GRADE THREE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING POETRY: A CASE STUDY IN THREE CONTEXTUAL VARIATIONS

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DECLARATION

I, Charity Zakithi Fynn Ngubane (217078589), declare that:

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore Grade 3 educator's experiences of teaching poetry, and to understand how and why they teach poetry in the way they do. A qualitative case study was conducted informed by a constructivist paradigm with educators in the Ugu District, south of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were conducted to gather data, which was then analysed using content analysis. The results of the study revealed that poetry teaching is a neglected area in the foundation phase. Inadequate educator training and professional development, and a lack of realistic alignment of time and available resources with the requirements of the CAPS curriculum, means that insufficient time is spent on poetry, and educators do not apply a uniform approach to poetry teaching during the time that is spent on it. A lack of adequate teaching and infrastructural resources in many schools, and a language barrier created by English as the LoLT, compounds the problems affecting poetry teaching. Many of these issues are not solely confined to poetry teaching, but affect teaching and learning in general in South Africa. Recommendations were provided for these issues to be addressed in a focused manner, to ensure that foundation phase learners in South Africa are adequately equipped to handle the conceptual leap to the intermediate phase. This will assist in ensuring the positive long-term learning outcomes of all South African learners.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my two children, Kevin and Tamia Fynn. My children, as promised, mom has done it I trust you will do better and much more than mommy. I love you guys from the bottom of my heart, and I hope you always know that.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANA   Annual National Assessment

CAPS   Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

DBE   Department of Basic Education

FAL   First Additional Language

FET   Further Education and Training

GET   General Education and Training

HoD   Head of Department

HL   Home Language

LoLT   Language of Learning and Teaching

MIA   Multiple Intelligences Approach

NDP   National Development Plan

NECT   National Education Collaboration Trust

PIRLS   Progress in International Reading Literacy

SADC   Southern African Development Community

SGB   School Governing Body

ZAD   Zone of Actual Development

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This chapter introduces this study on Grade 3 educator's experiences in teaching poetry in three different contexts. The background context to the study is presented, which includes a discussion on the status and role of poetry in South Africa. The rationale and purpose of the study is explained, and the main research objectives and critical research questions are presented. The overall research methods and approach are briefly covered, and the limitations of the study, as well as the validity and reliability of the research, are discussed.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Poetry is the oldest of the literary forms, and poetry and language cannot be separated. Dressman and Faust (2014) believe that poetry forms the most important genre of literature. After colonization, Africa lost its narrative voice to tell its own histories and interpret its own literature. Hughes (2007) points out that poetry should have a central place in our lives, not only for the aesthetic pleasure it affords, but also for its ability to awaken our senses. Poetry connects us with ourselves and others (Spiro, 2004). Rex and Shiller (2009) assert that power circulates between the learners and the educator when there is a movement of energy that produces a learning environment. The role of the educator in poetry teaching is to guide and inspire the learners. Both Zeman (2013) and Vaughan-Evans et al. (2016) support the motion that poetry produces the same reaction as listening to music, as the words and their meanings evoke a sense of pleasure. The educator is there to direct, but mostly learners engage and construct meaning to the best of their ability when it comes to poetry. Holmes and Moulton (2001) also state that the active performance of familiar language patterns in poetry improves learner's level of cognition and understanding.

The role of the educator in poetry teaching is to guide and inspire the learners. There are many benefits of teaching poetry. Poetry is the first genre a child experiences, in the form of lullabies, childhood chants, songs and first books shared on their parent's

lap (Perfect, 1999). Children can develop rhyme and rhythm, and can memorise and say or sing verses repeatedly. However, educators seem to be disengaging from teaching poetry (Thompson, 2013). Baker and Setterington (2003) state that the learner's lack of engagement with poetry in class is sometimes caused by the educator's negative attitude towards poetry.

Poetry is a democratic environment that creates a relationship between literacy, writing and democracy (Kinloch, 2005). Democratic engagement is inspired by poetry, and involves learner's participation, code-switching, and the free expression of ideas through the spoken word. Rex and Shiller (2009) state that poetry creates a welcoming environment that gives learners the independence to break free from struggles and share power with classmates and educators. In South Africa, independence is of paramount importance as the traces of struggles are still evident in education. Even though a great deal of attention has been paid to the transformation of the education system, there is still evidence of inequality, in the location of schools, language policy, and infrastructure and resources, amongst other things. The spoken word played an important role in the liberation struggles in South Africa, and this included poetry. Owocki and Goodman (2002) state that poetry acts as a unifying voice and project.

