

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES/PROPOSITIONS IN POETRY
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH AT TWO
LERIBE SCHOOLS**

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation titled CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES/ PROPOSITIONS IN POETRY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH AT TWO LERIBE SCHOOLS is my own work and that all sources have been duly referenced. It has not been submitted before to any other university for any other degree or examination.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late parents: *Samuel Tsekiso Felix Moea* and *Mabokang Nelly Moea*.

ABSTRACT

Poetry is a genre of composition in verse form which expresses deep feelings, noble thoughts in a rhythmic, beautiful and embellished language written with the aim of communicating an experience. These attributes of poetry can be seen as having a role in learners' development inside and outside the classroom. The learners can share their ideas and stories through learning poetry hence its value in learning and it is fundamental that teachers of poetry to high school learners are cognisant of the balance between competing tensions, including analysis in competition with appreciation, their prominence as both neophyte (apprentice) and expert readers of poetry, including the contradictory ideas of mastery of poetry that are, in history, at odds. This study examines the challenges and opportunities/propositions of poetry pedagogy and learning in two high schools in Leribe district. Focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from both teachers and learners about poetry challenges and opportunities in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. The findings show that learners and teachers are aware that poetry has roles to play culturally, linguistically and historically, not foregoing a number of challenges attached to teaching and learning inclusive of dearth of knowledge for techniques to use in teaching. The study further reveals that some teachers avoid teaching poetry due to fear of the genre and inherently negative attitudes towards it. The conclusion drawn is that teachers should have portraits of good teaching in action and learners be part of poetry; as writers and readers, enjoying all the aspects of the genre.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| - COSC | - | Cambridge Overseas School Certificate |
| - EFL | - | English as a Foreign Language |
| - ESL | - | English as a Second Language |
| - FLT | - | Foreign Language Teaching |
| - GCE O Level- | | General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level |
| - ICT | - | Information and Communication Technology |
| - JC | - | Junior Certificate |
| - LGCSE | - | Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education |
| - MOET | - | Ministry of Education and Training |
| - NCDC | - | National Curriculum Development Centre |
| - SLT | - | Second Language Teaching |
| - TT | - | Transactional Theory |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

It is in the 21st century where we have observed and continue to see various jobs growingly becoming outmoded because of the existence and growth of automation and smart technologies. This becomes even more alarming because the contemporary digital era, with its development and spread in science and technology, has changed people from reading to the world of digitalisation. As a result, those who have a desire to remain relevant would be the ones who can accomplish what machine intellectual cannot; bringing about absolutely novel solutions for unpredictable problems and challenges by thinking critically and inventively, bearing in mind relations among seemingly unrelated phenomena and drawing links sandwiched between universal and local issues. These encompass negotiating with others through collaboration and operative and effective communication. Prominently, all the above include empathy – the ability to share and understand the feelings of others with sensitivity, the aptitude to reflect on the human condition with shrewdness, and to think through the impact of their philosophies and actions on society. These skills are inherent and fundamental to the study of Literature, specifically, poetry.

Without even realising it, in most cases, high school learners hear poetry everyday as one of the novel solutions mentioned in the foregoing paragraph. Poetry is an art form that has timelessly survived around learners and they in turn survived with it since their infancy nursery rhymes, and it has followed them, a language silhouette, into their adolescence (Young, 2016). It co-exists with and in the music they listen to through their gadgets as they stroll to a shop; it is in the language they use to chat on various social media and in their peer groups; it is heard in their school shouts and inscribed in lavatory stalls (ibid, 6). Poetry is a significant literary form of personal expression, one that has been present almost as long as humanity; it is a communicative art that reveals to us the various ways in which prove that we are all identical underneath the skin and that the most central common denominator is the human heart (Grimes, 2005). This says that the existence of poetry is as old as time

itself and it is the prehistoric and most widespread of literary forms, rich in the oral and literary tradition of almost every culture.

Nonetheless, with that timelessness of poetry so obvious, smaller number of high school learners ever catch it coming from the mouths of their teachers of English and Literature or are even encouraged to discuss, analyse, write, or study it critically in their English classes. Educators, academics, critics, and poets themselves, far and wide, state publicly that poetry possesses great virtues as an art form, however it is the literary genre that is least taught in high schools today (Young, 2016; Dressman & Faust, 2014; Xerri, 2014; Benton, 2000; Fleming, 1996).

The phenomenon of current poetry pedagogy in the high school classroom, therefore, is necessary to investigate. Matter-of-factly, while many practising high school teachers of English may bring to light the constructive attitudes toward it and involvements and understandings with poetry in their classrooms, there are many other teachers who may consent for the genre to become extinct. Enquiry into the phenomenon of poetry teaching and learning, as a consequence, would seek to understand the existing experiences of currently practicing high school teachers of English and Literature as well as learners, the values of poetry and teachers' and learners' perceptions and their successes and the opportunities they unveiled or discovered and failures and challenges in the classroom of poetry pedagogy. This research seeks to gain better awareness and understanding of the problems and advantages of poetry pedagogy.

The pedagogy of poetry has long been renowned as a facet of English Language and Literature curricula, which presents clear-cut pedagogical challenges for teachers in many settings (Wilson & Myhill, 2012). Although studies have shown that teaching poetry is advantageous for learners (Iida, 2012a, Iida, 2012b; Hanauer, 2010), poetry teaching can be pronounced as negligible in the arena of teaching English (Wilson, 2010). With regard to the prominence of teaching poetry, Hanauer (2003) avows that teaching poetry stimulates understanding and tolerance because its discourse encourages empathy for and comprehension of individual experience and thus can play an integral role in advancing concepts of human diversity. Correspondingly, integrating poems into English lessons may fortify learners'

aptitudes to conjecture and 'read between the lines' from the linguistic and situational contexts of literary texts (Dymoke and Hughes, 2009).

Teachers have an undertaking to live up to; to open the door leading their learners to knowledge uncensored. Then comes another step as a requisite; igniting the learners' interestedness in learning poetry; allowing learners to, like rite of passage, enter through the 'poetry door'. This could be said to be all-embracing for all fundamentals in second language teaching (SLT) but then again when looking at the poetry door, it could be superfluously labour intensive and complicated to make the learners step over that starting point. In this regard, therefore, the strategic way is and would be for all stakeholders; teachers and curriculum developers and designers, to take part in ensuring smooth passage of learners through the poetry door, by building bridges leading to such a starting point, in order to arrive to all of those learners that will pass through one's classroom.

The compensation that follows as a result, together with achieving this task is plenteous. They could discover new thoughts and broaden their horizons of knowledge, learn about their identity, get a glimpse and an insight of history through another form of literature and mechanically and instinctively improve their target language in the process. Harmer (2001, 39) pressures the element of engaging learners in high school courses and how this spurs other profits; "teenagers, if they are engaged, have a great capacity to learn, a great potential for creativity, and a passionate commitment to things which interest them." Showalter (2006, 62) takes the notion further and explicates how poetry is like a gold-mine: "teaching poetry offers the literature instructor some of the most fundamental, immediate, active, even physical ways to engage learners in learning." Therefore, teachers need to make the lessons as interesting as possible for learners to be able to reap such prodigious benefits.

Notwithstanding the fact that poetry writing instruction is known to be of assistance in language classrooms, Hanauer (2012) suggests that many learners and teachers in English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts are skeptical about using poetry in their writing class. The reason that many teachers avoid teaching poetry writing is they think that poetry is more likely to be taught as part of the reading curriculum rather than as part of the writing curriculum. As well,

the teachers believe that poetry writing is 'difficult.' The dearth of desire to give grounding in poetry writing could be triggered by educational experiences that teachers have had, such as the level of exposure and experience in writing poetry in both their personal and academic lives.

Even though it antedates formal education, poetry is unfortunately and unfairly subordinated to other genres of Literature. At schools (in both the international and Lesotho contexts), poetry is not accorded bounteous space in the curriculum and teaching time-table. Worse still, both learners and teachers seem to fear it, thus a grossly side-lined discipline. Also, its starring role to grow human know-how and generate language awareness has not been well apprehended. Conversely, empirical investigation into the teaching of poetry writing is narrow with respect to teachers' perception of and desire to teach poetry writing.

Poetry, as one of the genres of Literature was not popular in many schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) examinations which comprised of GCE O Levels, marked and graded by Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL) in Lesotho since 1989. In COSC, Literature in English was not done by most schools and even with those that were doing it, they kept on dropping it out of the curriculum. As part of the national educational development in Lesotho, in 2013 the COSC was substituted by the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE).

LGCSE was believed to be more germane than COSC in that LGCSE is a qualification that appreciates subject performance in distinct acknowledgment unlike COSC which was based on a group award system and that all the subjects in the curriculum will have the same status and English Language ceased to be a passing or failing subject. Literature in English was separated from English Language and made one of the electives in the Social Sciences group in LGCSE in 2014 and was first examined as part of LGCSE in 2015. It is in this curriculum shift where poetry was made compulsory to all the schools that were doing Literature in English. This move, though was intended to be a positive one based on the significance and value of poetry teaching, saw more schools relinquishing the study of Literature in English. When talking with teachers of such schools, the main answer would be that they are forced to teach such a challenging genre.

In the school that I taught in when I started this study before moving to the college a local college I am now at, which is Khetha High School (not its real name), my colleagues did not teach it and claimed it to be difficult to teach and that learners do not understand it. For schools which were not in the curriculum pilot scheme, the LGCSE Literature in English syllabus was built into the three-year junior secondary syllabus where it was compulsory. “The rationale of Literature in English is to provide a basis for tertiary English courses in Lesotho and elsewhere, as well as laying a foundation for jobs and moulding professions that require empathy, communication and analysis skills” (National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL,2018, p. 2). Literary works help learners to use their imagination, enhance their empathy for others and lead them to develop their own creativity (ibid, 2) thus a dire need to have Literature in English in schools’ time-tables.

Khetha High School, a semi-urban school found in Leribe, Lesotho, is a large school comprising 1000 learners, with class sizes ranging between 38 and 66. In this school, Literature in English was phased out in the early 2000s due to high failure rate at COSC level. It has recently returned to the curriculum due to the integrated syllabus which was being piloted, and this school was one of about 98 piloting schools in the country. The piloting began in 2017 and is now at the level of Grade 11 for the second group which is forecast to write in October 2021 while the first group has sat for LGCSE 2020 examinations in February to March 2021 due to Covid 19 changes that saw the candidates not writing in October,2020 as it was planned before the prevalence of the pandemic.

In this piloting phase, LGCSE Literature in English is offered from Grade 9 to Grade 11 and it was to be compulsory but only recently, around February, 2020 a circular was released by the NCDC that declared it as an elective. This is to say, the content that was to be taught to Form D and Form E is now taught to learners in Grade 9, which can be equated to Form B of Junior Certificate (JC), which is being phased out. This appears to pose a major challenge as far as content dissemination is concerned, hence the decision to engage in this study investigating the challenges and opportunities of studying poetry in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class to ensure that the content taught tallies with the cognitive level of the learners.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although poetry appreciation is one of the components of the Literature in English programme and syllabus, I have observed that a majority of the upper secondary learners dislike and often shy away from poetry. A poem is usually not a favoured item for most ESL learners mainly because of its “deviant use” (Widdowson, 1985, cited in Byars, 2016) of language. I have also observed that learners rate poetry as making the least contribution to language skills development and they probably consider it as insignificant to any advancement in their studies or their future careers.

Although there are many advantages in integrating poetry in ESL classrooms, teachers should know and probably face the challenges in implementing poetry activities, its opportunities and how they can overcome these challenges and embrace the opportunities. Killander (2011) states that in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), teaching poetry is a challenge for teachers and learners because they should have extra thinking to get the meaning of the poem that they read especially if it is written in foreign language. This study therefore explores not only the challenges but also the opportunities in teaching and learning poetry. This problem is investigated in order to understand how to create better poetry teaching and learning environments.

1.3 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following major questions have been set to guide the direction of the study:

- What are the challenges of poetry teaching and learning?
- What are the opportunities of poetry teaching and learning?

The following subsidiary questions will be addressed in the study:

- What problems face the teaching of poetry?
- What problems face learners in studying and learning poetry?
- What are the opportunities of teaching and learning poetry?

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In my four years' experience of teaching Literature in English, I faced challenges in the school where I was teaching. I began this study while at this school but have since moved on to teacher training at a local college. One and the main challenges is the fact that other teachers of Literature in English in my school are disinterested to teach poetry and they shun even visiting classes when I am teaching a poem because they regard it as labour-intensive and boring. They even suggested that Literature should not be taught to learners in this piloting stage due to the difficulty of poetry. My colleagues who previously taught Literature in English in other schools also disclosed that since the introduction of poetry as obligatory for all schools, the number of schools that were doing Literature in English, which were already few as many other schools had done away with it from their school timetables, drastically declined, further threatening the place of Literature in English in the school and national curriculum.

Another major concern is the rather disinterested approach of learners to even buy poetry texts. Many teachers of Literature in English complain that learners are reluctant to purchase poetry texts. It was the same with my learners too, and even those who had texts were not attached to them as one would expect because they more often than not claimed to have forgotten them at their homes. It is very difficult to teach poetry when there are no texts.

Not only the aforementioned reasons constitute an impetus for this study, but also the fact that in the schools where Literature in English is done, it is an elective subject competing for space in the school curriculum with subjects like ICT, Accounting, Business Studies and Economics which learners often opt for and run away from Literature in English under the claim that they do not want to do poetry. This further poses a threat to Literature in English as a subject and thus nudges one to holistically consider the issues surrounding poetry. Having studied poetry in my first degree, and been exposed to it, I was intrigued. I could fathom similar if not identical challenges globally, and in Lesotho. Therefore, this concept challenged me to embark on this journey to explore whether this concept in Lesotho schools has an impact on challenges of teachers and learners as far as poetry pedagogy is concerned.

According to the unpublished examiner's report of Literature in English 2020 LGCSE, the performance of poetry was below par. It was observed that the performance of 2020 is exceedingly below average as compared to the previous examination in 2019. As stated in the report, candidates were spotted employing irresponsibly poetic devices and figures of speech with insignificant relevance and direct demeanour to the demands of the question. Another impediment noted was that of line adequacy, candidates duplicated the poem precisely as it was. It is also stated that A lot of rubric infringement was observed allegedly as a result of advent of grade 11 candidates. This report clearly states that there is a problem as far as teaching and learning poetry is concerned in Lesotho schools for both teachers and learners thus a call for an investigative measure in an attempt to ameliorate the status quo.

Despite the limited use of poetry in Lesotho, as it is the case in many EFL contexts worldwide, new theoretical arguments support its use as a means to enhance English language proficiency (Khatib, 2011). That is why this study reports on how a group of EFL learners and teachers responded to the challenges and opportunities of poetry in the ESL classroom. Participants' direct voices and opinions on reading poetry constituted the main data gathered and analysed, and determined the usefulness of this literary genre in this particular setting. Ultimately, this kind of study is needed so that the EFL community can start considering the contributions of poetry in the foreign language classroom.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study, through its findings, is set to help teachers in finding and devising strategies that may appear appropriate and effective in teaching poetry to learners of various grades and ameliorate their learning and demystify various fears related to poetry teaching and learning. It is also aimed at assisting learners to be provided with conducive learning strategies which are meant to enhance their learning and even find studying poetry an enticing task. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be of help as it is intended to improve teacher- learner relationship in refining their collaborative partnership in the studying of poetry and even Literature in English as a whole. This may also be of profound use at a later stage to assist the National Curriculum Development Committee (NCDC) in preparing the teaching material for

poetry teaching. In addition, the NCDC could even establish the mandatory ground for Literature in English teaching to be binding to all as part and parcel of English Language and to also understand and address learners' and teachers' challenges as far as poetry pedagogy in Literature in English is concerned.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Primarily, this study confined itself to interviewing the teachers and learners of the two schools purposively selected to the convenience of the researcher. These two schools which served as the scope of the study were selected because they have Literature in English as a subject in their syllabi. Khetha High School was doing this subject as a pilot school since 2017 whilst Letsema English Medium High School has been doing Literature in English for quite a long time; since the inception of the school in the early 1980s thus making the results comparative. This study was conducted in Leribe, the northern district of Lesotho. Only two schools were selected to ensure the study was manageable in terms of affordability and scope. Additionally, the study was delimited to schools that did Literature at LGCSE level to ensure collection of relevant data.

The selected participants taken from these two schools (inclusive of Grade 9, 10 and 11 teachers) were purposively selected. As an academic study intended to be run qualitatively, the selected participants, who were divided into focus groups, satisfied the minimum regulations regarding the depth of the study.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory used to underpin this study is the Transactional Theory (TT). The transactional approach is a teaching literary theory proposed by Rosenblatt (2002) who emphasises that meaning does not exist in the literary text, but emerges through the reciprocal relationship between the reader and the text. Reading a poem and any other literary text involves a "transaction" in which the reader is enthused by the text for creation and formulation of meaning and the text acquires its meanings when the reader brings his/her personal feelings, knowledge, and experiences to the reading. In his argument, Rosenblatt contends that the term 'interaction' summons a

depiction of detached and dispersed objects bumping into one another but continuing for all intents and purposes unchanged, and thus is an inadequate and ambiguous and confusing label for the mutually shaping exchange between reader and text. With transactional theory, the relationship between reader and text is much like that between the river and its banks, each working its effects upon the other, each contributing to the shape of the poem.

According to transactional theory, a great deal of emphasis is situated on the role of the reader. So long as meaning is inherent not in the text but rather in the portrayal by the reader, it is needless to say then that the discussion of literature stresses consideration of the mind of the individual reader or groups of readers. It appeals for us to perceive the reading act as an event that comprises a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group (Rosenblatt, 1985).

Such a conception affirms the significance of the unique reader, suggesting that reading should not be submission to the text or an effort to overpower the personal and distinctive in a search for a purified reading, uncontaminated by the reader's individuality. In order for a transaction with a text to take place, several prerequisites are necessary. Karolides (2000) points to the language of the text and the reader's willingness to engage. "The language of a text, the situation, the characters, or the expressed issues can "dissuade the reader from comprehension of the text and thus inhibit involvement with it" (Karolides, 2000, p. 6). Few people can fully enjoy a text that overstretches their skill. One of the reasons why many learners place reading low on their list of leisure time activities is because the books they are reading are too difficult to allow easy and enjoyable reading (Harris and Sipay, 1985, p. 575). In effect, a reader with insufficient linguistic or experiential background may struggle to relate to the text.

