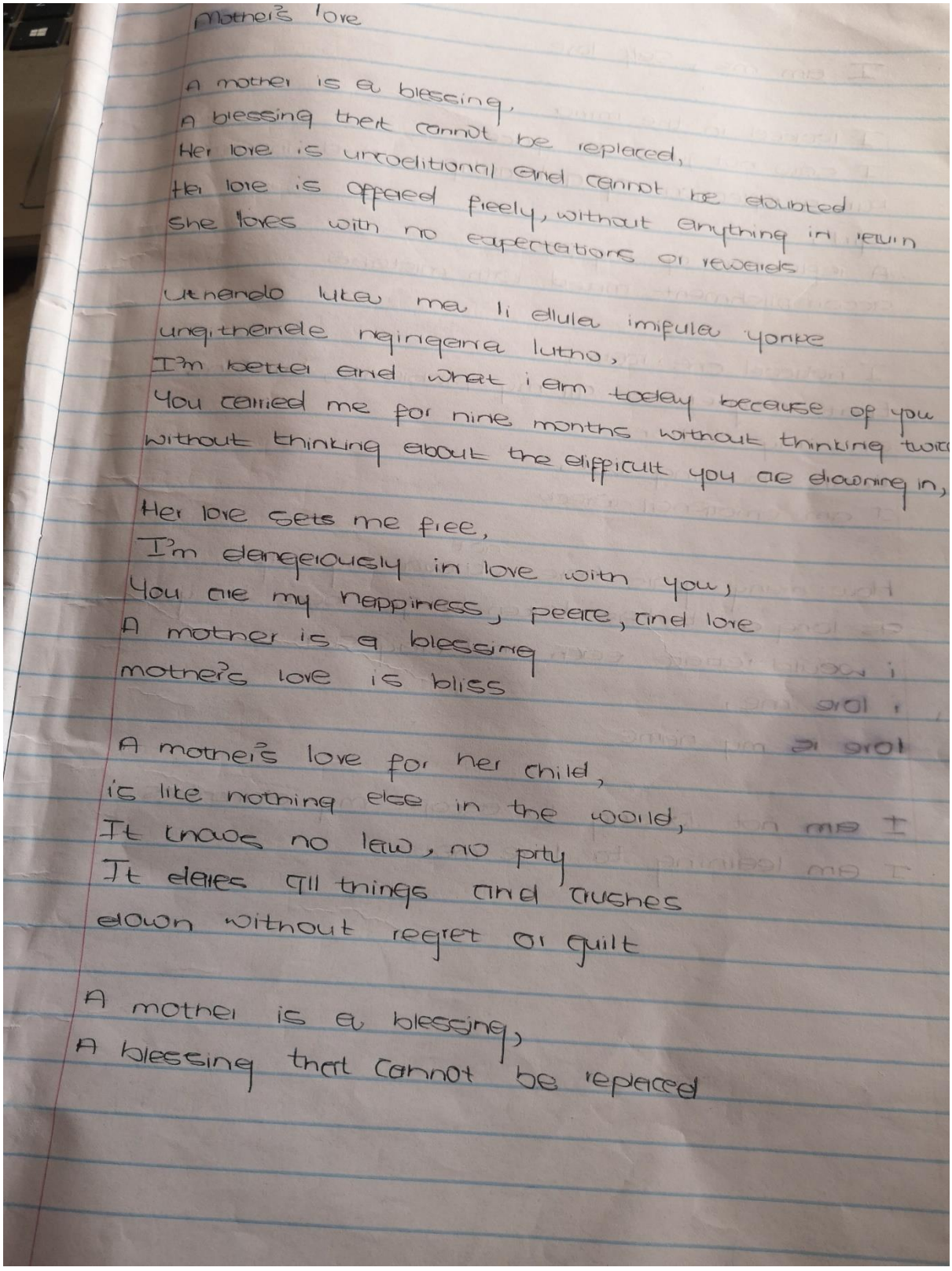
Umhlaba uyagwinya
Umhlaba akunoni

Appendix F


Dear my child
Im saddened and broken as i
write to you
Im sorry i could not get one
chance to raise you
Im sorry you could not get
one chance love you mother

Im sorry you could not get
one chance to say goodbye
God took me so soon
What good have I left for you
How will you survive without me.
I miss you my child
I miss you each seconds 60 minutes
to hours to days to weeks to
months and year
Im sorry
God took me so soon.