However, despite the efforts made to address the past inequalities of South African society, serious inequalities persist in the education system, and South African learners are underperforming. Various global studies have shown that South African learner's performance is way below average when compared to other countries. In fact, South Africa places 34th out of 43, and has a lower educational ranking than even the struggling Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries like Zimbabwe.

1.3   POETRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Poetry is an important component of the South African curriculum, from primary school level up to senior secondary school level. However, the different phases of the curriculum do not receive equal attention in terms of poetry teaching, and poetry in

the foundation phase receives far less attention than in the other phases, particularly when compared to the Further Education and Training (FET) phase.

The Minister for Basic Education Angie Motshekga introduced the Annual National Assessment (ANA), a new system of assessing learner's literacy and numeracy. The ANA was formulated mainly for the General Education and Training (GET) band (Grade 3, Grade 4 and Grade 6) in numeracy and literacy. The results of the Grade 3 literacy study conducted in 2001 and 2002 were disturbingly poor, and the Department of Education (DoE) delayed the release of the results. In 2007, another run of systematic assessments for Grade 3 indicated a low but improving literacy rate; however, the improvement was only by 6%, from 30% to 36%. The results showed a lack of basic literacy skills such as correct spelling, the proper use of language, and poor comprehension skills. The ANA report also proved that learners were not able to respond to questions and would rather respond with one-word answers.

Tin (2011) states that through poetry learners can express new ideas, and that poetry helps foreign language learners to broaden their vocabulary, grammar, and language skills. English is not the home language of most South African learners, yet it is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Many learners therefore find it difficult to respond to simple questions or even understand text. As a result, learners often respond in their home language to questions that were presented in the first additional language (FAL).

The Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) conducted in 2005 investigated children's literacy, and found that Grade 4 and Grade 5 learners from 40 different countries were taught in a language that had been taught since Grade 1 (Howie et al., 2007). South Africa's literacy performance was far below the benchmark, and was worse than 94% of learners in other countries. In other words, South African learners are at a clear disadvantage, as they are taught in their home language in the foundation phase, but then in their FAL thereafter. Umalusi (the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training) is responsible for developing an education framework and for managing the standard for General and Further Education and Training. However, there is no clear theoretical framework and pedagogical framework in the South African education system to

manage multiple languages in a way that enhances literacy and engagement in the curriculum. According to Umalusi, there are no clear guidelines in the foundation phase Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document on how to use home languages in conjunction with FALs. FALs are only introduced in Grade 1.

Qwabe (1996) notes that poetry is very important in the teaching and learning process and should be taught properly. However, effective teaching and learning is very difficult considering the language issues discussed, and becomes more difficult when higher-order and symbolic language is used, as it is with poetry. In addition, according to the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2011) the nature of South African education is structured by the teacher's abilities. A lack of training on the implementation of the new CAPS curriculum exacerbates, and a lack of training in poetry teaching, makes it extremely difficult to teach poetry effectively in South African classrooms. The concern is that the current issues with language and implementation of educational policies are simply entrenching inequalities, and placing non-English-speaking and poor learners at a serious disadvantage.

Poet-photographer Charles R. Smith, Jr. (in Singer 2010) formulated the controversial mantra that, Poetry needs to be taken off the pedestal‖. He stated that poetry weeks or months are a good thing, but that they confine poetry to a very short period, and allow people to neglect poetry at other times. Smith feels that poetry must be emphasized daily for learners to see the beauty in words. In South African schools there are formal events such as Readathon, Spellathon, Poetry Day, Nali ibali, Library Week, and others. These are good literacy programmes, but literacy and poetry are emphasised only during those events, and are seldom given attention thereafter.

Valleley and Shiver (2003 find repeated reading to be effective in increasing the oral reading fluency of learners, and advise that when teaching poetry, educators should focus on vocabulary repetition, and the correct pronunciation of words. Newsome (2008) states that poetry can be used to enhance instruction in the primary grades. Glazer and Lamme (1990) discuss how picture poem books can be used in the primary grades, and suggest reading aloud, with learners repeating words after the educator has pronounced them, to improve learner's vocabulary.