Transactional theory asserts that the reader's distinctiveness must be appreciated and well thought out; that readers at the outset comprehend and appreciate a work only on the basis of prior experience. They cannot make sense of a text except by seeing it in the light of other experiences, other texts inclusive (Liang and Galda, 2009). The reader's background, the feelings, memories, and associations called

forth by the reading, are not only relevant, they are serve as the foundation upon which understanding of a text is built. It is in this light that a conclusive statement about TT can be made; transactional theory calls for the reader to reflect upon what they bring to any reading, and to acknowledge and examine the responses it evokes.

Transactional theory demands attention, in other words, to who the readers are, what they bring to the text, the expectations they have of texts, and the choices they make as they read. The choice of stance may be most crucial. Rosenblatt (2002) distinguishes between the efferent stance, in which the reader is primarily concerned with what he will carry away as information from the text, and the aesthetic stance, in which the reader focuses primarily upon the experience lived through during the reading.

The efferent stance is that appropriate to one seeking information (Liang and Galda, 2009). It is the stance adopted by the amateur mechanic intent upon learning, from the manual, how to repair a carburettor. The mechanic reads to extract from the text the information necessary to accomplish a particular task. The rhythms and sounds of the language are of less interest than its accuracy and simplicity. If the prose is graceful, so much the better, but the primary concern is with the task at hand. The efferent is also the stance of listeners attempting to judge the claims and promises of a political candidate. In their transactions with such a text, not only may they not wish to be swayed by the felicities of the prose, but they may also have to guard against the possibility that the pleasures of the language, its compelling rhythms and vivid images, may obscure defects in logic, inadequacies in evidence, and other such matters significant in the analysis of the message.

The aesthetic stance, on the other hand, is that of the reader who comes to a text in a less directive frame of mind, seeking not particular information or the accomplishment of an assigned task, but rather the full emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual experience offered by the text (Rosenblatt, 2002). Rosenblatt claims that a reader adopting such a stance attends not only to content; the information, story, or argument offered, but also to the feelings evoked, the associations and memories aroused, the stream of images that pass through the mind during the act of reading. Such reading, in other words, is not undertaken simply as preparation for another experience-fixing a car or voting-but as an experience itself.

Which stance the reader takes or more accurately, where the reader stands on the spectrum represented by aesthetic and efferent, determines the extent to which experience of a particular text will be literary. Dressman and Webster (2001) claim that although the text may contain strong clues that suggest the appropriate stance (as does a poem, with its obvious arrangement in lines and stanzas, and a legal document, with its own set of distinguishing features), a reader may choose to approach it as a source of information-efferent - or as a source of poetic experience aesthetically.

Transactional theory offers the teacher of literature several assumptions and principles. Pradle (1988) asserts that TT puts forward that the poem resides within the reader, fashioned in the act of reading, rather than in the text. The poem and any literary work are thus unfixed, variable, poles apart for each reader, and divergent even for a single reader from one reading to the next. It is in this light that teachers therefore do not lead classes carefully along to foreseen conclusions, sustained by critical authority, about literary works. They rather face the challenging yet thought-provoking duty of accepting the matchlessness of the reader and each reading, accommodating the dissimilarities, and crafting out of that material noteworthy discussion and writing.

One other consideration in transactional theory is the primary responses from learners. Learners are stimulated to have a high opinion about themselves and their opinions and examine their responses; emotions, associations, memories, images, ideas (Rosenblatt, 2002). Out of those elements, they will craft their understandings of the text. Instruction channelled by this theory turns out to be a matter of encouraging learners to articulate responses, examine their origins in the text (Bowen, 2009) and in other experiences, reflect upon them, and analyse them in the light of other readings, those of other learners and critics, and of other information about the literature.

Under transactional theory, it has to be seen that classroom atmosphere is supportive. If learners are to survive through and with these matters, many of which will be personal, the literature classroom must be cooperative rather than combative (Hsu, 2004). Debate, where one wins and one loses, one is right and the other wrong, is not an appropriate model for most discussion of literature. Discussions

should hearten learners not to triumph but to clarify and refine. learners are thus heartened to cross the threshold into a reciprocal, conjointly defining relationship in their discussions with other learners and teachers, as well as in their readings of texts.

The commencement of literary knowledge is long-drawn-out in TT. As asserted by Rodriguez (2017), the products of such reflection and discussion might be superior knowledge of self, of the text, and of the others with whom the learner talks. Even though the ability to read intelligently, to observe features of language, to draw inferences about writers, texts, and genres, to express critical judgments, and all the other goals traditional in the literature classroom remain important, transactional theory also suggests that literature may lead to sharpened understanding of ourselves and our society. According to Rosenblatt (1984) cited in Rodriguez (2017), the literary transaction in itself may become a self-liberating process, and the sharing of our responses may be an even greater means of overcoming our limitations of personality and experience.

Relationship to other literary studies is key. Transactional theory accepts the validity of other approaches to literature. Historical, biographical, and cultural perspectives may all yield insight into literature. But the theory does assert that the fundamental literary experience is the encounter of a reader, a unique individual, with a text. Jauss (1982) points out that

...even the critic who judges a new work, the writer who conceives of his work in light of positive or negative norms of an earlier work, and the literary historian who classifies a work in its tradition and explains it historically are first simply readers.

1.7.1 Principles of instruction

According to Probst (1988), the principles of instruction implicit in transactional theory might be inferred as the following:

- Instruction invites response. Teachers must spell out to learners that their responses, emotional and intellectual, are binding starting points for discussion and writing.

- Teaching should give ideas time to take shape. That is to say, instructors should hold up learners in reflecting upon their responses, if at all possible, before hearing others.
- Also, instruction should be structured such that it finds points of contact among learners and helps them to see the potential for communication among their different points of view.
- Instruction should further allow an open up atmosphere for the discussion to the topics of self, text, and others. The literary experience should be an opportunity to learn about all three.
- Let the discussion construct learners holistically; learners should feel free to transform their cognizance, on the lookout for insight rather than victory.
- Learners should be able to look back to other texts, other discussions, other experiences in order for them to connect the reading with other experiences.
- Instruction should allow learners the ability to look for the next step. What might they read next? About what might they write?

1.7.2 Literary knowledge

The epistemology at the base of transactional theory returns the responsibility for learning to the learner. Knowledge, especially knowledge of literature, is not something to be found, not something the teacher can give to the learner (Probst, 1988). Rather, it is to be created by the individual through exchanges with texts and other readers.

Rosenblatt claims that each reader is capable of finding personal interpretations that could differ from those of the author and those of other readers, depending on personal and academic experiences, contextual factors, and sociocultural backgrounds. Understanding and interpreting texts demands two kinds of stances called *the efferent reading* and *the aesthetic reading* (Rosenblatt, 1995; 2002). The former refers to the act of reading a literary text in order to get information and gain meaning out of it. At this level, readers produce responses by focusing on implicit meaning based on rational interpretations (Probst, 1987). Although various interpretations may arise during the efferent transaction, they are only valid with evidence and convincing arguments (Probst, 1988).

Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, embraces the literary pleasure that the reader experiences during the transactional process. Meaning is also possible when the reader responds emotionally to literary language. Rosenblatt (1995) states, “any literary work gains its significance from the way in which the minds and emotions of particular readers respond to the verbal stimuli offered by the text” as the reader discovers that literature “arises a sense of organized structure of perceptions and feelings which constitutes for him the aesthetic experience” (p. 28). Consequently, the reader may trigger feelings of joy, pleasure, sadness, or fear through the words, images, the tone, and topics in a poem.

Furthermore, Rosenblatt (1995) emphasises that the transactional reading process comprises of a continuum flanked by the efferent stance and the aesthetic stance through relating with the literary text. The reader can regulate whether embracing, for the most part, the aesthetic stance or a principally efferent stance. One can even practise both stances during the reading event. The reader’s logic and feelings, or what Rosenblatt (2002) calls “the mind and emotions of some particular reader” (p. 32), play an important part in the construction of meaning during the reading act.

These assertions can be validated by the following maxims:

- I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand. ~
Confucius, 450 BC
- Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I will learn.
~ Benjamin Franklin, 1750

Therefore, this theory will be rightly used to underpin this research in order to assist teaching, learning and understanding of poetry by both teachers and learners, allowing each party involved in pedagogy and knowledge transmission and retention to develop an autonomous understanding and judgement of the challenges and opportunities of poetry teaching and learning. Furthermore, this theory is appropriated for this study by its premises that both the educator and the learner must be critical of their beliefs and educators can encourage critical reflection and experience with discourse through the implementation of methods including metaphor analysis, etc. Also, this study embraced the principles of transactional reading to be implemented in the EFL classroom so that learners could realise and

appreciate, in its truest form, literary language, negotiate meaning, and yield critical thinking through poetry.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises nine parts. It is first going to attempt to define what Literature is and also explain the need to study Literature and the challenges facing Literature. It will then go on to the second part which will engage with the different genres of Literature. Thirdly, there will be a detailed expansion on the genre of poetry. Then the fourth part will delve into values of poetry while the fifth section will discuss the challenges of teaching and learning poetry. The sixth section will deal with opportunities of teaching and learning poetry while the seventh part will expound on different poetry teaching strategies. The eighth will deal with the principles of effective teaching of poetry and the last part will discuss the role of teachers in poetry pedagogy.

2.2 LITERATURE AND ITS IMPORTANCE

2.2.1. What is Literature?

Trying to comprehend with accuracy what literature is has always been daunting; pinioning an all-round designation has proven to be difficult. In actual fact, at times one seems to be reduced to saying, "Anything is literature if you want to read it that way." Occasionally, the motivation for a specific definition appears like the work of copyright lawyers, aimed primarily at stopping people from using the word 'literature' for works which have not been licensed as literature by The Critics, by the keepers of the tradition, by "all high school English teachers," and so on.

Speaking from the heart, I can say Literature is an integral record of what men have perceived and embarked on in life, what they have practised of it, what they have thought and touched about those facets of it which have the most immediate and lasting interest for all of us. It is the interpretation of life and life shapes itself in the mind of the interpreter. We care for literature because we care for life, because we are interested in knowing the varied aspects of it, because we like to know how men and women live life and think about life.

Almost no one is now so simple as to think that The Critics, the high school teachers, or anyone else has a monolithic front on the question—yet most discussions seem to veer either in the direction of a dictatorial definition based on certain critical assumptions, or towards a definition based solely on whatever a particular reader chooses to call literature. This broad way of definition of literature gives the impression of being vague and amorphous in that it includes works that are not literature per se, the likes of works in arenas of Education, Biology, History and a mass of others by virtue of the fact that they are written. However, they cannot qualify as real literature. The narrow definition delineates literature from its general purview to what can be called literature as a subject of study. A perusal of some more definitions will provide a clearer light on the real nature of literature.

There are many definitions as far as the concept 'literature' is concerned. Literature, most generically, is any body of written works (Zhen, 2012). More restrictively, literature refers to writing considered to be an art form or any single writing deemed to have artistic or intellectual value, often due to deploying language in ways that differ from ordinary usage. Its Latin root *litteratura/litteratura* (derived itself from *littera*: letter or handwriting) was used to refer to all written accounts (Erdem, 2016). Tasneen (2010) states that the concept has changed meaning over time to include texts that are spoken or sung (oral literature), and non-written verbal art forms. It can therefore be concluded, based on these definitions that any written piece can be categorised under the nomenclature literature.

Definitions of literature have varied over time. A more restricted sense of the term emerged during the Romantic period, in which it began to demarcate "imaginative" writing (Ruubel and Laanemets, 2012). Contemporary debates over what constitutes literature can be seen as returning to older, more inclusive notions; Cultural studies, for instance, takes as its subject of analysis both popular and minority genres, in addition to canonical works (Erdem, 2016). The value judgment definition of literature considers it to cover exclusively those writings that possess high quality or distinction, forming part of the so-called *belles-lettres* ('fine writing') tradition (Ruubel and Laanemets, 2012). Ruubel and Laanemets further clarify that this definition is that used in the *Encyclopædia Britannica Eleventh Edition* (1910–11) when it classifies literature as the unsurpassed expression of the finest thought condensed

to writing. Problematic in this view is that there is no objective definition of what constitutes literature; anything can be literature, and anything which is universally regarded as literature has the potential to be excluded, since value judgments can change over time (Erdem, 2016).

The formalist definition is that “literature” foregrounds poetic effects; it is the “literariness” or “poetic” of literature that distinguishes it from ordinary speech or other kinds of writing (e.g., journalism) (Erdem, 2016). Jim Meyer deliberates this as a useful distinguishing feature in explaining the operationalisation of the term to mean published material in a particular field (e.g., ‘scientific literature’), thus writing must use language appropriately according to particular standards (Singh, 2010). The problem with the formalist definition is that in order to say that literature deviates from ordinary uses of language, those uses must first be identified; this is difficult because ‘ordinary language’ is an unstable category, differing according to social categories and across history.

There are different classifications of literature by scholars as it surfaces from the foregoing paragraph. To begin with, Literature is classified according to whether it is fiction or non-fiction, and whether it is poetry or prose (Andrews, 2010). Also, Goodwyn and Fuller (2011) add that it can be further distinguished according to major forms such as the novel, short story, poetry or drama; and works are often branded according to historical periods or their adherence to certain aesthetic features or expectations (genres). John McRae makes a distinction between literature with a capital L - the classical texts e.g. Shakespeare, Dickens - and literature with a small l, referring to popular fiction, fables and song lyrics (Duff & Maley, 2007).

In the same line, Pulverness (2003) reiterates that the literature used in classrooms today is no longer restricted to canonical texts from certain countries e.g. UK, USA, but includes the work of writers from a diverse range of countries and cultures using different forms of English (Turner, 2014). An increasing number of stories in English are written specifically for learners of other languages. Literary texts provide opportunities for multi-sensorial classroom experiences and can appeal to learners with different learning styles (Duff and Maley, 2007).

Lazar (2009) defines literature as a domain of fantasy, horrors, feelings, thoughts, vision etc. imaginatively organised into words. Correspondingly, Collie and Slater (2009) hold that Literature deals with an open-handed and extremely diverse organisation of written material and regard it as 'important' in the sense that it says something about fundamental human issues, and which is enduring rather than fleeting. According to Meyer (1997), Literature is the imaginative work that pictures the human life in society which can be enjoyed, understandable, and used by the society also. The writer will write the consequence of this imagination in a form of literary works.

The literary work has its own definition taken from each different literature expert. According to Dirgeyasa (2017) the literary work is as the picture of the world and human life, the main criteria that is put on the literary work is 'truth', or everything that wants to be pictured by the author. Through that process, the reader of their literary work will be able to catch the characteristic of the author related with the world around him/her. People who work in literature usually represent their work in such kind of literary works, like the term of literature itself, where literature is a term used to describe written or spoken material.

Broadly speaking, one can say 'literature' is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. Literature represents a language or a culture and tradition. Nevertheless, literature is more important than just a historical or cultural artefact (Pradopo, 1994). Literature could be in written form and spoken form such as novel, short story, poetry, drama, oral literature and many other forms. In conclusion, literature is an art of writing and a medium to express thoughts, feelings and emotions reflecting the mirror of the society. Literature can thus be summed up as permanent expressions in words, especially arranged in pleasing accepted patterns or forms conveying thoughts, feelings, ideas or other special aspects of human experiences.

2.2.2. Reasons for studying Literature

In the 21st century, when societies contemplate the locus and study of Literature as a discipline, both for the individual and society, the most rudimentary and recurrently pronounced question is, "why does the study of Literature matter?" The riposte to that is that Literature is one of the significant aspects of English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. According to Hennessy, Hinchion and McNamara (2010), Literature in English and conventional school subjects are the indispensable parts of the curriculum. Boas (1931, as cited in Violetta-Irene, 2013) outlines literature as the assemblage of human's expression, ideas, and emotion. This then makes it a sound annotation that literature forms an integral part in honing the critical thinking of human beings on how they appreciate the world and therefore it is in the eyes of Boas that this study will operationalise and rationalise Literature. Moreover, in the second language courses, literature has the important role especially for being resources in language teaching (Sharminnie, Vasuthavan and Kunaratnam, 2009). It means that in teaching English Language, Literature in English can be used as one of the authentic sources and cornucopia of language. Teachers can implement teaching English through Literature in their ELT classrooms.

For Literature learners, one dire consideration is the virtuous: the study of Literature has the ability to nurture mindfulness and alertness of the variety of viewpoints that human beings - alienated by time, space and culture - are capable of developing (Tsai, 2012). This amplified awareness, as highlighted by Violetta-Irene (2013), indorses fellow feeling (empathy) and world-wide mindfulness. Learners therefore become cognisant of and reassess their own values, beliefs and biases. The aesthetic thought is also vital. This is evident in the process where the practice of close reading stimulates deep and finely tuned and intensified kindness in the direction of language, while assisting learners in appreciation of the ample nuances and stratum of meaning in texts around them (Xerri, 2014). In the same vein, the study of Literature also sensitises them to the creative decisions made and constructed transversely across an eclectic range of artistic endeavours, and obliges as a gateway to the Arts (Iida, 2012), further manifesting a great deal of importance of Literature.

Finally, there is the intellectual consideration. Xerri (2014) posits that learners improve metacognitive behaviours of mind as they continually pay attention to the

influence of language on thoughts and feelings, and are penetrating to the places in a text that appeal for deeper reflection and processing. Learners' minds get to be educated to concede and contemplate numerous angles, even as they learn to convert others to their interpretations. At the same time, as may be observed, learners develop a greater reception for ambiguity and open-endedness. These three goals have national significance and complement the desired outcomes of education.

In the vision of the Singapore Literature in English syllabus, according to the Ministry of Education in Singapore (2019), it is stipulated that the study of Literature empowers learners to make meaning of texts, and see themselves and the world from diverse perspectives. In congruence to this, MOET and NCDC (2018, p. 2), in the Literature in English syllabus, state that the teaching of Literature in English 'provides insights into what other people think, do and say and helps learners to see more through the eyes of others.' It can be drawn then that, based on these assertions, Literature pedagogy inspires learners to empathise with others, to find their own voice as they reflect on the human condition and to consider the impact of their beliefs and actions on society.

One of the objectives to be attained at the finish of the literature syllabus is to enable learners to provide their personal responses to the texts and also to display an awareness of how language is operationalised in attainment of a particular purpose (ECOL, 2018). From my professional experiences as a teacher, many learners, conversely, are far from accomplishing these objectives in reading and understanding literary works for several reasons. One conspicuous thing which even some teachers are unconscious of is the role of literary know-how. Research carried out by Carter and Long (1991), as cited in Sharminnie, Vasuthavan and Kunaratnam (2009), revealed that the study of literature is somewhat unworkable if the learner does not have the literary competency and a certain extent of sophistication and acquaintance with the certain cultural conventions as this will make learning the language a "laborious task" (p.2).