Appendix G



Mother's love

A mother is a blessing,
A blessing that cannot be replaced,
Her love is unconditional and cannot be doubted
Her love is offered freely, without anything in return
She loves with no expectations or rewards

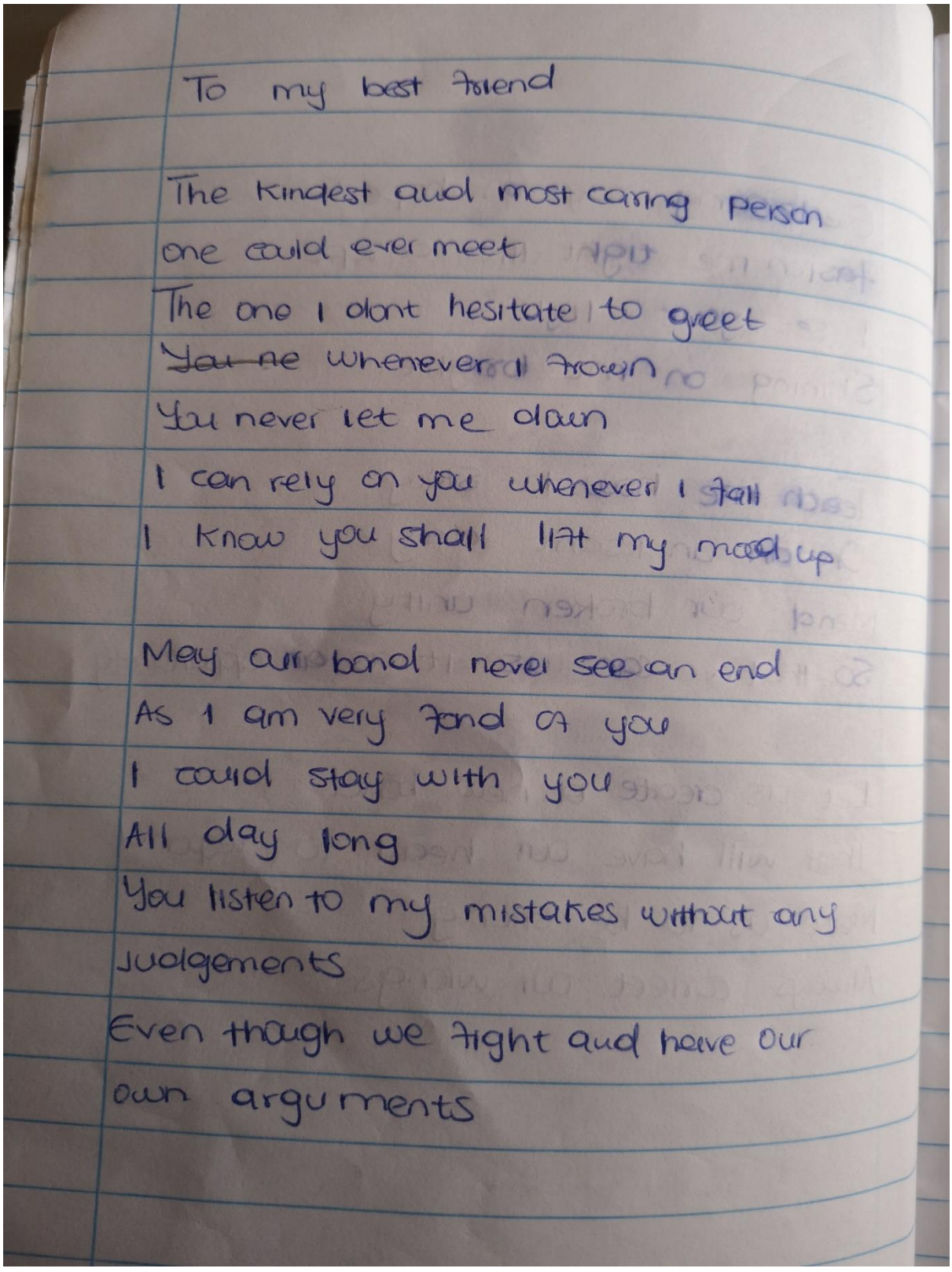
Unandelo lika ma li ellula imifula yonke
ungithanele ngingena lutho,
I'm better and what i am today because of you
You carried me for nine months without thinking twic
without thinking about the difficult you are drowning in,

Her love sets me free,
I'm dangerously in love with you,
You are my happiness, peace, and love
A mother is a blessing
mother's love is bliss

A mother's love for her child,
is like nothing else in the world,
It knows no law, no pity
It defies all things and crushes
down without regret or guilt