Poetry inspires not only learners, but also international and local artists. Intrato and Scriber (2014) relate how after winning a poetry prize in the USA, Mary Oliver wrote that "You can pay for school, but you can't buy class", and wore that note around her neck every day. Jay-Z who is a famous American rapper. He drew inspiration from Oliver, and incorporated her words into his song ―Swagga Like Us. Fox (2012) finds that there has been a recent rise in poetry published online, which is a sign that poetry is not dead but is thriving.

South African poetry is growing at a rapid pace, as there are certain African poets, such as Mzwakhe Mbuli, whose popularity is purely due to their poetry. Poetry is gaining momentum in South Africa, and poets are included in high-profile events such as presidential inaugurations. A recent highlight of poetry's presence in South Africa was President Cyril Ramaphosa's quotation from the late Hugh Masekela's song, Thuma Mina, in his 2018 State of the Nation Address (Masuabi, 2018):

> I want to be there when the people start to turn it around
> When they triumph over poverty
> I want to be there when the people win the battle against AIDS
> I want to lend a hand
> I want to be there for the alcoholic
> I want to be there for the drug addict
> I want to be there for the victims of violence and abuse
> I want to lend a hand send
> me.

1.4   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study seeks to describe educator's experiences in teaching poetry in the foundation phase, especially in Grade 3, and aims to make a new contribution to the existing knowledge in this specific area. This study aims to inform the educator's practice, as they bear the responsibility for developing their learner's curriculum based language-acquisition skills. The researcher hopes to produce and contribute

knowledge, and thus add to the pool of empirical studies on the teaching of African poetry at primary level in South Africa.

The study is inspired by the researcher's personal experiences as an educator in the DBE. The researcher experienced what it is like to teach poetry as required by the CAPS curriculum, which is the backbone of the country's education policy. CAPS require that all language educators teach poetry. This study also hopes to gather information on whether intensifying the focus on poetry positively enhances or benefits assessment results for literacy. Poetry enhances the language teaching, but it is seldom used as the form of cultivating the language. The researcher would like to investigate the reasons behind the resistance to teaching poetry in Grade 3, and would like to establish how much time is dedicated to poetry in the foundation phase, especially in Grade 3. The researcher would like to know from a professional point of view what other educators are saying about poetry, and hopes to extend the pool of knowledge on teaching poetry in the education system of South Africa.

1.5   THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Teaching poetry in Grade 3 in South Africa has not been researched extensively. Globally, equipping educators to teach poetry has also not been investigated extensively. This study hopes to investigate the gap that exists between the poetry teaching in the primary phase and poetry teaching in the secondary phase, and therefore produce knowledge in relation to teaching poetry. Furthermore, the perceptions of educators who teach poetry and the factors influencing the teaching of this genre have not been researched extensively in South Africa. It is hoped that the findings from this study will extend the pool of knowledge on teaching poetry in the South African education system.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- To explore Grade 3 teacher's experiences of teaching poetry.
- To understand how Grade 3 teachers, teach poetry.
- To understand why Grade 3 teachers, teach poetry the way they do.

1.7 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What training and experience do Grade 3 educators have in teaching poetry?
- Why do Grade 3 educators teach poetry the way they do?
- How do Grade 3 educators teach poetry?

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Time and financial constraints limited the scope of the study. The study was conducted at three primary schools: one located in a deeply rural area, one in a semi-township, and one in a city. Two of these schools were far from the researcher 's place of employment, and the travel involved took a great deal of time and put a lot of financial strain on the researcher, and these constraints limited the scope for further data collection. The sample consisted of only three female educators, which meant that gender representation was not met. This was beyond the control of the researcher, however, as the Grade 3 educators are usually female. The study can therefore not be generalised.

1.9   OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

This dissertation is structured in the following manner:

Chapter 1 has introduced the research topic, and explained the background to the study. It has explained the rationale and the purpose of the study, and has presented the main objectives and the critical research questions. The overall research methods and approach have been briefly covered.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature relevant to this study on Grade 3 teacher's experiences in teaching poetry. Poetry is discussed and defined in relation to teaching, and the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study is outlined. Poetry teaching is discussed in terms of a constructivist approach. The effects of the CAPS curriculum on poetry teaching are also described. Various approaches to poetry teaching are outlined, and literature on teacher's experiences in teaching poetry is discussed.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and research methodology selected to collect data for this qualitative study informed by the interpretive paradigm. The research problem and research questions are articulated, the research approach is clarified, and the research site and sampling strategy are discussed. The research instruments used to gather data are presented and the elements of validity, reliability and trustworthiness are established. Lastly, the ethical consideration is discussed by the researcher.