Language proficiency alone is not enough for learners to read, understand and appreciate literary works. Matter- of- factly, it is the failure to appreciate literary texts

that keeps learners away. Their knowledge of language would permit them in understanding study of phrases and sentences, but they would not know, quite literally, what to make of bizarre concatenation of phrases embedded in literary texts (Sharminnie, Vasuthavan and Kunaratnam, 2009). Consequently, learners would be incapable of reading it as literature because they lack the literary competence which enables others to proceed. They would not have internalised the 'grammar' of literature which would allow them to translate linguistic sequences into literary structures and meanings.

2.2.3 Challenges facing Literature

Teaching and learning foreign literature could be a daunting task for both the instructors and learners. Course designers always have to reflect upon issues that are likely to have effect on the practical implementations of what they design. In this respect, in the case of English literature course, designed for study by EFL learners, it is important to see if learners' proficiency levels in English comply or not with the curricular standards in order to ensure the sustainability of the programme. Like other purposeful activities we choose to engage in, literature teaching is a political act. This instructional practice results from a complex interaction among varied forces, including instructors' conception of what literature is, how it might contribute to human development, what learners are capable of learning and how literature should be learned and what resources—both internal and external—are at the instructors' disposal. To make things even more complicated, these determinant factors are themselves fluid, making it virtually impossible to make fixed generalizations across contexts.

Krishnasamy (2015) makes an assertion that unless the program replicates learners' real levels of proficiency, it risks producing a dire incongruity in the middle of the selection of texts and learners' language competence which inevitably would have a destructive effect on the course enactment. In congruence to this, Isikh and Tarakcioglu (2017) affirm that there is no doubt that learners should possess satisfactory command of English to guarantee they can keep up with the pace and workload of the Literature in English package. After all, Literature in English is a serious academic discipline. The controversy surfaces when decision-making is

prerequisite with regard to the question of what should be the aptitude levels of learners to make them eligible to study Literature.

In addition to proficiency levels, while motivation and self-confidence are measured as significant aspects in terms of their influence on learner performance, field knowledge and teacher training are equally and substantially important in terms of their effect on teacher performance. In a study by Katz (2001), teachers of English thought themselves professionally incompetent in teaching Literature, blaming for this the pre-service training they had received for its primary focus on English language teaching in disregard of Literature in English. Keeping in same vein, Karci and Vural (2011) argue that, let alone Literature, teachers often do not even think to be qualified to teach English language, hence, learners 'meagre command of English Language. This serves as a conducive environment for failure of Literature by learners.

There are numerous other challenges facing the pedagogy and learning of Literature in English. Notwithstanding this reason and for the purpose of the focus of this study, which is on pedagogy and learning of poetry, these aforementioned challenges will suffice.

2.3 GENRES OF LITERATURE

Literature is a full-fledged discipline of language. It is complete in itself with its genres. The three main genres are described in the sections that follows.

2.3.1 Poetry

Poetry is considered one of the oldest forms of literature, as it has been stated in chapter 1. It is a piece of creative writing which is generally composed in verse. Poetry is, according to Dressman and Faust (2014), a conventional form of art where one can find aesthetic pleasure and knowledge expressed in beautiful language, thought, forms, emotion and rhythm. In poetry, sentences are sometimes broken into parts and each part is on its own line. Poetry is usually shorter than other genres. In poetry, sound and meaning of language are compiled to create ideas and feelings and language is connotative.

2.3.2 Drama

Drama or a play, in the words of Abrams (2005) as cited in Xerri (2014) is the art form of work designed for theatrical performance, in which actors assume the roles of the characters, performs the indicated actions and utter the written dialogue. The elements of drama are plot, characters, setting, theme, conflict and dialogue. The different forms of drama are tragedy, comedy, tragic comedy and farce.

2.3.3 Prose

Prose is a form or technique of language that exhibits a natural flow of speech and grammatical structure. It comprises the novel, short stories, and newspaper articles as its examples. Novel is defined as an extended piece of prose fiction; there is no consensus among writers and critics as to its length (Tsai, 2012). Novel might be fictional and nonfictional. According to Tsai, the fiction novels are written with imaginary characters and events but non-fictional novels narrate the true history of someone or something.

2.4 POETRY

2.4.1 What is poetry?

Poetry is one of the literary texts which instrumentalises the words to particularly put across the writer's emotions, feelings and thoughts. Linguistic structures are regularly dishonored in poetry. It adheres to, by and large, the musical compositions like rhythm, rhyme, meter, tone etc. Special rhetorical devices like simile, metaphor, irony, paradox and so on are evident in poetry (Killander, 2011). Hanauer (2010) posits that poetry is categorically labeled as a diverged variety of the norms of language. Poetry recognises syntax, flexible to invention of its own vocabulary, unreservedly mixed registers and brings forth its own punctuation. Thus, the language of poetry makes learners aware of the fact that language is not always governed by the rigid body of rules (Xerri, 2014). It develops learners' interpretative abilities and creativity. Therefore, one of the literary activities that can benefit learners in learning English in ELT classrooms is learning poetry.

Poetry is all words that represent the author's feelings and experiences (Wilson & Myhill, 2012). Congruently, Olila and Jantas (2006) underline that poetry is any nomenclature of oral or transcribed language that is rhythmically structured and also

is intended for story- telling, or expression of any kind of emotion, idea, or state of being and it is used to achieve this artistic expression in several ways. To sum up all the definitions: Poetry is a genre of composition in verse form which expresses deep feelings, noble thought in a rhythmic, beautiful and embellished language written with the aim of communicating an experience. It becomes evident then that learners can share their ideas and stories through learning poetry hence its value in learning.

2.4.2 Types of poetry

When studying poetry, it is useful first of all to consider the theme and the overall development of the theme in the poem (Attridge, 2000). Obviously, the sort of development that takes place depends to a considerable extent on the type of poem one is dealing with. Hollander (2001) asserts, 'it is useful to keep two general distinctions in mind: lyric poetry and narrative poetry.'

2.4.2.1 Lyric Poetry

A lyric poem is a comparatively short, non-narrative poem in which a single speaker presents a state of mind or an emotive state (Crisp, 2005). Lyric poetry retains some of the elements of song which is said to be its origin: For Greek writers the lyric was a song accompanied by the lyre (Gayley and Young, 2005). Lyric poetry is a genre that, unlike epic poetry, does not attempt to tell a story but instead is of a more personal nature. Rather than depicting characters and actions, it portrays the poet's own feelings, states of mind, and perceptions. (Kirk, 2010) One notable poet in this genre is Edna St. Vincent Millay whose poem in the LGCSE is *Sonnet 29* also known as *Pity Me Not* and another example of such a poem in LGCSE Literature syllabus is *Song to the Men of England* by Percy Bysshe Shelley. This is one type that is problematic to learners especially in identifying how or what makes it a lyric poem.

Subcategories of the lyric are, for example elegy, ode, sonnet and dramatic monologue and most occasional poetry:

2.4.2.2 Elegy

In modern usage, Kennedy (2007) posits that elegy is a formal lament for the death of a particular person (for example Tennyson's *in Memoriam A.H.H.*). More broadly

defined, the term elegy is also used for serious contemplations every so often on enquiries of death, for example, Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (Blasing, 2006). In the LGCSE Literature syllabus, the examples of an elegy are *Lament* by Gillian Clarke and *Mid-Term Break* by Seamus Heaney.

2.4.2.3 An Ode

An ode is a long lyric poem with a serious subject written in an elevated style (Gray, 2000). Ode is an elaborate and elevated lyric poem, extending over quite a few stanzas, and addressed to a person or thing or to an abstraction (for example, melancholy). In its more straightforwardly outlined structure and form, it purely acclaim the subject, but as it advanced in the romantic period, the typical ode became more cautious and philosophical.

An ode is always addressed to somebody (or something) who seems to transcend the problems of life, and thus stands as a symbol of perfection. It turns out to be more complex, all the same, if the poet commences interrogating the status of the object addressed. Famous examples are Wordsworth's *Hymn to Duty* or Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn*.

2.4.2.4 The Sonnet

The sonnet, as stated by Gayley and Young (2005) was formerly a love poem which dealt with the lover's sufferings and hopes. It originated in Italy and became popular in England in the Renaissance, when Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey translated and imitated the sonnets written by Petrarch (Petrarchan sonnet) (Monte, 2000). From the seventeenth century onwards, the sonnet was also used for other topics than love, for instance for religious experience (by Donne and Milton), reflections on art (by Keats or Shelley) or even the war experience (by Brooke or Owen) (Kirk, 2010). The sonnet uses a single stanza of (usually) fourteen lines and an intricate rhyme pattern. Many poets wrote a series of sonnets linked by the same theme, purported sonnet cycles (for instance Petrarch, Spenser, Shakespeare, Drayton, Barrett-Browning, Meredith) which represent the numerous phases of a love relationship (Kirk, 2010). In my experience, the sonnet poses major problems to both learners and teacher for many are unable to identify the meter used in each sonnet and even the themes, probably due to lack of research. There are two examples of

this in the LGCSE syllabus. They are *On the Grasshopper and the Cricket* by John Keats and *Pity Me Not* by Edna St Vincent Millay.

2.4.2.5 A Dramatic Monologue

According to Kennedy (2007), a dramatic monologue a speaker, who is explicitly someone other than the author, makes a speech to a silent auditor in a specific situation and at a critical moment. In the same breath, Monte (2000) adds by claiming that, without intending to do so, the speaker reveals aspects of his temperament and character. Dramatic monologue is a poem in which an imaginary speaker addresses an audience. According to Monte (2000), the poem usually takes place at a critical moment in the speaker's life and deals with an indirect revelation of his or her temperament and personality. In addition, monologue is conversational, succeeding and following the patterns and structures of the speaker's voice.

One additional observation that can be made is that, entirely, dramatic monologues communicate one person's response and view to life. The point of all dramatic monologue has in common is that they do not present the poet's direct view of life, but take one step back and examine how imagined characters try to impose a shape and interpretation on the world they encounter. As in so much literature, we are concerned with the world's lack of pattern and man's attempt to pattern, understand, and find some meaning in experience. LGCSE literature example is *Dover Beach* by Matthew Arnold.

2.4.2.6 Occasional Poetry

Occasional poetry is written for a specific and definite occasion; a wedding (then it is called an epithalamion, for instance Spenser's *Epithalamion*), the return of a king from exile (for instance Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*) or a death (for example Milton's *Lycidas*), etc. (Attridge, 2000).

2.4.2.7 Narrative Poetry

Narrative poetry gives a verbal representation, in verse, of a sequence of connected events, it propels characters through a plot. It is always told by a narrator (see narrator in narrative prose). Narrative poems might tell of a love story (like Tennyson's *Maud*), the story of a father and son (like Wordsworth's *Michael*) or the deeds of a hero or heroine (like Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*).

Sub-categories of narrative poetry are for example: epic, mock-epic or ballad.

2.4.2.7.1 Epic

Epics usually operate on a large scale, both in length and topic, such as the founding of a nation (Virgil's *Aeneid*) or the beginning of world history (Milton's *Paradise Lost*), they tend to use an elevated style of language and supernatural beings take part in the action (Kennedy, 2007). Epic can be regarded as the most ambitious kind of poetry that deals with great heroes of a time whose action determined the fate of their nation or of mankind. With this type, the poet does not just solely concentrate on story-telling but they make an effort to embrace all his knowledge and the human experience at large. Epic is majestic both in theme and style and deals with renowned or historical events of national or universal worth, involving action of broad sweep and magnificence.

2.4.2.7.2 The mock-epic

The mock-epic, according to Blasing (2006), makes use of epic conventions, like the elevated style and the assumption that the topic is of great importance, to deal with completely insignificant occurrences. A celebrated example is Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, which articulates the story of a young beauty whose suitor secretly cuts off a lock of her hair (Blasing, 2006).

2.4.2.7.3 A Ballad

A ballad is a song, originally transmitted orally, which tells a story. It is an important form of folk poetry which was adapted for literary uses from the sixteenth century onwards (Hollander, 2001). The ballad stanza is usually a four-line stanza, alternating tetrameter and trimeter. *She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways* by William Wordsworth is a typical example of a ballad found in LGCSE Literature in English syllabus, together with Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach*. *Dover Beach* is regarded by both teachers and learners as challenging because of its implicit layers of meaning. Teachers even go as far as revealing that they do not know how best to teach it.

2.4.3 Descriptive and Didactic Poetry

Both lyric and narrative poetry can contain lengthy and detailed descriptions (descriptive poetry) or scenes in direct speech (dramatic poetry).

The purpose of a didactic poem is primarily to teach something. A didactic poem can take the form of very specific instructions, such as how to catch a fish, as in James Thomson's *The Seasons* (Spring 379-442) or how to write good poetry as in Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (Monte, 2000). Nonetheless, it can also be meant as instructive in a general way. Until the twentieth century, all literature was expected to have a didactic purpose in a general sense, that is, to impart moral, theoretical or even practical knowledge; Horace famously demanded that poetry should combine *prodesse* (learning) and *delectare* (pleasure) (Kennedy, 2007). However, the 20th century was more hesitant to proclaim literature openly as a teaching tool.

2.5 VALUES OF POETRY

It is important to understand that the essential values inherent in poetry should pervade activities in the pre-school, school and adult education. Fundamental values deal with relations between people and how we treat and value each other as children and adults. Fundamental values are thus a pedagogical issue, requiring knowledge and competence, and concern the activity of the school as a whole. The responsibilities of the school in endorsing learning and personal development are not two distinct activities that can be handled separately. It is in this light that we can conclude on how it is also important to consider how learners develop critical thinking concerning moral rules. Therefore, it is vital that learners learn to be independent to be able to reflect upon moral norms that they meet everywhere, including school.

Values are important things or uses full for human beings or humanity that is being the source of literary work (Arifin, 1991). It can therefore be inferred that value forms necessary and rudimentary platform from culture and its traditional aspects of ideas mainly which adheres on the self. Values are inherent in culture. Culture is seen as being an assemblage of necessary prerequisites in societies and forms part of life which comparatively encompasses the rule that makes it to form base about what we value; what must we do and what must we avoid to do. As explained by Lebron

(2013), culture is a set of values and beliefs, or a cluster of learned behaviours that we share amongst ourselves and together as a society, giving us a sense of belonging and pride and identity. This says basically that culture and values are well blended and interwoven thus becoming our societies their ways of life.

It cannot be evaded then that fundamental values are always changing. In this fast-paced journey of change, school and society are not two detached bodies, but rather they interrelate all the time. That is to say, what transpires and is imparted in schools has influences on society and what ensues in society then should and must be taught in schools. Therefore, fundamental values are changing, more or less rapidly, in a world that is changing so rapidly. In this case, in order to accede on the need to have poetry in the high school classrooms and learners' lives, it is of paramount importance to study why is it so valuable and what values are ingrained in poetry pedagogy and learning that would serve to build a well-rounded individual who can contribute positively to the economy and societal development.

First, poetry possesses a massive academic, socio-cultural, and critical value both in the classroom and in society, as it is documented in the accessible literature. Young (2016) states that the denunciation of poetic studies in high school pedagogy, therefore, may disenfranchise learners and leave them lacking in essential academic knowledge as well as in deeper, critical understanding of the social fabric of community and history and their individual places in those tableaux. This signals that with learners not being able to taste and have a feel of an environment of poetry, are being denied fundamental values of humanity, leading them not to know their place and value in their communities.

Poetry can be an accessible and profound tool in our spiritual practice as we journey toward becoming more conscious as human beings. Harris (2008) postulates that poetry, even the melancholiest poetry, is a well-intentioned therapy for lonesomeness for it retells us that our experience, regardless of how unusual, in some way mirrors another's. In this way, we are not solitary beings. The poems featured in the LGCSE syllabus are from all over the world and represent different cultures, cosmologies, genders, races, and times in history. Yet striking similarities are evident in the poems' emotional terrain. In realising this, we recognise our own compassion for others and ourselves. Hanratty (2008) cited in Young (2016)

espouses that poetry permits learners to explore and inspect sophisticated territories and to see the sights beyond the world motivated by market forces and the profit motive; at best, it enables the human being to respire, the spirit to be enlarged, the mind to (creatively) wander, and the heart to be enchanted.

Even discovering that others have some of the same questions as we do can be extraordinarily powerful and comforting. Poetry asks the best questions. So do teenagers (Harris, 2008). Most of the things that we can say about poetry, we can also say about teenagers—a fact that makes the idea of doing and studying poetry with teens so exciting. Harris further claims that both poetry and teens ask the great, big questions like, ‘how do we live? What do we love? What deserves our faith? Who are we, and where do we fit in this universe? How do we keep our hope alive?’ Thus, both poetry and teenagers are tireless seekers—of sense, justice, meaning, reason, hope, and sometimes just the plain old company of a good laugh.

As famous proponents of the idealistic, the natural, the lovely, and the lyrical, the scholars, educators, and poets of the 19th-century Romantic Era undoubtedly believed in poetry’s imaginative profoundness, as well as its dimensions to provide moral guidance, or even teaching (Hanratty, 2008). Arnold (1880) cited in Young (2016, 28) claimed that poetry contains the utmost worth to all of humanity; as it forms basis for “the soul and character”; it creates “a love of beauty and of truth”; it advocates for “high and noble principles of action” and it stimulates “the emotion so helpful in making principles operative.” In his seminal *Defence of Poetry* (1890), Percy Bysshe Shelley, as cited in Young (2016, 29), inscribed poets as not only “the authors of language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting”, but also as “the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true.”

Importantly, it is worth to reminisce how indispensable the arts are and can be in learners’ attaining a fully- fledged, well round education. Roberts (2007) claims that learners require art, and poetry specifically, to make sense of the world around them, to reflect, and to resolve conflict in their lives. A lot of the literature also shows that poetry has incredible interdisciplinary worth. Within the English Language Arts curriculum, poetry is proven to be valuable in helping learners make connections

between literary genres' (Ackerman 1968, cited in Young, 2016) and can be used effectively as a means of conversation between literary works and writers to reinforce themes (Moore ,2002 cited in Young, 2016). Yet it also has value in cross-curricular studies.

These values of poetry are fundamental and are important to take note of as we look into the development of both the teachers and learners as part of societies.