A mother is a blessing,
A blessing that cannot be replaced

Appendix H

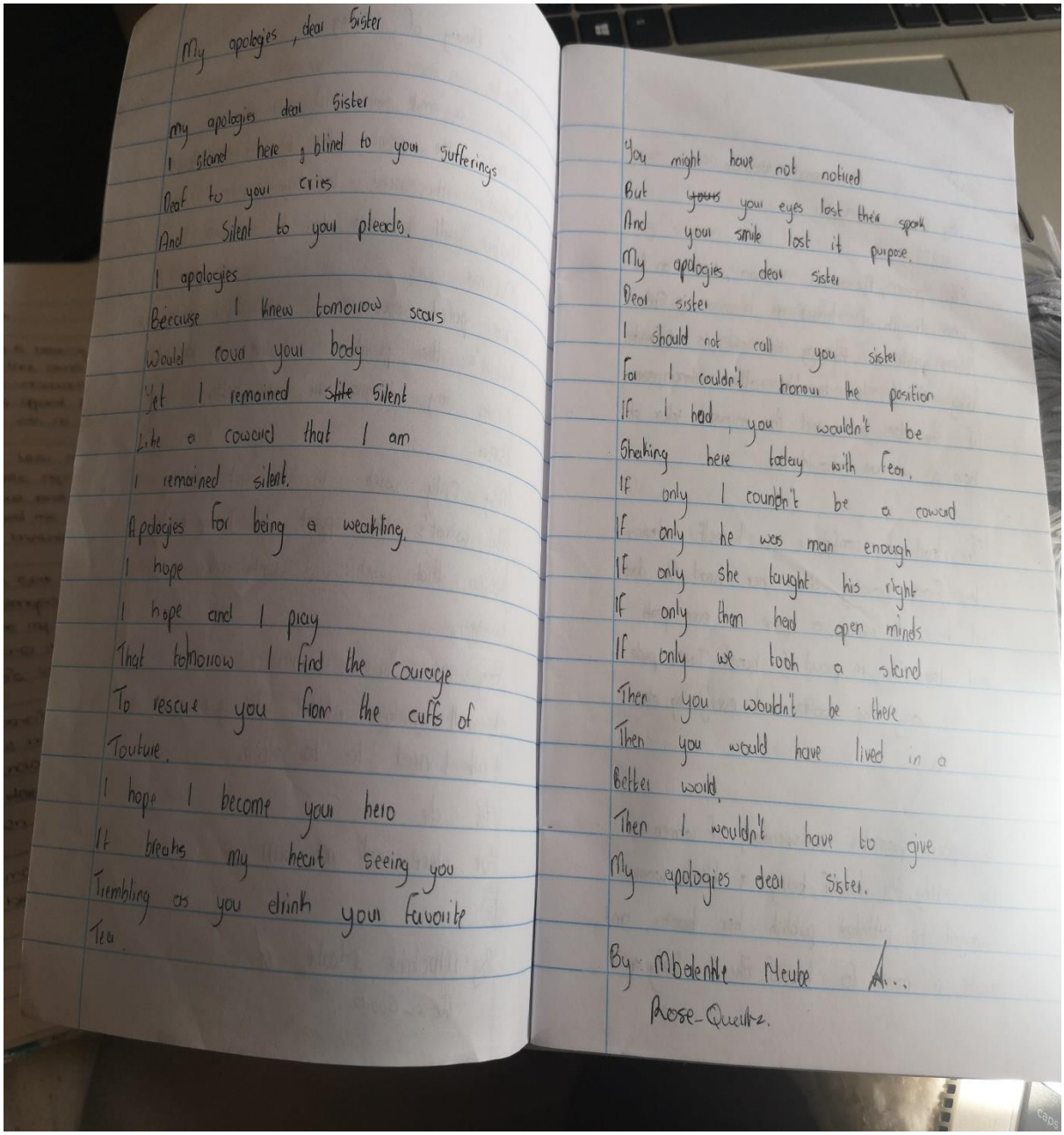


To my best friend

The kindest and most caring person
one could ever meet
The one I dont hesitate to greet
~~You are~~ whenever I frown
You never let me down
I can rely on you whenever I fall
I know you shall lift my mood up

May our bond never see an end
As I am very fond of you
I could stay with you
All day long
You listen to my mistakes without any
judgements
Even though we fight and have our
own arguments