Chapter 4 presents the data and findings of the study in relation to the three primary research questions.

Chapter 5 contains the main findings of this study on the experiences of Grade 3 educators in teaching poetry, and presents them in relation to the three critical research questions. Recommendations for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning using poetry in the Grade 3 classroom are also provided, and an overall conclusion is presented.

1.10   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the above chapter the introduction of the study is highlighted and the background of what the study is all about has been outlined. A short version of the background of

the topic is highlighted and the burning questions that the researcher that this study aims to answer by the end of the study. The limitations of the study that the researcher encountered during the process of the study. The researcher engaged the literature of poetry and gain more insight of what poetry is all about and what has been researched thus far and what is currently taking place in the schools in as far as poetry is concern. The next chapter engages on the literature of poetry and the theoretical framework which hold support of the study.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of literature relevant to this study on Grade 3 teacher's experiences in teaching poetry. Poetry is discussed and defined in relation to teaching, and the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study is outlined. Poetry teaching is discussed in terms of a constructivist approach, where learners play a pivotal role in their learning, and educators act as a guide. The effects of the CAPS curriculum on poetry teaching are also described. Various approaches to poetry teaching are outlined, and literature on the teacher's experiences in teaching poetry is discussed. The literature reveals that the South African educational approach to teaching and learning has evolved from traditional classroom teaching to a constructivist classroom.

2.2   DEFINING POETRY IN RELATION TO TEACHING

There is no specific agreement as to what poetry is, but Hanauer (2004) defines poetry as a literary text that presents the thoughts and feelings of a writer using language that makes the reader develop a new understanding. Hanauer (2004) further clarifies that poetry is not transparent in nature. The word poetry is derived from the Greek word *poiesis*, which means to` create' or make. Pollart (2011) describes poetry as a form of art in which language is skilfully and creatively crafted into a comprehensive piece that emulates thoughts and feelings. At its best, poetry is designed carefully to portray the art, beauty, meaning and mystery of language.

Torellas (2015) observes that it is not easy to define literature at any level. Literature is made up of language, and it is when reading literature that learners learn to cope with language. According to McRae (1991), literature is a collection of words that learners learn and understand. These words come in the form of oral or written

literature. Moody (1988) states that through literature, learners can recognize how language operates, be it rhythmic or an illusion. Lazar (1994) states that literature has different genres, i.e. poetry, literature, prose, and drama. Lazar (2004) further describes poetry as a genre where learners can explore feelings and themes in different type of poems. However, Torellas (2015) takes a different view from Lazar (1994), and states that poetry does not have to conform to a specific type of poem. As a result, a learner can feel as if poetry is very difficult to understand, as it is rigid. There is a constant contrast between Lazar (1994) and Torellas (2015) on the issue of conforming to language. In other words, poetry is a group of words that have meaning, which are placed together and have meaning for the author, and it is for whoever is reading those words to find meaning in those specific words.

The types of poems that are commonly used in the Foundation Phase or in Grade are

i.   Sonnet
ii.   Narrative poem
iii.   Acrostic Poem

Kamera (2000) describes each one of the above poems as distinctive and very simple for the learners in the Foundation Phase to understand. The Sonnet has lines at all times and a Sonnet also uses line ending rhymes. In most cases a Sonnet poem has a rhythm. The rhythm can be a sombre or joyful mood. The Narrative poem tells a story or an event and it also has characters. It is narrative by nature and can be dramatic. The Acrostic poem is a type of poem that spells a word or phrase in each vertically. The Acrostic poem can spell phrases like MOTHER, HAPPY, FATHER etc. all spelled vertically.

Constructivists believe that educators should understand that learners learn differently. Children often express their emotions through poetry, and most of the time that expression is positive. As a result, educators find that learners in the foundation

phase enjoy reciting poems. Even a struggling learner in class can engage with and master poetry easily, compared with other types of content.

Gardner (1993) developed the theory of multiple intelligences, which states that educators should focus on linguistics and logical-mathematical intelligence. The multiple intelligences approach (MIA) emphasises the importance of recognising individuals who are gifted in music, poetry, dance and design. MIA allows educators to identify strengths in their learners, and to learn to develop them. This approach focuses on the educator, whereas the communicative approach places emphasis on the learner. The communicative approach allows the learners to express their feelings and to be able to interact with each other. According to the communicative approach, the learners become the focus of learning and thus this motivates the learners to learn more. Krashen and Terrell (1983), who are linguists, developed the natural approach, which focuses on language acquisition and learning. Krashen (1985) describes language acquisition as the development of competency, whereas learning is simple to know about.