2.6 CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING POETRY

The poetry course is an environment where both teachers and learners come to interact with each other and benefit from the interchange of ideas and wisdom resulting from the various experiences of life. It is also a space where crossing borders is allowed, horizons are expended and intercultural perceptions are defined. Nevertheless, what is actually noticed is that teachers and learners are still unable to appreciate poetry studying or reading.

Carter and Long (1991) single out teacher-centred lesson delivery as the most detrimental challenge in the learning-teaching process of poetry. Tuvuzimpundu (2013) adds that such a non-participatory method of teaching pushes learners away from any attempt whatsoever of divulging into poetry. learners tend to view it as a teacher-handed down mystery. Consequently, they tend to look on waiting for the teacher to demystify all the ideas and poetic devices for them.

As Byars (2016) asserts, the experience of the teachers of literature shows that poetry is one of the least popular subjects. In the study conducted in Northern Colorado, Byars (2016) articulates thatthere are some poets from different generations and cultural backgrounds who use poetry to achieve different agendas. "Confronted with the different nature of these poems, readers require extra time and effort to understand the message in the poems by which some readers may not be willing to do so" (ibid, p. 18). Poetry usually requires learners to be critical readers so that they will be able to read between the lines in order to understand the message that the poet is trying to convey. Saraspaphy and Marimutu (2007) in their study conducted in Malaysia, assert that recurrently, learners only look at the word for word meanings and do not look beyond it. For that reason, there is a tendency to

conclude that all poems are boring, thus being a disregarded genre by both teachers and learners. Unfortunately, this claim has some basis as well, particularly in relation to poems with unfamiliar vocabulary and social or cultural settings which require additional background search to be able to understand them. This can be a real challenge for learners and teachers of poetry.

Croft and Cross (2000), support these statements by stating that poetry that was written a century ago is to a great extent different from the poetry we use today; words may have transformed in meanings, hold dissimilar implications or may merely have been out-of-date. That is to say, the references or allusions used would have been understood and have held some significance to a reader in the poet 's own age but often means little for us today. Therefore, the tasks of understanding the poetry would require a certain level of proficiency in the language and not all learners have it. Some of them do not have literature background while in school.

A number of learners find it challenging to use English as a means of communication. Inclusion of poetry now becomes a mammoth challenge. On the other hand, according to critical theorists of language, there is hardly any difference between literary and ordinary language. In the same way, figures of speech are used in conveyance of layers of meanings equally in serious literary and idle talk sense (Bala, 2011). They simply transfer meanings and information. It is however important that the metaphor entails two terms; target and source.

What is more, Gönen (2018), in a study undertaken in Turkey, signposts that poetry's role to grow human experience and generate language consciousness has not been fully realised. Using poetry in the language class is to some extent disregarded by many teachers. Poetic language encompasses manipulation of grammar and terminology (lexis) to suit for orthographical and phonological congruence; and in consequence, deviation from standard norms of language may be considered out-of-the-way to far-off EFL learners. Teachers' reluctance towards using poems may stem from considerations about following textbook materials which reserve little or no room for literary texts, and lack of time and motivation to include poetry and literature in general (McIlroy, 2013). As a consequence, potential of operationalising poetry to nurture language development has not been appreciated hitherto.

Other studies also display a recurring concern about pupils' resistance to poetry (Benton, 1986) and there has been an ongoing discussion about how literary theory, primarily from the new critics, contributes to the perception of poetry as something that is for an educated elite only and how this perception intimidates pupils (Dias & Hayhoe, 1988; Xerri, 2018; Young, 2016). In the past, poetry was often considered to be 'high' art targeted at 'elite' readers and this approach has continued up to the present day. The learners consider poetry to be very difficult for them to understand and, at the same time, they assume the 'understanding' it in a strictly exact sense. Dutta (2001), in a study conducted in Bangladesh, states that there is no attempt to involve learners into considerable close-reading of the poem, let alone loud reading. Teachers only hand down their own personal interpretation of a poem.

This interpretation, according to Tuvuzimpundu (2013), in a study conducted in Rwanda, basically revolves on denotation rather than the connotation sense. It thus sounds like language comprehension lessons, not literature. Reading focused purely on getting information is applied to poetry. Fleming, (1992) cited in Vala, Doubalova, Sladova and Rechicova (2012) postulates 'while reading, learners tend to use the stereotypes used for reading prose texts and try to understand each line separately instead of trying to perceive the poetic text as a whole' hence becoming a dire challenge to their understanding and learning of poetry.

Moreover, researchers highlight how overly analytical methodology disengages pupils and stress the need to emphasise feelings and the aesthetic experience of poetry (Rumbold & Simecek, 2016). Vala, Doubalova, Sladova and Rechicova (2012) add that the learners consider poetry to be difficult for them to understand due to their supposition that they obligatorily have to understand it in the exactly same semantic understanding and sense as others. Competence is essentially about ability, a mastery of a particular task. Inability to perform this task will make the person ineffective. A learner that lacks understanding of the language used to write a poem will definitely find it an uphill task to appreciate such a poem.

In a study conducted in Nigeria, Daniel (2013, p. 224) posits that 'competence in the language in which the poetry to be appreciated is written thus becomes crucial to unravelling the message of the poet.' The modus operandi to achieve this competence is consequently crucial to the task of appreciating poems by the

secondary school learners. The learners consider their emotions and feelings evoked by a poem as being too vague and hardly graspable and find it difficult to verbalise them. Then they think they have failed, not realising the fact that poetry is actually and very often inherently the 'expression of the inexpressible', which is to be understood as the tension between what a poet intends communicating by his words and what the words in turn are able to arouse (partially) (Vala, Rerichova, Doubalova, and Sladova, 2012). Then, the ambiguity of the meanings of poetic texts seems natural.

In addition, a number of studies suggest that pre-service teachers are not adequately prepared for teaching poetry, which could likely contribute to pupils' lack of engagement (Certo, Apol, Wibbens, & Hawkins, 2012; Cremin, 2010; Young, 2016). Iida (2016), in a study conducted in Japan, also observes that "poetry is the genre most English teachers seem least comfortable with." Iida further states that most teachers acknowledge a discomfort with teaching poetry; some admitted that they do not enjoy or actively read poetry. Most teachers, according to Lockward (1994), said that in their schooling days, they had never had an encounter with an English teacher who taught poetry effectively and, therefore, they had no models to emulate. More than other genres, poetry seems to elicit the most groans from learners. Often language arts teachers report feeling uncomfortable teaching poetry, either because they aren't sure how to teach it effectively (owing to lack of pedagogical role models), or because they find it elusive themselves.

Poetry is usually the genre that provides the most problems for the English teacher because learners often reach secondary school with little experience in relating to poetry and are often hostile to it. This is likened to what Lewis (1955) cited in Lockward (1994) asserts when stating that people tend to always be suspicious and a little afraid of things that they find difficult to comprehend and instead of acknowledging it, they are apt to formulate reasons which are complimentary to themselves; such is the status quo with poetry. On the other hand, there are also learners who wonder whether the study of poetry however enjoyable is not a waste of time or at least, an annoying obstacle (Kennedy, 2009).

Kennedy (2009) observes that learners' discontentment for poetry every so often is caused by inauspicious experiences with it, unskilled teachers, the print and the

very nature of its presentation in books – the unacquainted diction, conventions, and peculiar associations to things that are worlds apart and the string of mind boggling questions that follow the poem. Khatib (2011) also holds that the challenging duty in front of any teacher is to cultivate the actual sense of appreciation and pleasure in learners who are disinterested in poetry. For a prolonged tenure, literature in general and poetry in particular, was purged from the teaching programmes on the ground that it made no contribution to learning a foreign language for practical purposes. It can as thus be inferred and concluded from these assertions that teachers themselves are often afraid of dealing with poetry, they lack confidence and avoid teaching poetry. Insensitive approach of teachers and inappropriate teaching methods may spell the undesired learners' reception of poetry, perceiving it difficult for them.

A teacher should be cautious and try not to disrupt the initial impact of the poem on the learners, not to impose their opinion on the learners and not to deprive the poem of its liveliness (Vala, Rerichova, Doubalova, and Sladova, 2012). If they are asked to analyse certain kinds of poetry at a tender age, they may observe reading poetry as a problem instead of enjoying it, and this sentiment gets emblazoned on their memory for years to come. It is in the foregoing light that the aim of this study to explore various teaching approaches to enhance learners' interest and liking to poetry stems from. The next section will therefore, discuss opportunities attached to studying poetry.

2.7 OPPORTUNITIES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING POETRY

Due to its timelessness, poetry may be referred to as a cornucopia of wealth of knowledge and possesses vast abilities to survive humanity beyond barriers of time. It is therefore pivotal to assess the massive opportunities and benefits of teaching poetry and also of learning it.

In regard to the widely arrayed benefits of poetry on linguistic competence and improvement, knowledge development and extension, intelligence honing, and general inspiration to mankind, poetry earns being inaugurated into the school curriculum as an autonomous and compulsory academic discipline. Many a scholar have pointed out the benefits of a poetry course. Bukenya (1978), cited in

Tuvuzimpundu (2013) addresses that, poems are written about issue that concern people and for people's awareness and development. People should therefore access poetry in enough quantities and study it very closely. Otherwise, the poets' message continues to lay wasted. In a similar connotation, Bukenya also describes poets as the unofficial teachers and lawyers for their societies. This denotes that poets are committed to people's enlightenment and justice of humanity. Thus, the best way to exploit this service is to guarantee that the young generation is compulsorily exposed to poetry.

By learning poetry, I gather, learners can improve four language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). By listening and reading poetry, learners can exercise both skills in order to guess the meaning and exercise to listen the words in English. As Bala (2011) asserts in his study conducted in Nigeria, learners can write other poems that are related to their experiences. By writing a poem, learners can enhance their linguistic aspects; the likes of syntax and vocabulary. After writing a poem, they can show up their writing in front of the class. This activity helps them to develop intonation, self-confidence, gesture, and emotion.

Poetry as a literary genre is part and parcel of human realms and day-to-day practices. This is backed up by Alvi and Alvi (2019) that 'language learning is one way or another "messy", but poetry, when read and learnt by heart, supports in the provision of a secure anchor back to the language to come out again when it's needed. This is yet an emphasis and proof that poetry charters language learners and offers them the self-assurance mandatory to handgrip with confidence the targeted language by means of re-enacting the experiences of poets through the medium of writing and making of it something newly real. Accordingly, poetry provides an essential tool in language learning. Majority of the academics have without a doubt accredited the universality of poetry as a never-ending form of communication (Tuvuzimpundu, 2013).

The field of poetry teaching obviously involves the investment of a considerable amount of time and efforts in order to improve learners' literary and linguistic competence. The poetry classroom is set up to inform learners about the various shapes English language may take and the rich environment poetry may offer. That

is to say, poetry encourages an economy and precision in language, starting from inside-out, that transfers to other types of oral and written communication.

It is imperative for learners to be equipped with two language skills: reading and writing - via first grasping the first two skills: listening and speaking - or create texts in numerous genres. Transcending beyond pen and paper and exhausting different strategies (including visual arts or drama, for example) provide learners opportunities to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding in alternate ways (Tuvuzimpundu, 2013). A focus on oral language development through the reading and performing of poetry acknowledges that sound is meaning.

When we hear the sound of the words in a poem read aloud, we gain an improved understanding of the meaning of the writing. We can involve learners in the dramatic exploration of poems in a variety of ways, including choral reading, readers' theatre, dance drama, shared reading, or role play (Tsai, 2012). Such approaches provide opportunities for learners to play with the words of a poem and to experience it lifted from the page. This kind of attention to the language and rhythms of a poem serves to expand oral and written vocabulary thus a great opportunity.

Lahmer (2012) adds that reading poetry helps learners to self-monitor in what concerns their perceptions' organisation and interpretation as well as meaning and vocabulary understanding. As learners read they become efficient in decoding linguistic structures, and become more proficient in reading faster (words per minute) with fewer mistakes. There may be learners who progress from the mere spelling out of the letters of a word, to spelling and sounding out the word, using spelling out as a "word attack" skill for new words. Word attack is defined as the collection of various skills which are intended to aid an individual distinctively to use any one technique or combination of techniques in recognition and mastery of the meaning of new-fangled words as the need arises(Hutauruk,2018).

Virtuous poetry does undoubtedly have a tendency to form the soul and character; it has a habit of begetting a love of beauty and truth in alliance together, it suggests, however indirectly, high and noble principles of action, and it inspires the emotion so helpful in making principles operative" state Hennesy, Hinchion and McNamara (2010) in their study done in Ireland. In the same breath, Hughes (2007, p. 1), in the study conducted in Canada, advocates that poetry should occupy a pivotal place in

all of our lives, not only for the aesthetic pleasure it affords, but also for its ability to awaken our senses, connect us with ourselves and others, and lead us to think in synthesising ways, as required by its use of the language of metaphor.

Poetry's conciseness, its brevity, and its power to convey so much in such a limited space is its appeal. Peacock (1999) cited in Hughes (2007, p. 1) calls poetry "the screen-size art" that affords a "quick dive in a deep pool," offering "depth in a moment, using the depth of a moment." Hennesy et al. (2010, p. 6) suggest, "Reading and writing poems can help us discover profound truths we didn't realise we knew." Studying poetry proves in this regard to offer a great deal of chance in moulding a person holistically and nurturing their growth (Conway, 2015).

Many of the messages that we receive or produce contain issues of concern to us and the world as a whole. As well, poetry deals with issues that are universal topics to publics of all nations, including what life, love, and nature mean, the mystery of death and God, along with the multiplicity of human feelings, values, and dilemmas. Maley and Duff (1989) distinguish the universality and non-triviality of the themes in poetry while Kramersch (1993) perceives poetry as deep in thought and that it calls readers to acquire knowledge about human "values, collective imaginings and historical frames of reference that constitute the memory of a speech community" (p.175). Learners create insightful reflections relating to human life, the world, and individual practices when they are encouraged to read between the lines and construct meaning from what they read.

This foregoing idea relates to Hanauer's (2012) view of the role of language learning in ESL/EFL: To facilitate "personally meaningful expression" and emphasise the "presence of the living, historically situated, individual human being at the centre of the language learning process" (p. 106). For Kramersch (1993) and Hanauer (2012), the purpose of learning a foreign language is not only linguistic, communicative, and cognitive. "It involves the whole human being beyond just intellectual abilities" (Kramersch, 1993, p.105), inclusive of their emotions, personal concerns, and human experiences. Such cultivated dimension should be fostered through poetry in EFL learning, as English teachers are educating learners to become more humanitarian, intercultural, and world citizens in the process of globalisation.

Poetry possess advantages in the world in its natural form as it can be seen as a naturalistic reading task (Hanauer, 2001) that arranges EFL learners to face and deal with figurative language in daily communication, since people do not always speak in direct and literal metaphorical/figurative language, as is the case with journalistic language. For Hanauer (2001), poetry represents a naturalistic reading mission that is a portion of the many real-world language types, such as the lyrics of popular songs.

Another powerful feature about poetry is its ambiguity permitting learners to broach multiple understandings and attempt to accede on its messages and themes from different perspectives. Thus, literary ambiguity breeds language competence development, meaning negotiation, and even debate, as learners have to defend their interpretations with coherent arguments (Maley & Duff, 1989; Kramersch, 1993; Khansir, 2012; Sakamoto, 2015). This communicates to the fact that poetry contributes to critical reading and argumentation in EFL education (Hişmanoğlu, 2005 cited by Khansir, 2012) as learners are engaged in understanding and interpreting messages mentally and rationally. It “fosters reflection and a critical stance *vis-à-vis* one’s one and the foreign meanings” (Kramersch, 1993, p.175), chief aspects comprised by transactional reading.

‘Poetry evokes feelings and provokes thoughts about complex social issues’, asserts Tuvuzimpundu (2013, p. 2381) in the study conducted in Rwanda. Poetry is more than a vehicle for expression; it is also a way of knowing. Poetry both requires and facilitates a concentration of mind or sustained attention to which our hectic lives have unaccustomed us. Hughes (2007) further adds that the linking of the strange with the familiar through the image or even through well-placed line breaks is perhaps what makes poetry so powerful. Needless to say, poetry transforms the way we see the commonplace through new perspectives.

Research tells us that children with well-developed oral skills are more likely to have higher achievement in reading and writing as well (Van, 2009; Kirkgoz, 2008; McIlory, 2013 and Iida, 2016). It also helps evoke a sensorial response to the poem. Learners should be encouraged to express the kinds of connections to feelings and senses that they experience, ideally in small or large groups where they can discuss these responses among themselves (Iida, 2016). By involving their learners in such

performances and discussions, as well as in the reading and writing of poetry, teachers can support the multiple goals of literacy development, including making inferences, identifying the main idea, making judgments and drawing conclusions, clarifying and developing points of view, and making connections.

2.8 PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES TO TEACHING POETRY

Poetry can more often than not be daunting in any language; and worse in the language that is foreign to learners. Yet, attaining the set and predetermined goals of poetry and other literary subjects hang on mainly the methods, strategies, and techniques that are aligned and formulated in order to deliver it in the classroom. Brandes and Ginnis (1986) cited in Alvi and Alvi (2019) state that gaining knowledge on and about what is meaningful and relevant depends, to a minimal extent, on what is taught and somewhat on its pedagogical strategies, thus hammering and emphasising that the technical know-how is important in poetry pedagogy especially when it is varied.

Due to the complex language that some poetic texts might have, the teaching of poetry has faced some difficulties. Torrellas (2015) asserts that notwithstanding that, every so often, the use of language within the poems or whether the poems possess a musical or rhythmic patterns or not, are not the major obstacle for learners to enjoy the study of poetry. An added factor that makes the teaching of poetry difficult is the selection of an adequate approach for the teaching of poetry.

As well, often times, adherence of teacher to just a single approach, which may be named the traditional approach poses drastic challenges. It is imperative to make available an explanation of the word 'traditional' as is operationalised in this study. A traditional approach can be categorised by the dearth of a systematic disciplined approach, disallowing a conducive and dynamic strategies of teaching and learning poetry. It can also be acknowledged as the incessant 'deliberate use –and abuse- of a certain 'old-fashioned' approach as the result of a personal choice on behalf of the teacher; that a traditional approach is conceivably represented by any of these three denominations: impressionism, neoclassicism and classicism' (Torrellas, 2015, p. 108). These explanations are the ones that this study prefers to use for better understanding and clarity of the word 'traditional'. Thus, they –traditional approaches to literary analysis or criticism, as stipulated by Torrellas (2015)- end up

ignoring or even rejecting the operationalisation of any more newly made approaches, no matter how useful it might prove to be.