Appendix I



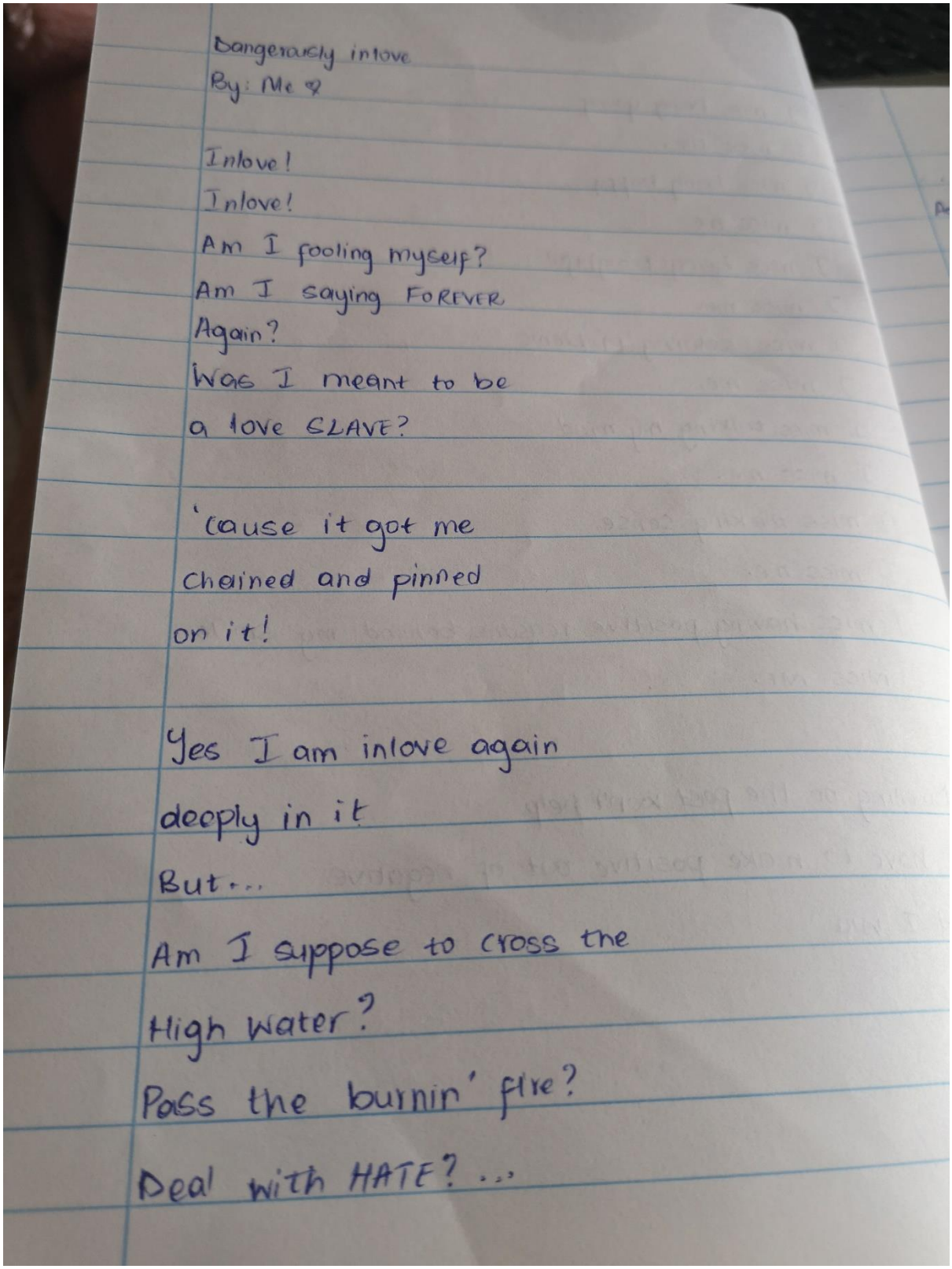
My apologies, dear Sister

my apologies dear Sister
I stared here, blind to your sufferings
Deaf to your cries
And Silent to your pleads.
I apologies
Because I knew tomorrow scars
Would cover your body
Yet I remained ~~shte~~ Silent
Like a coward that I am
I remained silent.
Apologies for being a weakling.
I hope
I hope and I pray
That tomorrow I find the courage
To rescue you from the cuffs of
Torture.
I hope I become your hero
It breaks my heart seeing you
Trembling as you drink your favorite
Tea.