In the 1970's there was no emphasis on children learning to design their own poetry. A great emphasis was placed on enjoyment of the genre, and learners were encouraged to write their own poetry (Enoch, 2010). The constructivist approach was not yet in practice. The 21st century pedagogy of teaching poetry is that all classrooms and schools should create a situation whereby educators read aloud, and this should be included in the daily routine. The learners read poetry aloud after the educator has introduced new topics. The learners reinforce their knowledge, they practise oral language, and they learn where each part of the word belongs.

2.3   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Using constructivism as a foundation, this study is based on socio-cultural theory. Lev Vygotsky believed that relationship has a cultural context and that the child will also have thoughts that are culturally constructed. The social-constructivist perspective of learning created by Vygotsky is relevant to the development of young children constructing the world. Through interaction with adults, children and the

environment, Vygotsky believed that culture is a product of social activity (Conkbayir & Pascal, 2014). Vygotsky (1987) further states that culture is a product of human social activity. Everything that is cultural is social, and everything that is social is cultural.

Vygotsky further explain the three stages of language development. External speech is developed through interaction with the outside world, which begins at birth and involves responses with the outside world. Overt inner speech is the middle stage, which occurs at around the age of three years, when the child provides a narrative for events. Vygotsky noticed that the child is very talkative at this stage, and can narrate what he is doing, for example —I am combing my doll like how my mom combs my hair‖. The internal phase is the final stage, which begins at seven years, when the child can think silently and is able to plan and reflect on each event.

The three stages of development by Vygotsky are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Vygotsky's three stages of language development

STAGE NAME	BEHAVIOUR	AGE
External speech	There is an interaction of the child with the world	This stage begins at birth
Overt inner speech (middle stage)	The child at this stage is talkative and can narrate what he or she is doing	This stage begins at three years
Internal phase (final stage)	At this stage the child can think and do things silently and is able to plan and reflect on every movement that has taken place	This stage begins at the age of seven years

Adapted from: Cook-Gumperz (2006)

Vygotsky stages are almost like Piaget's seven stages of language development. According to Bruce (2006), Piaget and Vygotsky never met, and although Piaget felt that both their theories were the same, Piaget's became more popular. Piaget worked for many years as a biologist in the 1920's studying molluscs, and he connected this environment with children. Piaget's theory is based on the cognitive development of the child from birth. Piaget's approach is constructivist, which means that children learn by being actively involved in the construction of knowledge. Like Vygotsky, Piaget believed that children construct their own knowledge through their interaction with their environment. However, Vygotsky emphasizes social interaction, and can be described as a social constructivist.

Piaget and Vygotsky agreed that the relationship between language and thought, and how they interact developmentally, is central to a social-constructivist theory of learning. Vygotsky (1978) further postulated that human learning presupposes a specific social nature and is a process through which children grow the intellectual life of those around them. By this Vygotsky meant that children absorb culture in a process called enculturation. Enculturation is the gradual process of an individual or group learning and adapting to the norms and values of a culture in which they are immersed, for example learning a new language or clothing style. In other words, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory seems to be in contrast with Piaget's socio- cognitive theory, which Piaget applies to social interaction among peers rather than with adults. Piaget's socio-cognitive conflict theory suggests that transformation might be achieved best among peers, and that new skills like writing and reading can be achieved better with adult supervision.

Webb and Palin (1996) agree with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory on the based- on modelling perspective, which guides language. Literacy modelling explains how children learn reading and writing in their home language by observing adults. This is a perspective that has given rise to the drilling of learners on the use of correct language. According to the Open Education Sociology Dictionary, Vygotsky believes that language comes first and then thought, as highlighted in his overt inner speech or monologue stage, where language comes first and then paves the way for thought. Conkbayir and Pascal (2014) are of the different opinion that each child develops at his or her own pace. Other researchers like Hespos and Spelko (2004) show that

children who were both Korean and British children were able to predict emotions associated with objects at the age of five months.