Literature teachers may use approaches in which one can design activities where the study of poems can be considered as a possibly novel experience; where poems can possess a dissimilar effect and a meaningful impact on learners. There is a proliferation of modernised approaches that can bring about a range of choices for teachers. Richards & Rogers (2000) authorise that the invention of new teaching space approaches offers to teachers more resourceful and more current ways of teaching. These authors also claim that 'present day teachers have a wider variety of methodological options to choose from' contrary to what they might have had and used formerly. For this reason, besides the traditional approach, teachers may use pedagogical approaches, which may prove particularly useful for the teaching of poetry. For the purpose of this study, reference to the Communicative Approach, Natural Approach and Multiple Intelligence Approach, Humanistic Approach, traditional Approach, Integrated Approach and periphrastic Approach will be made for, these approaches afford teachers with a plethora of strategies, just as they stimulate the use of dependable material in order for learners to interrelate as they express ideas and opinions.

Larsen-Freeman (1991) claims that these approaches mentioned in the preceding paragraph are advantageous and teachers should practise them because they integrate learners in the teaching process. Above and beyond, these approaches provide both instructors and learners the chance to express their uniqueness by having them share their ideas and opinions. Larsen-Freeman (1991) also claims that these approaches are methodological innovations. While using these approaches, learners' confidence in the learning process is heightened by the many opportunities for cooperative interactions with their fellow learners and teachers.

2.8.1 Communicative Approach

This approach highlights the importance of providing learners with guidelines to use language for communicative purposes. Learners, while using the Communicative Approach, will have the opportunity to become conscious that language is acquired through communication. The Communicative Approach will give learners the

opportunity to interact with teachers and other learners in order to share their ideas and opinions, to read and write, to learn how to use language forms appropriately, and above all to be the centre of the learning process. Communicative Approach may be appropriate to use when teaching poetry because learners can interact among themselves with or about the language of the poem, message, meaning or how grammar works within the text. Poems are samples of authentic text; therefore, they are also good samples to exemplify real life language. The necessary skills and abilities to study and analyse poetry can also be acquired through communication.

In addition, it is also accepted that grammar is an essential resource in using language communicatively. This is certainly Littlewood's view (1981) where he suggests that the following skills need to be taken into consideration when teaching language and literature: the learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence. That is, he must develop skill in manipulating the linguistic system, to the point where he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message. The learner must distinguish between the forms he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions that they perform.

In other words, items mastered as part of a linguistic system must also be understood as part of a communicative system. The learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. He must learn to use feedback to judge his success, and if necessary, remedy failure by using different language. The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms. For many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances, but rather the ability to use generally acceptable forms and avoid potentially offensive ones.

2.8.2 Natural Approach

Krashen (1982), as cited in Torrellas (2015), developed the second approach and it is called the Natural Approach. This author mentions two principal terms: "input" and "output." The first one refers to the reading and listening skills; whereas, "output" refers to writing and speaking. In addition, the Natural Approach points out, the "natural order". The "natural order" refers to the order children follow when learning

their native language which is listening, speaking, reading and writing. Considering Krashen's "natural order", literature learners may study poetry, first, by listening and speaking, and then by reading and writing.

2.8.3 Multiple Intelligences Approach

The Multiple Intelligences Approach deals with learners' different learning styles. Dr. Howard Gardner developed this approach. Gardner (1993) says that this approach divides the learning styles in seven distinct intelligences or forms of intelligence (each learner must develop at least one). Some of the strategies that exemplify how this approach is put into practice are cooperative learning, social gatherings, simulations, board games and role-plays, among others.

I mentioned earlier that a traditional approach seems to be the one most commonly used in a literature class. Obviously there is also a common use of the traditional approach when teaching of poetry; instead of that, the strategies that respond to the Communicative, Natural and Multiple Intelligences Approaches are prospective to be used for the teaching of poetry for learners far from labelling poems as meaningless text, will get the chance, through the strategies, to see the sights to the potential meanings, the culture, and the language of poems.

McRae (1991) posits that the language of poetry is significant because it centres around the senses, the places, the images, the sounds and so on. All of these facets cannot be retrieved by learners while using a traditional approach exclusively. For a meaningful teaching of poems, teachers may use the strategies that answer back to the statements made in the Communicative, Natural and Multiple Intelligences approaches. I perceive these as the prerequisite for new strategies to be used in the teaching of poetry in order for literature learners to really experience the rich and varied repertoire a poem can offer, systematically. Moreover, Maher (1982), cited in Torrellas (2015, p. 8), claims that 'for the teaching of poetry, teachers may have to use approaches that develop learners' creativity, cultural knowledge and linguistic competence.'

Due to all the reasons mentioned above, the aim of this research study is to define guidelines intended to arrange the pedagogy of poetry by means of strategies unswervingly derived from the Communicative, Natural, and Multiple Intelligences

approaches, in a quest to turn the study of literature into a discipline rather than just an academic activity.

Armstrong (1996) gives examples of activities that fit each type of intelligence:

- **Logical / mathematical** – puzzles and games, logical, sequential presentation, classification and categorizations.
- **Visual / spatial** – charts and grids, videos, drawing.
- **Body / kinaesthetic** – hands – on activities, field trips, pantomime.
- **Musical / rhythmic** – singing, playing music.
- **Interpersonal** – **pair work** project work, group problem solving.
- **Intrapersonal** – **self – evaluation** journal keeping, options for homework.
- **Verbal / linguistics** – note – taking, storytelling, debates.

2.8.4 The Integrated Approach

ELT recent researches in the field of methodology demonstrate that teachers must ensure maximum attention and participation from their learners. This could be if and when the teacher follows an integrated and communicative teaching approach incorporating a set of text-based, learner-centred activities which, as Collie and Slater (1987) suggest augment renewed momentum into the teaching of literature by stimulating learners' desire to read and encouraging their responses. Several activities belonging to this approach establish not only an interface between language and literature leading to communicative exercises but also create a challenging classroom situation in which learners try to put, with a competitive spirit, all their available resources into action. Activities like predicting, gap-filling, creative writing, role playing, media-transferring, etc. are such helpful exercises. These latter exercises give an impression that a successful teacher in a poetry classroom must possess the ability to convince when it comes to answering questions about literary criticism as well as analysing data like a practical linguist.

2.8.5 The Humanistic Approach

Among the recent developments of significance for ELT are affective sides of language teaching from the humanistic approaches. These latter have facilitated both self-directed and collaborative language learning process, transforming their paradigm from simple, rigid teaching into “life experience”. In this context, Stevick (1998) as cited in Lahmer (2012, p. 21), speaks of bringing to language teaching a concern for ‘deeper aims,’ for ‘pursuing new “life goals,” not just for reaching certain “language goals” when he says: “. . . We need to be concerned with both their (learners’) cognitive and affective natures and needs.”

Dealing with cognitive and affective aspects of poetry teaching, this emerging approach, ushers in a primary shift in the current ESL/EFL theory and assessment: the shift from transactional uses of language towards interactional uses of language, from transmission of knowledge towards an experiential one, from form-based learning to meaning-oriented acquisition, from artificial poetry activities towards actual, creative, subjective, and contextual poetry and poetic acts, from extrinsic motivation towards intrinsic motivation, and finally, from controlled teaching towards heuristic learning and acquisition. Teaching English through English poetry can be an excellent add to this shift, the relevance of English poetry as a component of the humanistic ELT is well argued, and ways to incorporate English poems into ESL/EFL lessons are well suggested by many theorists and practitioners in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) for the following stated reasons:

1. Predicting what’s coming next after reading only one verse at a time.
2. Improving on a given paraphrase (replacing, adding, or omitting words, images, etc.).
3. Rewriting a part of a poem in one’s own words and ideas to offer different messages.
4. Answering questions which arise from ‘problem lines’ in a poem (discussing any unfamiliar vocabularies, syntactic features, rhetorical devices, etc., correcting them, if possible, and comparing their effects on the overall meaning of the poem).

2.8.6 The Paraphrastic Approach:

Paraphrasing is the restatement of a text or passages, using other words. The act of paraphrasing is also called ‘paraphrasis.’ A paraphrase is usually introduced with a

declaratory expression to signal the transition to the paraphrase. To exemplify this, in “seeing them, I flew off the handle, that is, I lost temper abruptly and unexpectedly,” the “that is” signals the paraphrase that follows. What's more, it does not need to go along with a direct quotation, nonetheless when this becomes the case, the paraphrase characteristically serves to put the source's statement into perspective or for clarity of the setting in which it appeared. A paraphrase is typically more detailed than a summary.

One should add the source at the end of the sentence, for example: I flew off the handle when I saw them. Paraphrase may attempt to preserve the essential meaning of the material being paraphrased. Thus, the (intentional or otherwise) reinterpretation of a source to infer a meaning that is not explicitly evident in the source itself qualifies as "original research," and not as paraphrase. As for this approach, it deals mainly with the surface meaning of the text, teachers who are using this approach may paraphrase or re-word the story in a simpler language or even translating it into other languages.

Rosli (1995) as cited in Lahmer (2012) says that this approach is suitable for beginners of the target language as it acts as a stepping stone in formulating original assumptions of the author's work. Some learners may be weak in English, their understanding and comprehension of a particular literary text may be impeded due to low language proficiency. Therefore, this approach can be employed in assisting learners, activities for this approach include teacher re-telling the story of a poem using simpler language or the mother tongue even reading paraphrased versions.

2.8.7The Traditional Methods:

Teachers that rely on traditional approaches are found to fall back upon the role of teaching background information about the text/ author or delivering a 'meta- critical' lecture which often results in a negative effect taking learners' interest away from the text instead of allowing them to find their feet in researching about such and also allowing them to nudge their interest in it. Instruction on understanding and realising the aesthetics of poetry have exclusively been viewed as futile and vain. Whether it is because of a lack of appreciation due to the learners' flaws in studying poetry or

because of well-intentioned enthusiasm to show learners the wonders of the form, many teachers have force-fed "meanings" to perplexed learners or have taught poetry by way of dissecting poetic techniques-here is a symbol, here is a metaphor, and so on.

Dutta (2001) states that the implications for teaching and teacher education are that theory that explains how learners learn in classrooms is foundational to teaching effectiveness. In the same line, Widdowson (1975) states that Initially, learning was theorised as taking place in the interface between facilitative opportunity to learn, facilitative learners' behaviours and learner's resource access. Many behaviours traditionally considered off-task were found to be facilitative of learning and many considered on-task were not facilitative of learning. Learners' experiences in classrooms frequently led to the development of misconceptions about the subjects taught, and central to learning was the role of the learners' long-term memory which places constraints upon how learning occurs.

2.9 PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE POETRY TEACHING

Teaching poetry is as important as teaching any other content or subject in the school curriculum. For effective teaching, and learning too, teachers and learners must be grounded in principles of why poetry exists in the school curriculum which will then ground them in effectively learning poetry. It is of paramount importance to understand that learning poetry as an authentic material of information, pupils get to know parts of a foreign culture. This is so because it satisfies children's natural curiosity about everything new. It is also important to create a suitable context for learning – this needs to be natural, real and make sense to the child. It also needs to allow for the active discovery and construction of meaning, and lead to the use of language as a vehicle to do things which are relevant and purposeful.

We need to be cognisant of thoughts about the status of the vocabulary in our lessons. It is important to realise the need to make sure that the meaning is clear and need to encourage children to notice the form. We need to provide a variety of opportunities for recognising, practising and using the songs and poems. Whenever possible, we have to consider providing opportunities for learners to make connections between their understanding of lesson themes and their own personal experiences. This consolidates understanding and promotes 'ownership' of learning.

It is therefore my belief that the reading and writing of poetry should be positioned together as synergistic literacy practices that may be summed up as the four principles for effective poetry teaching. The first principle for effective poetry teaching is *modelling*, which points to the teacher's active exhibiting of engagement with and writing of poetry (Creely, 2019). The second is *integrating* poetry into diverse learning contexts and meaning spaces, mediated with technologies. Thirdly, *re-centering* poetry away from but still connected to classrooms, in third spaces that are meaningful for learners. Finally, *challenging* the rigidities and obstacles that often distance poetry from experience. The goal is to connect to the life world of learners so that poetry becomes relevant and orientated to their interests.



Figure 1. Four pedagogical principles for effective poetry reading, adapted from Creely (2019)

2.10 ROLE OF TEACHERS IN POETRY PEDAGOGY

Eriche (2012) cited in Daniel (2013) asserts that the quality of the curriculum content of the teacher education naturally has implication for the quality of instruction given to learners. Looking at the identified problems that learners of literature may encounter, one fears that the capacity of such teachers to get across the necessary information contained in the poetic diction used by authors may become problematic.

It is fundamental that teachers of poetry to high schoolers must sail across special challenges, cognisant of the balance between competing tensions, including analysis in competition with appreciation, their prominence as both neophyte (apprentice) and

expert readers of poetry, including the contradictory ideas of mastery of poetry that are, in history, at odds. A question that surfaces then is, what does it mean to be an exemplary teacher of poetry in an era of high-stakes assessment, when poetry itself and poetry teaching have been marginalised?

Poetry, as a thing to study and teach, provides us much in the realms of our cognitive, intellectual, affective, and aesthetic development. This was elaborated in section 2.7. Notwithstanding what it can offer us, nonetheless, exhausting the possibilities of the potential of poetry in the classroom and beyond the classroom barriers is easier said than done. It is not as problematic, as it is perceived to be, to teach poetry. Rather, the challenge surfaces in teaching it well, and in a particular manner that will nurture not only our learners' lifetime engagement with this art form, but our culture's- and our profession's- as well. A dearth of research exists that shows us exemplary poetry teaching in action- research from which knowledge can be constructed that endows teachers to be prepared for this difficult form, and the pedagogical task of doing it justice, especially at the secondary-high school level.

There is a plethora of inherent incompatibilities regarding the teaching of poetry. Is it an art to be appreciated or an academic subject to be mastered? What is the relationship between appreciation and analysis? Do we teach a poem's surface features and formal elements, and hope that learners' interest and deeper knowledge- their sense of wonder and appreciation- will be sparked? Or do we target for a learner's heart first, and her head second, initially subordinating a learner's analysis of a given poem to their experience, investment, and intrigue? How do we teach poetry in a way that does not give learners a superficial, degraded, or shortened version of what poetry is and can do?

Steadfast educators of poetry are particularly concerned about the curricular sidelining of higher-order thinking skills and the cultivation of learners' affective and aesthetic intelligence associated with poetry (Hennessey, Hinchion, & McNamara, 2010). As stipulated in the previous chapter, literacy theorist and teacher Rosenblatt (1980) emphasises the distinctions between reading events that are *efferent* (reading to bring together information, including scientific reading) and those that are *aesthetic* (reading concerned with the reader's response and meaning making within the reading event itself, with regard to literature- exclusively poetry). In educational

terms, the teaching of poetry can be enclosed as being positioned on a spectrum, with unadulterated analysis or information-extraction on one end (formalist, instrumentalist, efferent), and on the other an affective or aesthetic approach to poetry (constructivist, aesthetic) which locates meaning-making as on a social basis and personally-constructed (Faust & Dressman, 2009; Hennessey, et al., 2010, Rosenblatt, 1986).

How the teachers handle the perception of the processes, goals, and aims of the study of literature plays a noteworthy role in how such a teacher tackles poetry teaching (Benton, 1999; Dymoke, 2012; Hennessey, et al., 2010; Myhill & Wilson, 2013; Peskin, 1998). The role of interpretive analysis in poetry teaching is, as one would recommend, governed by two counter-truths. On the one hand, it is indispensable that learners come out of a poetry class (or poetry unit) with a steady and sturdy comprehension that poems are not fortune cookies with a message hidden inside; that poems are not problems for which there's an answer in the back of the book; that there is no "teacher's edition," as it were, that explains what each poem really means.

It is imperative for learners' cognisance of the fact that no one, the poet inclusive, has exclusive interpretive ownership of a poem; that the poem is, and should remain, a bird in flight; and that its subtlety and irreducibility may be a key part of what we appreciate most about it. It would also be of paramount importance for learners to realise that one can even, on occasion, become profoundly attached to a poem that doesn't make all that much sense.

Cultural factors play an integral part in modelling teachers' methodologies to poetry pedagogy, inclusive of its learning too, as they relate to the appreciation-analytical spectrum. On the subject of the balance of appreciation to analysis, for example, one study (Hennessey, et al., 2010) in Ireland of 200 teachers in a post-primary Leaving Certificate program noted the haunting aftereffect of the English cultural heritage model on the English curriculum and the re-emergence of instrumentalist approaches that favoured stock analyses. The study's authors attributed this pattern to the challenging economy, whereby learners learn "the greatest" poems as a way of gaining a foothold culturally and economically. Being acquainted with the jeopardies of despotism and incorrect irreconcilable differences, teachers in this

study embarked on a quest to find an intermediate ground between affective or aesthetic and efferent or analytical (epistemic) instruction.

According to documentation, modelling is essential in the instruction of disconnected reading and analytical skills, and that even very problematic literature can be made more easy to get to by hearing a teacher do a think-aloud protocol (Eva-Wood, 2003). In the process of teachers outlining their own discourse about literature, they must shape the questions learners ask of literature; thus, “it seems important to ask if and how discussions of literature help shape reader-text transactions by fostering specific ways of talking and thinking about texts” (Marshall, 1995, p. 17). By the same token, Cazden (2001) notes that learners need support, or scaffolding, as they are at the portal of thinking of themselves as writers and academics in the literature classroom, and that they need both experience and support with complex texts like poetry:

The metaphorical term scaffold has become a common caption for this kind of assistance, and it is a good name if we remember that...[it] needs to change continuously as the child's competence grows, just as a physical scaffold is raised higher and higher up on a building as construction proceeds. (p. 63)

On the importance of continual exposure to texts which learners use to gain greater independence and agency, Cazden (2001) highlights, “In literacy, automaticity in word analysis and word recognition is necessary to free mental space for thoughtful, even critical, understanding of larger units of text” (p. 56). In as much as Cazden speaks of, seemingly, early or second language learning, her conception of literateness and automaticity brought about by regularly recurrent acquaintance to texts and discourse about texts spreads out into and applies to the careful and scaffolded teaching of poetry. This assertion by Cazden about automaticity puts forward that steadily recursive teaching of poetry joint with teacher support by means of unambiguous stratagems for reading is a comprehensive practice.