You might have not noticed
But ~~yours~~ your eyes lost their spark
And your smile lost it purpose.
My apologies dear sister
Dear sister
I should not call you sister
For I couldn't honour the position
If I had, you wouldn't be
Shaking here today with fear.
If only I couldn't be a coward
If only he was man enough
If only she taught his right
If only them had open minds
If only we took a stand
Then you wouldn't be there
Then you would have lived in a
Better world.
Then I wouldn't have to give
My apologies dear sister.

By Mbalenhle Mvubu
Rose_Quartz.

Appendix J



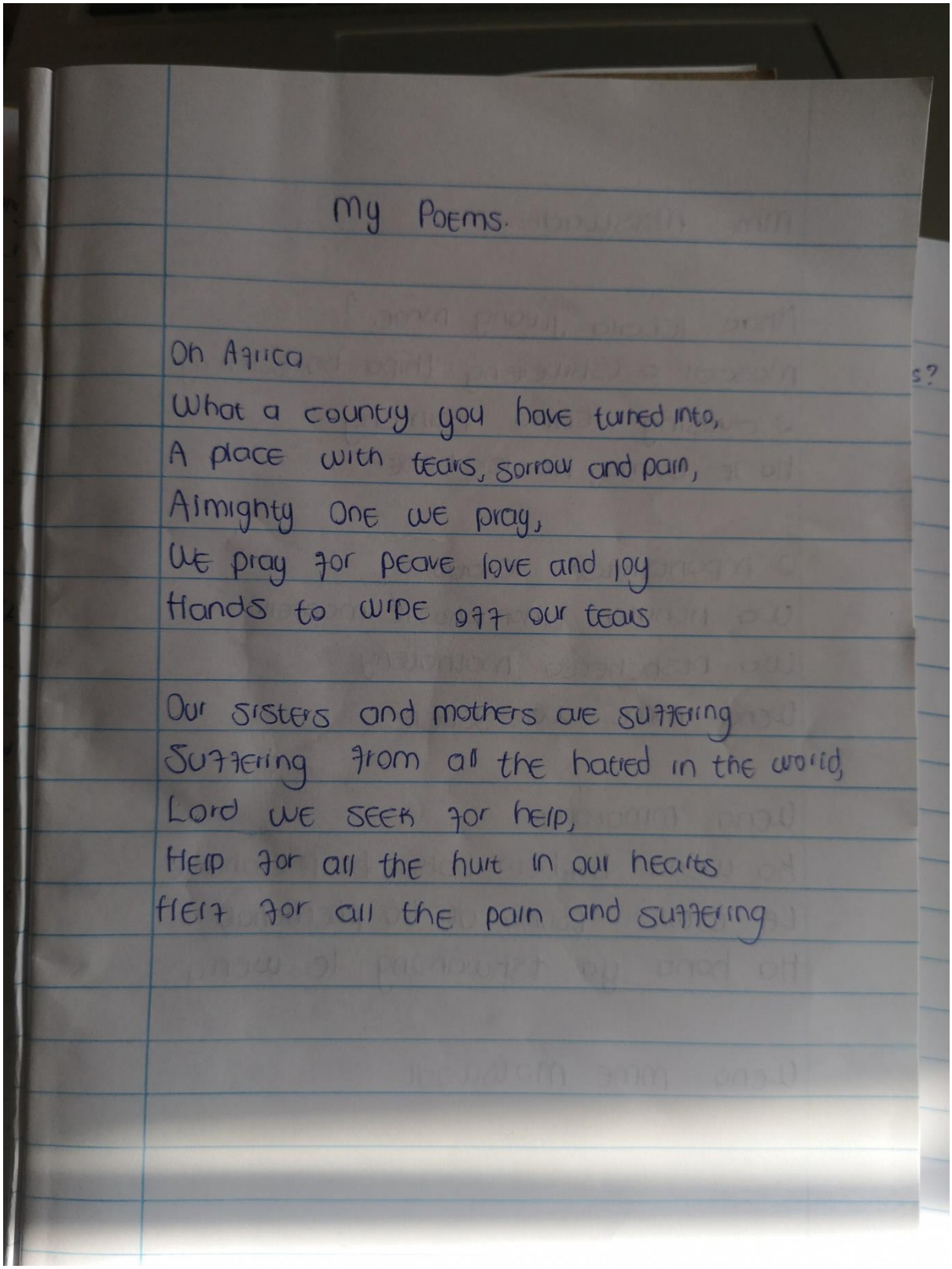
Dangerously inlove
By: Me ♡

Inlove!
Inlove!
Am I fooling myself?
Am I saying FOREVER
Again?
Was I meant to be
a love SLAVE?

'cause it got me
chained and pinned
on it!