Vygotsky, as cited by Pascal and Conkbayir (2004), stated that the element of interaction requires language, and that language is a cultural tool. Exchanging the cultural tool of language is the most important element of the social-constructivist theory of learning, and Vygotsky's and Piaget's theories differ on the point of culture. Vygotsky further explains that the cultural is divided into two forms: physical and psychological. Physical forms are items such as books, while the psychological form is the language. Children from diverse backgrounds enjoy rich cultural tools, which include books, songs, events, festivals, and ways of behaving. These cultural tools also help intellectual development, as they are new forms of communication that operate in what Vygotsky terms the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is a form of development which the child undergoes. The zone of actual development (ZAD) is, for example, when the child shows his or her classmates how to tie a bow, and when the other classmates have also learned how to tie a bow, that process will then be called the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 33). The ZAD is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving under adult supervision and with capable peers. The ZPD determines the child's ability on what the child can learn and understand with the help of capable peers as well as with the help of an adult. The ZPD does not say the child cannot demonstrate the ability individually. The ZAD is a process where the child performs alone, but the ZPD is the result that emerges through the process of development. An example of the ZAD and ZPD is when the child is doing something that represents an activity that is not usually associated with their age, such as bathing a baby doll while engaging with peers through role play. The child acts like a grown up in relation to the doll, and does that freely.

A recent study conducted by Van Ders et al. (2008) supported Vygotsky's theory that development is affected by the cultural tools used by adults in their interaction with the child, producing the outcome. It is important to note how the adult interacts with the child directly, as adults have an influence on a child's personal beliefs and on their view of society. One of the links between Vygotsky and poetry teaching is that when teaching poems, educators must be mindful of the different cultural and linguistic

backgrounds of their learners, as well as of a possible cultural mismatch between the cultural tools used at home and at school. Vygotsky's theory suggests that children should be provided with activities that are familiar but are beyond what they already know. Social engagement in class facilitates collaboration, and children perform at their best when educators assess a task in the context of a child's true performance.

Benson (2001) is also in agreement with Vygotsky, and defines cultural psychology as a way of examining how people, working together using both physical tools and symbolic tools, solve problems and make meaning. Another theorist who is also in agreement with Vygotsky is Urie Bronfenbrenner (2005), whose ecological theory states that not only does the environment impacts children's development, but children impact their environment (which is Bronfenbrenner breaks down into the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem). Bronfenbrenners theory links to Vygotsky's theory at the point of the microsystem, where the child forms a relationship or has a first encounter with parents, family members, community, play groups, school, and educators.

Adults ensure children's welfare and mould their learning journey. During this process there must be an awareness and acknowledgement of differences in cultural backgrounds. Davis (2004) observes that there are multiple theoretical frameworks for approaching poetry teaching, and that it is therefore sometimes difficult for researchers to establish a clear understanding of how these different theoretical perspectives on learning exist in relation to one another. Davis (2004) further states that the theoretical frameworks continue to evolve, but that this is necessary to establish a deeper understanding of how literacy practices shape human learning. Dewy (1963), Piaget (1954) and Vygotsky were all influenced by structuralist, linguistic and philosophies (Sumarea & Davis, 2006), but their core perspective was the assertion that language should be understood as a set of relations rather than a set of world referencing units. Figure 2.1 illustrates the cultural and social relationships that exist for learners when learning poetry, and shows the relationship that exists between history and language. Vygotsky's form of constructivism is appropriate for the conceptual framework of teaching poetry.
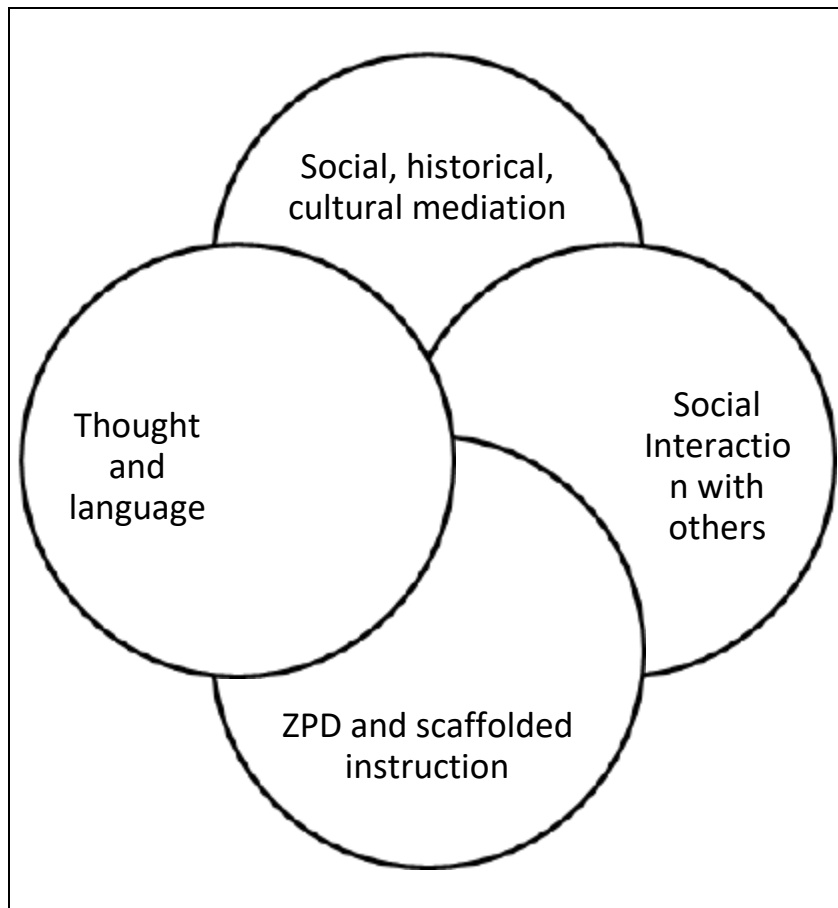
Figure 2.1: Cultural and social relationships that exist for learners when they engage with poetry