As well, Johnston (2004) denotes the exercise of operationalising unambiguous language in description of one's interfaces with and responses to a text as “noticing and naming” (p. 11). Similarly, teacher Johnson (1985); a college teacher, highlights the value of rereading poems, emphasising that a learner's first encounter with reading of a poem scrapes meaning together, while the second garners connotation.

He recommends the explicit teaching of re-reading strategies as “a way of helping learners to acquire ‘a full appreciation of poetry’ [and as] a way of helping them to be critically and creatively conscious of language” (p. 48).

A teacher is bestowed with authority and that authority a teacher already possesses--both positional and experiential-- is a difficult status to reverse nor break. This makes the teaching of a poem, with which the teacher feels they have a sense of intimacy and mastery, to be at odds with that teacher’s intention and attempt to share knowledge and power. According to the assertion by poet Billy Collins (in personal communication, May 28, 2003), cited in Smith and Connolly (2005):

The teaching of literature takes place on an extremely slanted playing field. Most of the classroom discussion, if you want to call it that, rests on the difference between the teacher’s superior reading of a text and the learners’ naïve reading. Humiliation and alienation are the results. The chalk is the new sword. (p. 273)

A reference is also made to the work of Cazden (2001), who contends that “school discourse on all levels is dominated by the initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) or initiation-response-feedback (IRF) sequence, so much so that this pattern is the default option of schools” (Cazden, 2001, p. 51). These authors acknowledge that initiating a change in such deep-rooted discourse patterns is hard to achieve. A teacher embarking on a quest to shake up the already prevailing paradigm of textual authority and a discourse pattern that puts teacher front and centre holding all the answers will need to overcome the sheer “salience of the IRE/IRF pattern” (Smith & Connolly, 2005, p. 272).

By and large, it is obvious that teachers should ensure their 100% engagement in preparation for and dissemination of poetry content; ensuring that they are not aloof from motivational and parental attachment to their learners and teaching. They have a role to play in demystifying learners’ perception of poetry as a boogiemer, ready to scare them. This puts the teacher even closer to the learners and allows them to develop a rapport that would make it easier for the teacher and learners to sail smoothly together in comprehending even the aesthetic nature of poetry, in and outside the poetry classroom scenario. However, in this process, they should try to balance elements of learner- centred teaching to cater for learners not to feel inferior and that ‘a teacher is always right’ notion should be avoided as much as possible.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 Research Design

According to Akhtar (2016), research design can be regarded as the framework of the research. It is considered a glue that holds the whole research together and also serves as the conceptual blueprint within which research is conducted. It is also defined by Ahuja (2010) as the design, structure, strategy and investigation conceived so as to obtain results ensured to research question and control variance. It can therefore be seen as the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent and achievable empirical research. In other words, Van Wyk (2012) states that research design articulates what data is required, what methods are to be used to collect and analyse data, and how all of this is going to answer the research question. Research design is necessary because it makes easy the smooth sailing of the various research procedures (Akhtar, 2016). The design of this study is a case study of two purposively selected high schools in Leribe. This study was conducted qualitatively, underpinned by the interpretive paradigm.

In order to receive the data needed for analysing teaching and learning of poetry, various data collecting methods were applied. As stated in the foregoing paragraph, the study consisted mainly of qualitative research, which allowed only a few participants that contributed with their thoughts, ideas and conceptions on the teaching and learning in question. The study applied an approach where conclusions were made based on inference of respondents' responses. The design of the study was to initially perform a focus group interview with learners from the two schools, followed by semi-structured interviews with both teachers and learners at two high schools in Leribe district, Lesotho.

3.1.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is essentially 'exploratory'—namely, it sets out to describe, understand, and explain a particular social phenomenon (Gagliardi & Dobrow, 2011). Notably, qualitative inquiries involve the exploration and description of social processes through nuance, complexity, and detail (Mason, 2002). People construct

meanings in life and share their interpretations of such meanings with others through communication (Blaikie, 2010). Similarly, qualitative research uses face-to-face interactions with participants to elicit and negotiate meanings. That is to say, through the communicative and interpretative process of deep reflection meaning that is hidden 'inside' the participant is brought to the surface.

This study is qualitatively oriented to allow the interaction of participants; teachers and learners to construct meanings in life and share their interpretations of such meanings with others through communication (Blaikie, 2010). The researcher attempts to look into how best to answer the research questions. This is implied, therefore, as the method which is prospective to be well-matched with the questions in this study. In this case, the qualitative method suited to the choice of the researcher because he wanted to understand the poetry teaching and learning processes by interacting with respondents in their contexts. The respondents in this case were teachers and learners who were interviewed in their respective schools.

3.1.3 Interpretive Paradigm

This study falls within the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive research is more subjective than objective. Willis (2007) argues that the goal of interpretivism is to value subjectivity, and interpretivists eschew the idea that objective research on human behaviour is possible. Following from Willis's points, Smith (1993) believes that interpretivists are 'anti-foundationalists', because there exists no particular right or correct path to knowledge, no particularly special method that automatically leads to academic progress. Proponents of interpretivism do not accept the existence of universal standards for research, instead the standards guiding research are serve as yields of a particular group or culture (Smith, 1993). Interpretive researchers do not seek the answers for their studies in rigid ways. Instead, they approach the reality from subjects, typically from people who own their experiences and are of a particular group or culture. This paradigm was also helpful with regard to this study because the researcher sought to comprehend respondents' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs in relation to poetry teaching and learning and how such aspects promote and enhance poetry teaching and learning.

Willis (2007) is assertive of the fact that interpretivists lean towards favouring qualitative methods such as case studies. As explained by Willis, qualitative

approaches often give rich reports that are necessary for interpretivists to fully understand contexts. Consistent with Willis's ideas, Thomas (2003) maintains that qualitative methods are usually supported by interpretivists, because the interpretive paradigm represents a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing. In other words, in order to explore understandings of participants, an interpretive methodology provides a context that allows me to examine what the participants in my study have to say about their experiences.

It should be taken note of that the objective of any scientific investigation for the interpretive researcher is to comprehend how reality goes on at one time in one place as compared to what goes on in different times and places in the world. That is to say, it seeks to make sense of everyday life such that the human behaviour can be clearly understood as well as ensuring that social phenomena in this paradigm are believed to have influence on individual behaviour. Thus, the paradigm is best suited for this research because the researcher intended to unveil what teachers and learners from different schools encounter and perceive to be the challenges and opportunities of poetry teaching and learning.

3.1.4 Data Collection Instruments

A research enquiry is an empirical study. This means that it is based on generation of data or evidence which is the data that the researcher uses in reply to the research questions. It is in this light that for the purpose of this study, the researcher opted for and employed two data generation methods being; focus group discussions and semi- structured interviews.

3.1.4.1 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion was used as an instrument of data collection. Focus group is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics defined with respect to the proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures (Boateng, 2012). In line with the foregoing idea, Nyumbo et al, (2018) add that the focus or object of analysis is the interaction inside the group. The participants influence each other through their answers to the ideas and contributions during the discussion.

This study is a case study that therefore used the focus group discussion of Grades 10 and 11 teachers and learners as participants at Khetha High School and form D and E teachers and Learners from Letsema English Medium High School, respectively, purposively selected to the convenience of the researcher. The focus group interview was a semi-structured interview with nine open questions for learners and 13 open questions for teachers. There were two learners' groups in Khetha High and two from Letsema High which comprised of eight participants each. The selected participants were believed to be an accurate source of data because they are studying poetry. This was because there was no biasness as the participants were afforded enough chance and hence true reflection came to surface because the fundamental data produced by this technique are the transcripts of the group discussions and the moderator's reflections and annotations (Mishra, 2016). The focus group interview was made in February 2021 and its duration was between 38 min to 41 minutes, varying per individual groups.

3.1.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Another instrument that was used is the semi-structured interview. Conducted conversationally, as Adams (2015) states, with one respondent at a time, the semi-structured interview employs a blend of closed and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions. Adams goes on to add that the conversation can meander around the issue on the agenda, rather than adhering slavishly to verbatim questions as in a standardised survey—and may delve into totally unforeseen issues. Datko (2015) adds that a semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that is a combination of a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) together with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further.'

Due to its flexibility, the structure of the interview permits the researcher to prompt and encourage the interviewee if they are looking for more information or find what they are saying interesting. 'This method gives the researcher the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate or to follow a new line of inquiry introduced by what the interviewee is saying' Adams further adds. According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2018), this technique typically consists of a dialogue between researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up

questions, probes and comments. It is therefore a method that allows the researcher to collect open-ended data, to discover participant thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a specific topic and to deeply delve into subjective and sometimes sensitive issues. Based on this information, it is needless to say that semi-structured interviews also allow informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms. This information appropriated semi-structured interview for this study because it allowed the participants (teachers and learners) a chance to give out data that became helpful for the study, not locking out their personal and subjective content out.

Face-to-face semi-structured interview encounter was used, allowing me to ask open-ended questions and probe participants' responses. The participating teachers were five high school teachers from the two high schools in Leribe district, in the northern region of Lesotho; two from Khetha High School and three from Letsema English Medium High School and there were 10 learners participating; five from each school. These interviews were made in February 2021 and their durations were approximately 40 minutes. The questions were presented to the teachers and learners, who were interviewed independently from one another and others.

3.1.4.3 Participants and Sampling

Research participants are, by and large, selected for the reason that they are able to offer rich descriptions of their practices and are keen to pronounce their experiences, thereby providing information that is rich and which will be able to dare and enrich the researcher's understanding (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2009). Subject selection in qualitative research is purposeful; participants are selected based on who can best enlighten the research questions and enrich understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2009). For this reason, one of the most significant tasks in the study design phase is to recognise appropriate participants. Decisions regarding selection are based on the research questions, theoretical perspectives, and evidence informing the study (Creswell, 2009).

Grades 10 and 11 and Form D (conventionally know as Grade 11) and Form E (Grade 12) teachers and learners were taken as participants at Khetha High School and Letsema English Medium High School, respectively, purposively selected based

on the convenience of the researcher. This was because the selected participants were believed to be an accurate source of data because they were respectively teaching and studying and learning poetry with different experiences.

The data collection instruments that were employed were learners' focus group interview schedules and teacher interview schedules. The reason for choosing different types of data collection methods was to ensure that both the teachers' and learners' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of poetry and perhaps methods used to teach poetry were elicited.

Table 1.0 Schools included in the study

| Names of schools | Locations in Leribe district |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| School A- Khetha High School | Semi-urban area |
| School B- Letsema High School | Urban area |

School A- Khetha High School

This school is situated within the semi-urban area of the Leribe district. Learners and teachers in this school are from both the rural parts and the urban parts of the district with mixed advantage family background. Also, access to technology and phones (internet) ranges from minimal use to moderate use in learners and moderate use with teachers because of lack of possession of phones for some learners due to a disadvantaged background. For those that have them, the major strait is the internet connection in the school and a rather stiff allowance of learners to use mobile phones, especially those staying at the school dormitory. This says, their exposure to media is rather minimal. This makes it an interesting choice of a school to research for this study because it allows the researcher to find rich data in relations to both problems and opportunities relating to poetry. From this school, data collected was from Grade 10 and 11 Literature learners and teachers.

School B- Letsema High School

This school is situated in the urban area in the district of Leribe. Teachers and learners in this school are from around the town area and from more advantaged family backgrounds. This forms an interesting base for this study because the availability of resources is fairly great and allowing exposure to resources easily. Not only that, but also that they are exposed to functions where poetry is or may be performed. From this school, data was collected from Form E Literature learners and Literature teachers.

Table 2.0 Teacher participants table

| Teacher | Teaching experience | Qualification | Name of the school (pseudonym) | Age | Location of school |
|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Teacher A | 5 years | B Ed (Bachelor of Education) | Letsema | Early 30s | Urban |
| Teacher B | 13 years | B Ed | Letsema | Late 30s | Urban |
| Teacher C | 5 years | B Ed | Khetha | Early 30s | Semi-urban |
| Teacher D | 13 years | B Ed | Letsema | Early 30s | Urban |
| Teacher E | 5 years | B Ed | Khetha | Early 30s | Semi-urban |

Table 3.0 learners participating in the study

| Name of a learner | Class | Age | School | Location of the school |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
|--------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------|

| | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|----|---------|------------|
| LEARNER A | GRADE 10 | 17 | KHETHA | SEMI-URBAN |
| LEARNER B | GRADE 10 | 16 | KHETHA | SEMI-URBAN |
| LEARNER C | FORM D (GRADE 11) | 17 | LETSEMA | URBAN |
| LEARNER D | FORM E (GRADE 12) | 17 | LETSEMA | URBAN |
| LEARNER E | FORM E (GRADE 12) | 18 | LETSEMA | URBAN |
| LEARNER F | FORM D (GRADE 11) | 16 | LETSEMA | URBAN |
| LEARNER G | GRADE 11 | 18 | KHETHA | SEMI-URBAN |
| LEARNER H | GRADE 11 | 18 | KHETHA | SEMI-URBAN |
| LEARNER I | FORM E (GRADE 12) | 19 | LETSEMA | URBAN |
| LEARNER J | GRADE 11 | 17 | KHETHA | SEMI-URBAN |

3.1.5 Ethical Considerations

The security of human subjects via the submission of proper ethical principles is imperative in a research study. Ethics, as defined by Akaranga and Makau (2016), is a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people and guides the norms or standards of behaviour of people and relationships with each other.' In a qualitative study, ethical considerations have a particular resonance due to the in-depth nature of the study process (Arifin, 2018). The prevailing ethical direction for undertaking qualitative research time and again offer wide-ranging guidelines rather than concentrating on how to apply it in practice.

For this study, ethical clearance certification was sought from the National University of Lesotho through the Faculty of Education. The Faculty-endorsed letters were sent to the principals of the concerned schools for permission to conduct research in their schools. All the participants were also made aware of their rights of participating or not. Anonymity of the participants together with the schools to be used was adhered to ensure safety through the use of pseudonyms. A password-secured device was used for recording of data to ensure its safety and confidentiality. Participants were also afforded the chance to listen to recordings of what they had said to ensure that the data captured was correct.

3.2 Validity and Trustworthiness

Validity, as described by Sarantakos (2005), is the property of research instrument operationalised to measure its relevance, precision and accuracy. It tells the researcher whether an instrument measures what it is meant to measure and whether the measurement is accurate. To ensure validity, the results of this study was compared and contrasted with those conducted in other countries. It was again validated by asking participants to read transcribed notes so as to ensure that the notes truly reflected what they said. Also, tape recording was used for accuracy of data.

According to Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen and Kyngas (2014), trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry supports the argument that the inquiry is worth paying attention to and makes the study dependable, credible, conformable and transferable. To ensure trustworthiness of the results the study was conducted in a conducive environment where learners and teachers were free to provide reliable information. The selected schools and participants (teachers and learners) are believed to be authentic sources of data in this study because they engaged with the issue of concern more frequently hence this made them a rich source of data. Also, the instruments of data collection chosen, that is Focus Group discussions and semi-structured interviews, were employed due to their depth flexibility respectively. These features render them appropriate and dependable instruments to give accurate results. Using data from different sources also improves the trustworthiness of a study.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a step that follows after data collection and presentation of findings. For this study, data was analysed qualitatively. Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that has been collected, into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating (Punch, 2009). QDA is usually grounded on an interpretative philosophy. The findings were related to different roles of literature in class and were summarised under the research questions through thematic content analysis. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data (Anderson, 2004). Satisfactory TCA portrays the thematic content of interview transcripts (or other texts) by identifying common themes in the texts provided for analysis (Cho & Lee, 2014).

The researcher grouped and distilled from the texts a list of common themes in order to provide expression to the communality of voices across participants. Every attempt reasonable was made to employ names for themes from the actual words of participants and to group themes in manner that directly reflected the texts as a whole. According to Anderson, while sorting and naming themes requires some level of interpretation, "interpretation" is kept to a minimum. The researcher's own feelings and thoughts about the themes or what the TCA themes may signify are largely irrelevant to a TCA (Cho & Lee, 2014) therefore, I kept my interpretations minimal in order to maintain epistemological stance as objective or objectivistic. I labelled each pile as initial categories (themes) using key words or phrases copied from highlighted texts.

The researcher made inferences from the collected data by comparing data and recorded information to consolidate the findings of the study. All data materials were transferred to textual format as transcription, and were read several times to achieve the sense of whole, to explore the main meaning behind the data and trace back related ideas for understanding hidden concerns in the data. I brought myself close to the data by highlighting main ideas as codes related to the phenomenon, which led to the themes emerging through a constant comparison process. Text was inductively analysed, guided by the theories discussed in chapter 1 to arrive at the conclusion based on the collected data.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter highlighted the methodology, which is the design and approaches used in this study. The researcher also defended the use of the qualitative approach as used in the study and explained how it would be carried throughout the investigation. The chapter also explained the ethical considerations which have been observed, and concluded with how data was analysed. The next chapter presents the findings and analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the finding and analysis of data. The qualitative method used to collect data will direct the analysis of the data. The interviews and transcriptions were done through thematic content analysis, which uses quotations to convey clear meaning of data (Rule and Vaughan, 2011). All the data was captured on video and tape recording. The focus group interview questions and the teachers' interview questions will be attached as appendices at the end of the dissertation.

The interview itself was based on the questions in the interview guide, although the order of these questions varied from time to time (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the interview guide). Throughout the interviews, I also used a combination of probes and pauses in order to elicit as much information as possible. A probe is a comment that the interviewer can use to obtain more detailed information, for instance by asking the interviewee to say more about a particular topic, while pauses require the interviewer to be silent for longer than the interviewee in order to encourage them to keep talking (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Razavieh 2010).

The interview guide comprised 22 questions grouped thematically into seven categories. I typically commenced the interviews with questions one to three, related to the informant and their educational background and teaching experience. I would then go to the topic of literature in question four and ask the informants regarding their likes and dislikes about poetry based on their classroom experiences. After that, in questions five to the end, I asked them how they normally work with these different genres, pedagogical strategies employed, how they feel about them and also the challenges they meet in teaching and learning poetry and what opportunities of poetry are they cognisant of.

4.2.2 The participants

Of the five teachers that I interviewed, four were male and one was female. Since the interviews were conducted anonymously, the informants have been assigned the following labels: Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D and Teacher E. More detailed information about the individual informants is provided in Appendix 1. All of

the informants were LGCSE Literature in English teachers working in the two high schools in question. The interviews with these seven informants were conducted in person at their respective schools.