Yes I am inlove again
deeply in it
But...
Am I suppose to cross the
High water?
Pass the burnin' fire?
Deal with HATE?...

Appendix K

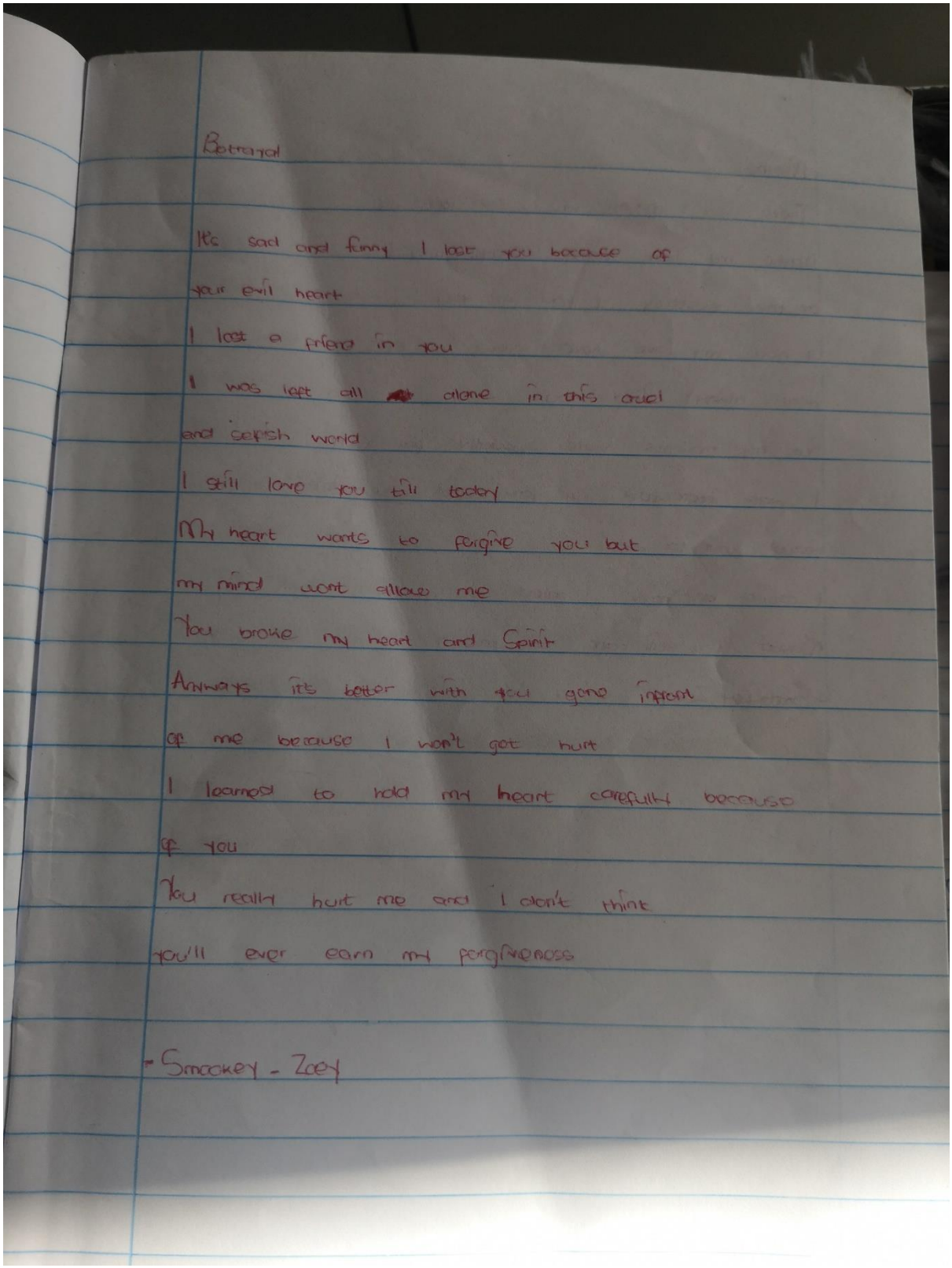


My Poems.