The educators who participated in the study showed that they understood their learner's stage of development, and that this understanding informed how they chose particular poems. Each educator chose poems that were at an appropriate level for their learners in terms of language. Language played a pivotal role in the choice of poem, as the participants felt it was important for the language to be accessible to the learners for the learners to understand the poem easily and in enough depth. The scaffolding of understanding in relation to poetry was revealed when learners answered questions that were based on the poem, and the actual understanding of the poem unfolded. Vygotsky emphasised the role of culture, and the poems that the educators chose to teach at that time were all based on culture. Two of the participants chose poems that spoke about food, and food plays a vital role in all cultures and nations. During meals there is interaction and conversation, and language is at the heart of the communication. Vygotsky illustrated how such interactions in the zone of

proximal instruction take place. The children learn from each other through language interactions.

This research study examines the experiences of Grade 3 educators who teach poetry, and their experiences take place in schools with very different dynamics. School Zi is a rural school, with no access road to the school, and the Grade 3 educator is the only educator for that grade. School Khu is a semi-urban school of 742 learners, and the educator teaches grades 3 and 4. School Hib is a city school of 1200 learner, and there are six educators per grade. The objective of the study was to find out how educators in these three different contexts cope with teaching poetry. The circumstances under which these educators teach are radically different. The study used interviews and questionnaires to capture the experiences of these educators. Macmillan and Schumacher (2010) use the term —grounded theory‖ to describe an approach to forming a theoretical idea that begins with data. Macmillan and Schumacher (2010) further state that grounded theory involves comparison, data analysis, deduction, and verification of information. Data is collected until a point of saturation is reached, after which comparison begins, and an analysis is conducted.

Lodwick and Dunlop (1992) describe a paradigm as a pattern, structure, or framework of scientific and academic ideas, values, and assumptions. Chalmers, (1982) defines a paradigm as a theory that is general and that has laws and techniques that can be adopted. William (2007) describes a paradigm as a comprehensive belief system in the field of research and practice. The study at hand examines the experiences of educators in teaching poetry, and seeks to understand these experiences through the socio-cultural paradigm. The researcher selected this paradigm as appropriate for studying of experiences of educators teaching poetry, which is a language-based exercise.

There is an assumption that educators in rural areas and in the townships, do not teach poetry, and that educators in former Model C schools do. It is for this reason that the researcher chose to conduct research in rural, semi-rural and urban schools. The study seeks to understand and describe the social actions of educators in poetry teaching. Thomas Kuhn (1970) first used the term paradigm and described it as a culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in

common, regarding the nature and conduct of research. In other words, a paradigm is a truth that is not yet tested, which is why for this study the researcher used an interpretivist approach. The study seeks to understand if poetry can help children's basic understanding of language, and what educators and children experience during this process. The researcher seeks to understand the true meaning of poetry in the language sphere, and how it will help the learners to understand the meaning of words, as poetry uses symbolic language. In this study the researcher used interviews and observations to gather data. The interviews involved open-ended questions on the educator's experiences, the mood of different poems, the types of poems, the methods of teaching the poems, and the cultural context of the poems.