Field notes were first analysed based on the grounded approach (Charmaz, 2012), which is a method that helps to find patterns from the collected data in order to answer research questions. Data was read many times until recurring patterns related to how poetry influenced participants' learning process emerged. Participants' similar opinions and reactions about the poems led to establish major relations in the data which were considered initial findings. These instruments were analysed systematically through thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analysing, describing and reporting themes found within a data set. (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

There were 47 participants in this study consisting of 42 learners aged between 16 and 19, and 5 teachers whose experience in teaching Literature in English varied between five and 13 years. The learners were blended such that they were both internal and external among them (Grade 10 and 11 for Khetha High and Form D and E for Letsema). Learners from Khetha High had had an exposure in Literature from Grade nine while those from Letsema English Medium had studied it from Form D. The learners in Grade 11 and Form E from these respective schools were facing the LGCSE final examination at the time of the study. The examination also consists of an assessment of their knowledge of literature. There were two teachers from Khetha High School and three from Letsema English Medium High School.

Data was collected using the semi-structured interview method and the focus group discussions. Adams (2015) states, 'with one respondent at a time, the semi-structured interview employs a blend of closed and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions.' Focus group was also used in this research and the two methods served as the source because they were individualistic and anonymous, thus giving both teachers and learners confidence to partake in the process. However, the mostly used and most reliable method used across the teachers and learners is the semi-structured interview because of its large spectrum of individualism and secrecy.

During the focus group discussions, I collected data on aspects such as the teachers and learners' attitude towards their way of teaching and learning poetry respectively, their opinions about the opportunities and challenges of teaching and learning poetry, learners' feelings towards poetry, methods used by literature teachers, and the learners' involvement in text interpretation. The answers were sometimes shifty, particularly when they had to discuss the teaching methods selection. The interview used open-ended questions aimed at gathering in-depth information concerning learners' reactions towards text selection and teaching strategies.

As said earlier, the sample for the study consisted of 42 learners and five teachers. The data has not been analysed according to the gender of the respondents or to their age because I have not found significant differences between the male and female participants' answers. Also, the statistical weight of male respondents is insignificant (only four male learners; two from each school in their final year of study, and four male teachers and one female teacher) and thus, their answers cannot be generalised or considered representative for their gender. In terms of age, the subjects have similar ages and no significant differences have been noticed between the age groups 16 and 19. For both the semi-structured and focus group discussions, there were nine primary questions for the learners and 13 primary questions for the teachers which were flexibly exploited during the interviews to probe rich data. The most significant responses will be presented.

Being taught as part of the Literature in English examination, I found out that right from teachers' remarks and responses, that throughout the lesson, most teachers applied teacher-centred approaches in presenting poetry. There was minimal or no attempt to involve learners into considerable close-reading of the poem, let alone loud reading. The teacher only provided their own personal interpretation of a poem. The interpretation basically revolved around denotation rather than the connotation sense. From their responses, it appears like they conduct and treat poetry lessons like language comprehension lessons, not Literature.

4.2.3 Demographic Profile of Teachers

Teacher participants were those who had taught Literature in English for a period of five years and 13 years. Only five teachers were selected to participate in the study. Of the five respondents, two were from Khetha High School and the other three were

from Letsema English Medium High School, and they were four males and one female. Three of the teachers were in the early age of 30 while another two were in the late 30 of their age. Two of the teachers were having 13 years of teaching experience, while another three were having five years of teaching experience. Refer to table 2.0 in chapter three for the presentation of this information.

I examined the data in order to identify connections and themes, a process that assisted me in making broad conclusions about the ways in which learners interrelated with and understood poetry in both positive and negative ways. Besides, my approach helped to facilitate an overall understanding of the data because it allowed research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies. Key themes are often obscured, reframed or left invisible because of the preconceptions in the data collection and data analysis procedures.

The selected theoretical framework aided in analysis by providing a way to identify themes. My ultimate goal was to identify patterns or themes that helped to provide an answer to the key research questions; therefore, the codes used were connected to Transactional Theory in an effort to elaborate on learners' aesthetic and efferent responses. In general, several kinds and levels of codes were necessary so as to place learners' ideas along the artistic/efferent scale, which then enabled me to respond to what emerged from the data. Overall, I remained open to variability: each learner expressed their feelings, ideas, and attitudes in different introspective, personal, and/or emotional ways.

First, the interview protocol that I employed during both the individual interviews and focus group sessions was rooted in questions about transformative learning. I asked about the ways in which participants describe their experiences or connections with poetry (text), deal with challenges and opportunities in relation to poetry text and poetry as a genre, and classroom teachers/classroom teaching practice in general.

Second, during preliminary analysis of the data it became clear that transformation is at the very foundation of what learners report regarding their ideas and impressions about poetry and poetry instruction. The positive transactions learners described centred on their feelings, ideas, and ability to engage with text. The positive transactions they spoke about dealt universally with feelings, ideas, and

engagement. As this study was designed to uncover ways to improve pedagogy and learning based upon learners' and teachers' perspectives, it was crucial to understand more about how learners transacted with texts, peers, and instructors inside of the classroom.

4.2.4 The Learner (Focus group) interviews and semi- structured interviews

These group discussion sessions helped the researcher to understand the participants, compare their interpretations and ascertain what they feel about poetry, how they perceive it based on their various experiences from classroom scenarios.

4.2.4.1 The Learner (focus group) schedule

Participants discussed a posed topic not only as a group, but also as individuals. They interacted with each other and their spokesperson reporter and would sometimes give different information when in the presence of the group compared to their individual interviews. These sessions offered the researcher a deep understanding, especially in open-ended questions where participants explore their vocabularies.

Kitzinger (1994, p. 209) defines 'focus group' as "helping people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be easily accessible in a one-on-one interview". This means that, through group dynamics, the participants worked alongside the researcher and interacted with other group members and other people around, as the researcher, learners and their teachers in this study with interviews, individually or in a focus group. Video tapes were also used.

4.2.5 The Teacher Interviews

The semi-structured interviews by the researcher required teacher's as participants to respond. Also, open-ended questions helped the researcher to analyse the responses meaningfully.

4.2.5.1 The Teacher Interview Schedule

This involved conducting intense individual interviews with each teacher from the two secondary schools. They responded according to their choice and styles of teaching. They were visited twice in their respective schools. These interviews were conducted in a relaxed setting; in a car.

4.3 THE VISION OF POETRY

As stated in chapter two, it is clear that poetry has its inherent values which are didactic in many ways and are important in moulding a whole person. However, there are questions to be answered in relation to poetry pedagogy so long as it has to form an important part of Basotho children's learning and children worldwide. What is the vision of poetry for learning and development and what are its uses in education today? What role can the poem play not only in formal education, but also in personal development and well-being beyond the classroom? How may we develop our teaching practices to access such benefits? These are all important questions to address if poetry is to continue to form a central part of the teaching and learning of Literature in English in our schools. However, the value of poetry in knowledge and development is often taken for granted: assumptions about the necessity of foundational encounters with 'great' literature overlap with anecdotal evidence about the transformative power of poetry.

Poetry can be used creatively, artistically and generatively, not only in English and literacy programs, but across the curriculum to support discipline-specific literacy, artistic and textual practices (Marshall, 2014), as well as what Bandura (1977) calls social learning. These are characteristically visions of poetry; what poetry is set for both inside and outside the classroom. Poetry can be regularised and unified with the delivery of teaching and learning in a school context. There is potential to conceive poetry as a modality for creativity, embodied expression and oral discourse, and deep conceptual thinking that can be experienced across the curriculum (Parker, 2014; Davis, 2015).

Undeniably, there may be wide-ranging trans-textual possibilities in deploying poetry discursively in teaching and learning across the curriculum and in a variety of social learning situations. The idea of poetry as a socially situated instrument for engaging with knowledge and exploring experience, contrasts with the approach often seen in English or literacy classrooms to categorise poetry as other: as a discrete object for examination and analysis that belongs in the province of literary studies (Khatib, 2011).

The vision of poetry also cuts across the curriculum that is aligned with societal needs and such vision can be branched into three major roles in education:

language improvement, cultural understanding and personal growth. From the results of my interviews these three aspects are present and dominating more or less in all the participants' approaches, but with different degrees, where one aspect is perceived as more important than the others. The results revealed from both the learners and teachers that poetry is a trustworthy cornucopia of the values; language, culture and personal growth and I present them in the particular order in which they surfaced.

It is very pellucid that participants are in agreement that poetry dominates language learning and comprehension, followed by ability of poetry to teach cultural awareness through various historical backgrounds and contexts and content and lastly followed by poetry's ability to enhance personal development through its ability to allow readers to feel for (sympathy) and feel with (empathy) others in different geographical and time scopes. For the fact that participants were able to cite examples of certain poems taught shows a certain level of comprehension and appreciation of poetry. However, challenges of poetry pedagogy as far as teaching methods are concerned is very glaring as well as the issue of language used in poetry and research surrounding poetry content.

In the following sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 I analysed to what degree participants in the group and individual interviews addressed these aspects. Then 4.4 focused on the role of teachers in teaching poetry and their teaching methods while 4.5 discussed the teacher interviews.

4.3.1 Poetry for language improvement

Correia (2011) claims that the literary text becomes a central means to boost learners' vocabulary bank, facilitating them to operate on different and more demanding linguistic structures and heuristically assist them in becoming cognisant of the different conventions of the language. This argument contradicts the idea that a literary text is difficult because of the language it uses. As teachers, we want our learners to absorb words and their synonyms. We wish that our learners learn the weight that each word brings with its meaning according to the context it is used. On the second argument, the literary text helps learners improve their reading ability of texts in a foreign language as it will also give them means to read more difficult texts and lead them to embrace the connotative and denotative meaning.

In fact, several authors are in support of the idea of the validity of a literary text, bringing up the many advantages of this text in opposition to those who only work with non-literary texts, because its readers feel that they have a more active role in working its interpretation than reading, for example, an informative text. As teachers, we expect our learners to use the English language in various situations. They will not use it in pre-defined contexts as we generally find in textbooks nor will they have someone explaining the underlying meaning of what is being told or written.

Reading in another language has a significant impact on the learner's acquisition of the target language because of the exposure to appropriate input (Alvi and Alvi, 2019). The participants were unanimous in their view that poetry impacts positively on language improvement. Group D through its spokesperson stated this as the main reason why poetry should be taught in the ESL classroom:

Except for being... fun and interesting, I think (literature) is a wonderful tool for teenagers or all learners to pick up new words and phrases and to see idiomatic language; it's reading comprehension so it's not just for entertainment, but for learning. Poetry offers chance to exposure of rich language which enables us to be dynamic in usage of words while writing our essays. Thus we can say it is an effective entry point to understanding English Language better.

This groups perceives poetry as a tool that they can use to reach the final goal of English learning, which is language learning. Group B gives a similar comment on this aspect:

We love poetry lessons because they build on language skills and also help us understand the significance of words in writing. Poetry improves our vocabulary especially when we are helped by our teacher and we help ourselves with dictionaries.

They agree that language development is an aspect of studying poetry that should be as important as gaining understanding and use of language in a varied way and also clarify that a teacher should be there to guide them. Even with the individual interviews, they shared similar sentiments that poems are helpful because they open eyes to beauty of language in use and make them to be better people via the use of

language and that they need guidance of a teacher. One of the learner interviewees highlighted as thus:

I like poetry because it increases my vocabulary and has a way of teaching me how to play around with words thus improving my writing and speaking of English Language. It becomes easier to comprehend and feel the beauty of language in poetry when my teacher guides us and makes us understand words as used by the poet. Those words will make us better communicators.

This participant values poetry lessons for upraising their linguistic competence and adds that a teacher makes it easy by guiding and simplifying language.

It however surfaced in the learners' semi-structured interviews that the same language which can assist them in their linguistic competence does have problems and challenges them. Learner E opines:

The language ... used can sometimes be tricky to grasp and understand, which makes me to have some very bad attitudes towards poetry sometimes.

This learner states that the difficult language sometimes brings about a negative attitude towards poetry in them. Learner H states shares similar sentiments and states:

One of the terrible things about poetry is that sometimes the language employed is difficult to comprehend and make meaning of, thus hindering to find the metaphorical meaning for I will be struggling to find the superficial one.

For this learner, the unfamiliar language blurs understanding and thus learning of poetry layers of meaning.

According to data, all the learners appreciated the power of poetry to enhance language however some reported that reading poetry in the language classroom is a difficult task because the poems contained a great amount of vocabulary that they had never used before as language learners. This can be seen in a comment by learner F:

The most difficult part is the vocabulary because there are some very strange or complex words that are not used frequently. Some words are not

commonly used in real life. In the poems, there are a lot of unknown words to us.

Participants stated that the poems contained vocabulary and linguistic structures that were not part of daily speech. Therefore, at the beginning of the experience, the reading transactions become complicated as learners are forced to make a great effort to understand the language before actually doing any meaning transactions.

Participant B recognises the benefits of reading because of language exposure, as long as the level of the language does not compromise the reader's enjoyment and appreciation of the text. To sum up, the participants acknowledge the benefits of reading on the learners' language proficiency. However, for participant D, the language is the goal and the reading is the means to achieve this goal, while for A and B, the main objective is to be able to understand a text and enjoy the reading, for which a development of the language is necessary. The two are nevertheless compatible and the literature corroborates this. Lightbown and Spada (2006) posit that, in relation to Krashen's theory of comprehensible input, which claims that language acquisition is enabled through extensive exposure to input at an appropriate level (not too difficult and not too easy); however the language improvement can only occur if the affective filters of the learner are down, i.e. the learner is in a positive emotional state, for example when enjoying and finding purpose in the activity (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p.37; Harmer, 2007, pp.50-51).

Even though participants complained about the unknown vocabulary and metaphorical properties of the poems, data indicated that all of them gradually acknowledged that poetry was an exceptional source to improving their English competence. 9 learners reported that poems helped them to learn vocabulary in context, while all the learners' groups confirmed that they had enhanced their language skills. This could be seen in some comments and replies in the interviews:

The poems helped me to learn new vocabulary. (learner J)

What I have improved the most thanks to the poems are my speaking and reading skills, because if you speak, even if you make mistakes, your fluency will improve. Also, if you read, even if you don't understand, you are going to get accustomed to read poetry anyway. (Learner C)

I consider that the analysis of the poems helped me to improve my reading process and vocabulary. (Learner G)

With poetry, you learn to read in a critical way. You improve your language skills. (Learner B)

Ten participants out of 10 stated that reading transactions had permitted them to be better readers. In actual fact, their reading skills give the impression that they develop sequentially as they read verbatim and stanza by stanza with the intention of making out the main ideas of the poems.

4.3.2 Poetry for cultural awareness

On the cultural argument, we have to look at culture as content that has to be worked on to demystify stereotypes and make learners more tolerant towards other cultures. The contact with different cultures also permits learners to boost their creativity. In this line of thought, we can talk about intercultural experience. A literary text contains this potential, leading learners to confront themselves with any ideas and stereotypes they might have or did not conceptualize as part of their lives. A literary text comes as a form of conscious awareness, of confrontation and of paying attention to tensions that we need to understand different cultures and appreciate the art of literature. On the other hand, in this case the goal of reading literature is first of all being able to understand the text for its own value and not only to reach a higher language proficiency. Respondent B said:

I like poetry lessons because they help us understand different historical backgrounds, they improve our understanding of other people's way of seeing the world in their writing and reveals us to the different thematic issues like nature.

Sharing the same sentiments, Group A further and extensively adds that,

Poetry helps us to be critical thinkers in so many ways. Poetry normally carries more than one meaning and that encourages us to find the different hidden meanings behind the poems. In our quest to find these layers of meaning, we get to be exposed to various cultures, allowing us to experience the poet's cultural experience through his poetic lens.

Respondent A and group B emphasise the might of poetry in being a cornucopia for different cultures and being exposed to such cultures through the writer's eyes, as though it is a first-hand experience. This clarifies and supports that reading poetry opens the readers' eyes to different cultural influences, thus moulding one to see and empathise with characters in the poem.

Generally, all the participants highlighted the value of poetry in being a multiple disciplinary train where learners can learn various subjects and cultures while still studying poetry. They highlighted a few poems which they claim to have been didactic as far as cultural background is concerned. Participant J elucidated as thus:

Well poetry lessons rock. A small piece of writing entailing all the detailed message intended to be conveyed by the persona is way too profound. Who cannot be down for those brief yet informative lessons? Unlike novels and short stories, poems are easy to get away with and comprehend. More so, whatever analysis one makes in congruence with how they understand the text, they are or likely to be precise not leaving behind learning different cultures. Poems like 'Dover Beach', 'She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways' and 'Song to the Men of England' played such an important role in opening our eyes to different periods characterised by certain unique cultures and influences. Poetry lessons have gained much of my predilection.

Hughes (2007) shares this view of respondent J that poetry has been pivotal and also has captured their heart as opposed to the other genres of literature due to its conciseness and being such a great wealth of cultural knowledge.

4.3.3 Poetry for personal growth

One of the questions I asked was 'What do you like about poetry lessons? Why?' Even though most of the data analysis exposed that learners considered poetry as challenging because of linguistic complexity and literary ambiguity, all of them, except one, asserted that they enjoy reading the poems because of several aesthetic reasons. To the above stated question, six learners and all the learners' groups said that they enjoy the poems because of their literary beauty, while four learners valued how the poems evoked good feelings and depicted interesting human universal topics. Respondent H stated:

I really like them, especially because they are connected to profound human mysteries such as death and God, religion and nature. I love all of them because they reflect different personal emotions, such as love and passion, and I get excited while reading them. Poetry helps us explore and be cognisant of life from different angles. It also helps us to think beyond our imagination; that is think outside the box. These factors make us love poetry.

Repeated words in the data such as “I really liked,” “I loved,” and “I felt,” clearly portrayed the aesthetic stance that learners experienced during the reading transaction. They admitted having responded emotionally through feelings of joy, pleasure, pain, and sadness when they said that they had developed aesthetic sensibility to poetic structure and figurative language. This is how respondent E sees poetry for personal growth:

I like the knowledge, information, experience and insight gained in poetry lessons. I like how they allow me to exercise empathy and sympathy. They also open my eyes and attention to issues of love and nature and things that matter to the society.

This participant states that poetry has enhanced their feeling for others which is a great personal growth and development. Similarly, learner G added:

I like ideas and perspectives expressed through poetry. This guides one on how to behave and judge things thoroughly looking at pros and cons not only on the general perspective of society only. It also brings us to the world of humanity, by accepting the facts, emotions and feelings.