Oh Africa
What a county you have turned into,
A place with tears, sorrow and pain,
Almighty One we pray,
We pray for peave love and joy
Hands to wipe off our teaus

Our sisters and mothers are suffering
Suffering from all the hatred in the world,
Lord we seek for help,
Help for all the hurt in our hearts
Help for all the pain and suffering

Appendix L

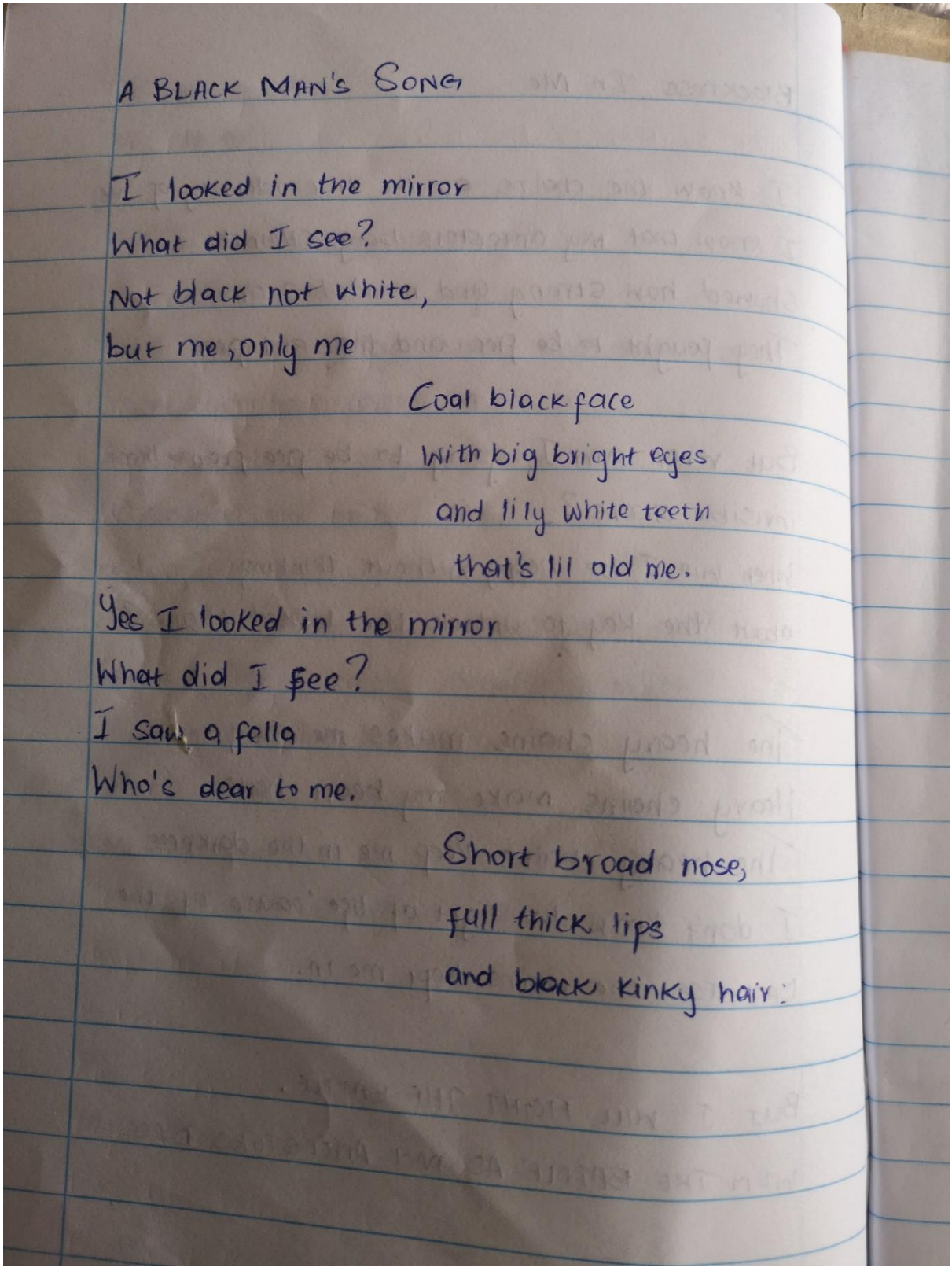


Betrayal

It's sad and funny I lost you because of
your evil heart
I lost a friend in you
I was left all alone in this cruel
and selfish world
I still love you till today
My heart wants to forgive you but
my mind wont allow me
You broke my heart and Spirit
Anyways its better with you gone inpart
of me because I won't get hurt
I learned to hold my heart carefully because
of you
You really hurt me and I don't think
you'll ever earn my forgiveness