This notion connects with Hanauer’s (2012) view of the role of language learning in ESL/EFL: To facilitate “personally meaningful expression” and accentuate the “presence of the living, historically situated, individual human being at the centre of the language learning process” (p.106). For Kramersch (1993) and Hanauer (2012), the perseverance of learning a foreign language is not only etymological, linguistic, communicative, and cognitive. “It involves the whole human being beyond just intellectual abilities” (Kramersch, 1993, p.105), including their sentiments, individual trepidations, and human know-hows.

Learners' comments on how they were able to experience human emotions through the beauty of images, symbols, and other figurative language, signposted how they were stirred by aesthetic stances during the reading continuum. Rosenblatt's (1995) theory indicates that this ensues when "the reader's attention is centred directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (p.25). In other words, reading poetry not only helps learners to build knowledge, communicative competence, and critical reading, but to appreciate the beauty of literary language in the foreign language and walk in the shoes of others and feel what they have felt. Likewise, the ESL poetry classroom became a space to discuss the human state of mind, personal standards, morals and ethics, and human experiences.

The indistinctness found in poetry is the dominant feature that allows learners to bring to the surface different messages and themes from diverse viewpoints and relate with numerous interpretations provided in poetry. Thus, literary ambiguity engenders language aptitude development, meaning negotiation, and even debate, as learners have to defend their interpretations with coherent arguments (Maley & Duff, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Khansir, 2012; Sakamoto, 2015). This relates to the fact that poetry underwrites critical interpretation and argumentation in EFL education (Hişmanoğlu, 2005 cited in Khansir, 2012) as learners are tied up in understanding and reading between the lines the messages mentally and rationally. It "fosters reflection and a critical stance *vis-à-vis* one's one and the foreign meanings" (Kramsch, 1993, p.175), chief aspects comprised by transactional reading.

4.4 ROLE OF A TEACHER AND THEIR TEACHING METHODS

Singh (2011, p.118) discusses a triumphant scenario wherein teaching in an additional language "depends on the dedication shown by the teacher." This means that the methods that the teacher uses have a positive influence on the learners and their performance. Learners, individually and in groups, asserted that their teachers are largely supportive for even when they encounter problems with poems on their own, they are able to consult them and they be assisted positively. This, according to the learners, helped them have a positive attitude towards poetry. In response to the question, 'Is your teacher helpful? Why?', group A stated:

Yes. He has a positive attitude towards the subject and poetry which becomes contagious because we also end up having the same attitude which helps us focus more and be motivated to love and enjoy the subject and its content.

Similarly, learner B added,

He is helpful because he provides us with material for further reading in order to enhance our understanding of poetry. He is always with positive attitude towards us and the subject and he helps us with the questions we have in order to make us understand. He sometimes allows us to write our own poetry so that we can relate to poetry first hand.

These responses affirm that positive attitude matters in teaching and learning for it motivates learners.

However, looking at the data collected from learners and their groups, the teachers use the teacher-centred methods only which can be referred to as traditional teaching methods. All of the participating learners said their teachers provide them with learning materials. One of them said:

Yes, he is helpful because he is the one who usually explains the poems to us and corrects our mistakes after writing class works.

This is evidence that teachers do not allow learners to embark on discovery of learning for themselves, rather, they are dependent on their teachers. This is further evidenced by group B which stated:

Yes. This is because (they) supply us with hardcopy materials that they have extensively done research on.

This further clarifies the point that poetry teaching and learning is traditional which may bring problems in learning because it is easier to learn by doing.

Günes (2009) cautions on abandoning and breaking up with the previously futile ways and means of teaching, which have unfortunately appeared unfavourable and disadvantageous, exclusively for second language acquisition. I echo the identical sentiments expressed by Wyse, Sugrue, Fenteman and Moon (2014, 58-59). They indicate that the methods of teaching poetry in Tanzania are 'orthodox' as is the case

in the context of this study in Lesotho. This means that the methods referred to are conservative and traditional. Therefore, they appear ineffective and seem not to prepare learners for good performance at school.

4.5 TEACHER INTERVIEW

Günes (2009, p.189) equates literature and language to the work of a sculpture which is pronounced as 'a block of marbles with some pieces chipped off'. This means that the impression in the poem is sketched back to the language in which it has been transcribed in black and white. Such amalgamation increases linguistic and philosophical awareness, elevating vocabulary and analysis of literature artistically and ingeniously. This serves as an indicator of the practicality and helpfulness of literature for the appreciation of the different ways of language. These sentiments cut across both the learners and the teachers. This is so because it became evident in the teachers' interviews that they too, like their learners, do applaud poetry for its beauty and positive impact on language honing.

Teacher B mentioned that

"poetry can function like a bridge between academic and more common literature", thus aiding in minimising the difficulties the teacher might face when using more challenging material in class. Then a few of the teachers gave examples of the benefits with teaching poetry; linguistically - *"...you can make them study more grammar, vocabulary in that way..."*, confidence and speaking ability - *"Poetry helps learners to express themselves..."*, and finally inclusion where every learner can perform – *"The good thing is that you can't do it wrong... The weak ones can produce something, even if it is only a few lines."* One teacher went as far as showing the role of poetry exposure in their life. They declared that,

I... was modelled by my teacher of Literature to love and enjoy it. I can't forget its exposure to language- it has played such a central role in my linguistic development.

It became obvious from the teachers' responses that they are aware of the importance of internet in browsing for information about poetry on their side. However, their responses were very silent on how they make learners use

technology to learn on their own. Thus, this makes it clear that teachers still believe so much in them being the source of knowledge and perhaps authoritatively, deny their learners to exploit technology to the advantage of their learning.

On the question regarding how to prepare and teach poetry, the teachers listed several methods and approaches. The teachers use discussion/ Socratic and largely lecture method which they state to be time effective in their teaching. Based on their responses, teachers seem unaware of the other teaching approaches of poetry mentioned in chapter 2. Only one mentioned the use of the discovery method blended with collaborative group.

They also mentioned that they teach a few poems and let learners embark on their own learning with other poems which the teacher did not teach, not making any mention of guidance from teachers to learners. What also surfaced is that many learners want to depend on teachers and do not want to do things on their own. Teacher A said,

They expect the teacher to do everything for them, so we spend more time on one poem unnecessarily.

On the question of poetry opportunities, teachers' responses were rather passive and confined to being a poet in writing and performances. Only one teacher; teacher D, gave a more detailed response:

Of course yes. Poetry is infused with unfathomable beauty of language. I believe poetry comes in handy when it comes to Designing Adverts, compiling music and also moulding one to be a better stage performer. Internationally, poetry is taken so seriously to the extent of having poetry competition well sponsored by lucrative entities. Sadly, I haven't witnessed such an event here in Lesotho. I therefore don't there is home for poetry locally.

According to this teacher, there are wide opportunities in poetry which they have enlisted in their response, beyond being just a poet, which are not tapped or explored in Lesotho and other teachers do not make mention of, probably due to lack of exposure to such or maybe the attitude is not right as far as poetry pedagogy is concerned. This view echoes that of Eliche (2012) cited in Daniel (2013) that teacher

background knowledge is fundamental in teaching for it goes hand in hand with exposure.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher summarises, concludes and makes recommendations on the challenges and opportunities of teaching and learning poetry in two secondary schools, in the Leribe district, Lesotho. The researcher used learners' focus-group interviews and semi-structured interviews for both learner and teacher interviews twice on separate occasions, to gather data. This study investigated the challenges faced by both teachers and learners in poetry pedagogy together with the opportunities that come along with its teaching and learning.

5.2 RESPONSES TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher's findings were linked to the following key research questions:

- What are the challenges of poetry teaching and learning?
- What are the opportunities of poetry teaching and learning?

This empirical case study has shown that both teachers and learners of poetry in an EFL/ESL classroom in Lesotho face challenges, but equally find opportunities, though minimal, and benefit from such opportunities such as influencing both teachers' and learners' language competence in positive ways. According to the findings, poetry enhances their lexis, as learning vocabulary was a constant response in data collection.

This study helped them realise the benefits of studying poetry and realise the problems they always thought they did not have and the ability to understand unknown words in meaningful literary contexts, instead of learning lists of words and grammar structures in isolation as it still happens in EFL classrooms. Also, based on learners' opinions, this study concludes that poetry is an influential material to improve the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing), for the reason that it enables learners to be critical readers and better speakers and writers to develop arguments based on evidence.

This study reflects on the teacher-centred approach dominated by the teacher-narration. What surfaced from the data is that most of the time poetry lessons are predominated by teacher-talk and the learners listening and sometimes, taking down notes instead of actively participating in free discussions throughout the lessons. However, Singh (2011, p.118) explicitly discusses a triumphant scenario wherein teaching in an additional language “depends on the dedication shown by the teacher.” This means that the methods that the teachers use in their teaching of poetry have a positive influence on the learners and their performance.

The researcher shares the sentiments expressed by Wyse, Sugrue, Fentemann and Moon (2014). They indicate that the methods of teaching poetry in Tanzania are ‘orthodox’. This means that, the methods referred to were conservative and traditional and this became evident in teacher interview responses in the case of this study. Therefore, were ineffective and seemed not to prepare learners for good performance at school. Similarly, in Kenya, Chemwel, Kibass and Illeva (2005) indicate English poetry results as appalling. The genre was only for the sake of the examinations only, and had reduced teaching to a bore.

This study concludes that the transactional approach should be implemented as part and parcel of EFL education. This should be so that learners can be involved in efferent and aesthetic stances during reading tasks. This approach is important because it can take them into analysing and interpreting meaning smoothly, along with blending them into enjoying the aesthetic beauty of literature. EFL teachers should, then, take advantage of the power of language ambiguity in poetry so that they and learners mutually support each other to negotiate meaning as well as considering assorted interpretations grounded on logical thinking, reasoning and proof.

Into the bargain, the discoveries of this research give the impression to indicate that poetry requires to be considered as accurate and unpretentious linguistic material that can foil and also match other conventional instructional resources such as textbooks, videos, and grammar books. Appropriate selection of poetry, according to learners’ own English language level, without pressure and preconceptions, can result in an enriching content-based experience and in a meaningful.

Let me state that good poetry teaching requires a praxis (a powerful combination of practice with theory) best suited to the nature and stature of this varied and wide literary genre. This praxis takes into account the promotion of learners as writers as well as readers of poetry, in conjunction with the teacher as a writing practitioner and pedagogue. It should be taken into consideration that the interaction of connection of writing with reading and analysis of poetry is actually very commanding in developing learner's interest and engagement with poetry, and as a consequence, the rich potential to develop, hone and enhance substantial literacy capabilities. I consequently argue that, in writing poetry, the distinctions and sensibilities of published poetry are best understood.

It is also worthy to note that in this praxis, poetry writing, poetry performance and poetry appreciation are equally significant and fundamental in learning to comprehend poetry and to appreciate its potential as a system of personal and creative expression that has emancipative and transformative possibilities. Despite the fact that there might well be strong emphasis on more functional or instrumental notions of literacy in literacy programs in many Lesotho classrooms, poetry is pivotal for understanding the deeper meanings in the use of language and the power of language to convey tone and emotion, as well as the rhythmic patterns possible between words and within word groups. This became very clear from the words of the participants in both the teachers' and learners' interviews. It is also important for facilitating more unfettered personal writing that is important for self-expression and for the encouragement of a learner's voice.

It is therefore important to note that literacy is essentially fundamental for the comfort and welfare of society in one piece and for the capacity building of every person to function efficiently and commendably in that society. Poetry enables the democratic process, nurtures interconnection of members of a society as well as being an indispensable instrument for prosperity. That being the case, accommodating and assimilating the unequivocally compelling potential of poetry for improving literacy in the ways I have pronounced is key.

I want to be bold in my affirmation of poetry as a powerhouse in literacy practice thus a huge need to realise that poetry needs greater centrality in literacy programs and in content decisions in the curriculum, especially in the middle school where attitudes

to poetry are often formed. This further affirms a call for the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) to help teachers in dealing with this gem of a genre.

It is important, now more than ever, to be able to have portraits of good teaching in action. I hope that this study contributes to a healthy, specific, and sustained conversation regarding the importance of having the excellent teaching of poetry and strive to ensure that poetry is a consistent, integrated part of the secondary English Language and Literature in English classroom.

There is much at stake here. If we want learners who think critically, who can use literature and poetry to help make sense of their increasingly complex world, who see themselves as connoisseurs, who read poetry and seek out art outside the classroom, and who have a sense of agency and ownership over their education and can see themselves as agents in their own lives, we must continue to ask ourselves what it means to teach poetry well--and why it is important to teach it at all.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is problematic in its nature since the phenomena that are being measured are feelings and expressions from people participating in the research. Whenever research is done where people are involved they will actively affect the outcome of the study. Together with the fact that the one performing the study will also add things involuntarily into the study.

One potential criticism toward this study is the parameters used when engagement and lack of engagement is measured. The categories for the observations were selected by the one that was performing the research. One such category that turned out to be problematic was distractions since it did not disclose, without a doubt, that the learners in the focus groups and semi-structured interviews were engaged or not.

Another shortcoming with the study is the number of participants since there were only two interview sessions made per school. There should be more schools, more teachers and learners interviewed in order to validate the findings. If there was an opportunity, a study during a longer period of time and involving more participants would be preferred for this particular method of research.

Another issue with the study is the geographical location. It focused on schools from one part of the country. If chance afforded, the study may have been extended to

other parts of the country in order to cover a larger area and receive richer data from such places. The purposive sample does not allow for generalisations and these results need to be evaluated in relation to their context and further research in this field must be conducted.

Another limitation is that the researcher used closely related instruments; focus group and semi-structured interviews, which may render the study biased. There is a call for more instruments in order to make the results more valid and tangible.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study could be extended by looking into related topics like:

- ✓ Opportunities of poetry learning for learners and teachers in order to make them see the worth of this dying art form.
- ✓ The role of the teacher in changing learners' attitudes towards poetry
- ✓ The place of poetry in teacher training colleges.
- ✓ The impact of educational backgrounds, belief towards poetry, and level of confidence.
- ✓ More studies are needed to examine the influence of English teachers' backgrounds on their perceptions towards poetry from a socioeconomic perspective, such as the levels of education and income.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have emerged:

- It is important that the Ministry of Education and Training through the NCDC works with teachers via intensive workshops to help them enhance poetry teaching and performance for both learners and teachers alike. This would be done in line with the well-developed syllabus, helping to provide appropriate and helpful material for poetry teaching and learning; helping teachers too to be knowledgeable in different teaching approaches as far as poetry is concerned. The development of teaching material packages may even ease the pressure on teachers and spare the time which proved to be a predicament to teachers as far as finishing the syllabus content.

- Additionally, educational program administrators should offer professional development opportunity for their teachers to be involved in workshops that introduce them to different varieties of poetry writing other than classic poetry. As suggested by Dymoke and Hughes (2009), if teachers are exposed to poetry in a variety of poetic forms, they will gain confidence in their ability to view themselves as competent writers of poetry. Once they experience poetry writing in a positive light, it is expected that they will demonstrate increased expectations toward their learners' ability to write poetry.
- I recommend that learning material be readily available for learners to help in their learning of poetry in order to demystify their misconceptions about poetry.
- Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that poetry and literature as a whole, has a role to play in language learning. It would be important to make it a compulsory subject to aid in English Language learning for it is a problem in schools with learners. It is in this light that I recommend the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho and NCDC review the place of Literature in English as an elective in the national curriculum.
- One other method to use in encouraging novice teachers to consent to the oxymora of teaching, specifically teaching poetry, is to take account of strategies for poetry teaching explicitly, or more explicitly, in methods courses. In an attempt to provide pre-service teachers experience and confidence with poetry, we have to give them metaphors for learning (Certo, Apol, Wibbens and Hawkins, 2012). Methods courses would certainly do well too to put into practice classic poetry teachers as models, focusing on the prominence of reflexivity in one's teaching which can be transferred to teaching the importance of teasing out the false dichotomies (close reading versus appreciation) from the real tensions (expert versus novice positionality of teachers), to teach the embracing of beginner's mind and to help new teachers to embrace paradox in all aspects of their teaching.
- Our learners are already wrapped up in new media and the question is no longer whether we should use digital technologies in the classroom, but rather how they are being integrated into the curricula. Although access to resources

continues to be an issue, principals need to encourage and support classroom teachers in developing digital skills to improve literacy learning. In addition, teacher preparation programs need to ensure that teacher candidates are fully equipped to integrate new media in a classroom context.

While the findings of this study cannot be generalised to Lesotho as a whole, it has still managed to reveal that despite the challenges of poetry teaching and learning in classrooms, many benefits can still be derived out of this centuries-old genre. It is up to teachers to implement the kind of instruction that allows those benefits to cascade to the learners to enrich their poetry experience at school.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

01st March 2021

Dear Principal

A letter of introduction to undertake research

This letter serves to introduce **Kananelo Moea** – a masters student in the Faculty of Education at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). He is undertaking research on "**Challenges and opportunities of poetry teaching and learning in Literature in English at two Leribe schools.**" The study requires him to interview the relevant participants. Kindly accord the student the necessary assistance to enable him to carry this study which has the potential to generate useful data and information in the field of education.

Your cooperation and assistance are most highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mahao Mahao, PhD
Head - Department of Language and Social Education
Faculty of Education, National University of Lesotho

Appendix B: SEMI-STRUCTURED AND FOCUS GROUP LEARNER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been teaching literature at LGCSE level?
2. Do you enjoy teaching it? Why?
3. How do you usually plan for your poetry lessons?
4. Describe the methods you employ in teaching poetry?
5. What method(s) do you find the most effective in teaching poetry to learners?
6. Which lessons are most exciting for you?
7. What don't you like about poetry lessons?
8. What do you find challenging/ problematic about poetry?
9. How do you usually overcome those challenges?
10. What problems do your learners face in learning poetry?
11. What have you seen and believe to be the opportunities of poetry?
12. Would you encourage someone to make a career out of poetry? Why/ Why not?
13. How much do you make your learners feel involved/ engaged in learning poetry? For example, some activities they engage in, etc. and what is the feedback you often get from learners?

Appendix C: SEMI-STRUCTURED TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What Grade are you in?
2. How old are you?
3. What do you like about poetry lessons? Why?
4. What do you dislike about poetry lessons? Why/ Why not?
5. Describe how your teacher teaches poetry lessons.
6. What do you regard as the opportunities of learning poetry? Why?
7. What do you regard as the challenges of learning/ studying poetry?
8. How do you usually handle the challenges of studying poetry?
9. Is your teacher helpful? How?

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