-Smookey - Zoey

Appendix M



A BLACK MAN'S SONG

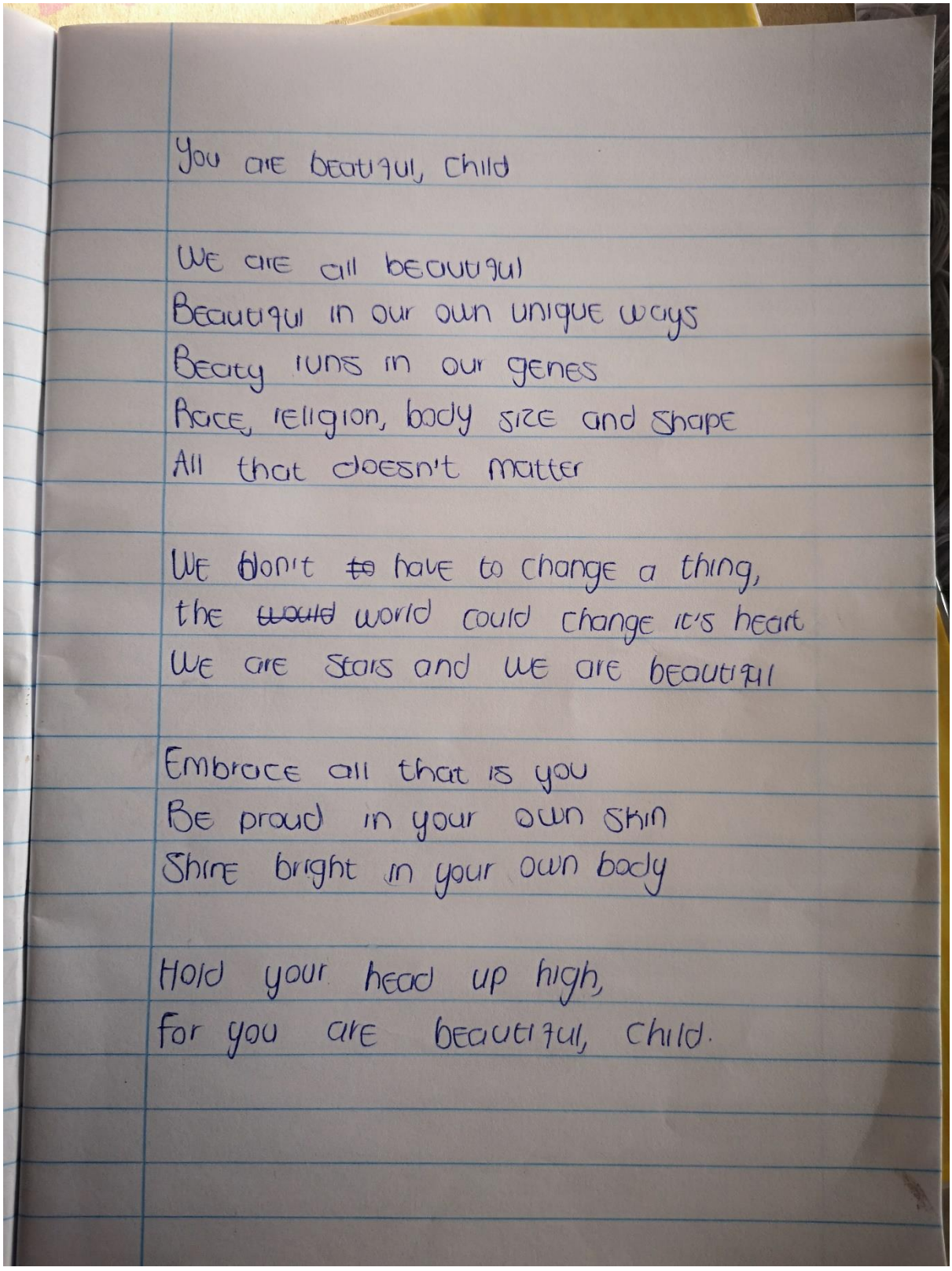
I looked in the mirror
What did I see?
Not black not white,
but me, only me

Coal blackface
With big bright eyes
and lily white teeth
that's lil old me.

Yes I looked in the mirror
What did I see?
I saw a fella
Who's dear to me.

Short broad nose,
full thick lips
and black kinky hair.

Appendix N



You are beautiful, child

We are all beautiful
Beautiful in our own unique ways
Beauty runs in our genes
Race, religion, body size and shape
All that doesn't matter

We don't ~~to~~ have to change a thing,
the ~~would~~ world could change it's heart
We are stars and we are beautiful

Embrace all that is you
Be proud in your own skin
Shine bright in your own body

Hold your head up high,
for you are beautiful, child.