The researcher as an outsider sought to enter this sphere of educators and poetry teaching. Hofmeyr (2000) states that learners need to know more about the history, literature and culture of South Africa. The Grade 3 educators are not merely teaching poetry for the learners to pass English, but for them to know more about the history, literature, language, and culture of South Africa, a diverse country with different ethnic groups. The researcher aimed to understand how poetry is taught in this multicultural country, especially in the foundation phase.

A lot happened during the apartheid era and a lot again has taken place post apartheid regarding language. Afrikaans and English have the strongest children's literature tradition (Van der Walt, 2004). After the 1994 elections a new language policy identified eleven official languages, and recently sign language has been declared a twelfth official language. Of these twelve official languages only two languages have a significant literary tradition, and children 's literacy materials need to be created in other languages.

2.4   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study uses the constructivist approach as a lens for viewing the teaching and learning of poetry as a genre. Poetry and culture cannot be separated, whether the poetry is modern or traditional. There has been a shift in education over the past

twenty years towards viewing learners as constructors. Plato and Socrates (1975) maintained that learners are not empty vessels, blank slates or tabula rasas, as Locke's philosophy maintained. According to Cuban (1993), it is assumed that if an educator speaks eloquently, learners are more motivated to learn, but if learners do not learn it is because learners do not care. According to Cuban (1993), these ideas are grounded in the theory of behaviour. Behavioural-learning theorists argue that if educators behave in a certain way, so do the learners. The idea of conditioning simply means training the individual to respond to stimuli. Lesh and Lamon (1992), who are behavioural psychologists, focus on cognitive psychology, which is based on making sense of real-life experiences. The cognitive theorist states that at a young age learner make sense of the world by actively creating meaning and reading texts, or even by interacting with adults. When the educator speaks with learners, the learners comprehend, and this cognitive turn in psychology is known as the constructive approach.

To understand how learners can construct meaning, a perfect example would be the game of Telephone, in which the educator whispers a phrase to one learner, who must whisper it to the next person, and so on; by the time the message reaches the last person, it is a different message altogether from what the educator had first communicated (Beard & Wilson, 2006). Another perfect example is how everyone interprets a movie differently. In this way children grow and develop differently from each other (Beard & Wilson, 2006). Gelman and Gallistel (1978) state that some things do not make sense to the learners, such as saying that ¼ is bigger than ⅛, when eight is bigger than four. An educator can only create an opportunity for the child to learn, but cannot control the child's interpretation. Behaviourists reject constructivist learning theories. Beard and Wilson (2006) state that this theory in neither new nor productive. Learners can learn whether they are active or not; if learners are sitting still and quietly, it does not mean that their minds are not active, and if learners are active it does not necessarily mean that learning is taking place (Beard & Wilson, 2006). Sfard (1998) argues that we need different metaphors if learning is to be successful. In as much as the NRS of the Department of Education (2008) promotes teaching and reading in groups, a cluster of theories like social constructivism, socio-cultural theory and activity theory hold that learning is influenced by the social world

in terms of individual development. These theories are different by nature but all of them bear a resemblance to socially constituted systems of activities. Their testing in terms of performance is measured by groups and not individuals (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Constructivists attend to epistemology and socio-cultural theory places information in a cultural context. Constructivism describes the mind facing the world, and sociocultural theory explains how one gets to that point. Constructivists emphasise the character of the learner, and the way in which the individual interacts alone with the environment; the outcome is a construction, and involves a qualitative organization of knowledge. Vygotsky's constructivism has elements of socio-cultural theory. Packer and Goicoechea (2000) state that if a person lacks identity, that person is divided from himself or herself. An individual strives to identity or achieve identity. Identity is related to membership of society (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Identity can become a struggle and the struggle can either be positive or negative. An individual is always pushing forward beyond the identity stipulated by community practices. Piaget (1972) stated that human beings are formed and transformed in conjunction with other people in the community. Various cultures in a community can transform nature into culture. The constructivist approach is an instructional strategy that is concerned with how individuals learn. The constructivist approach places the individual as the active person in the process of thinking, learning and coming to know. There is a vast difference between a constructive classroom and a traditional classroom. Table 2.2 illustrates the differences between the constructivist classroom and the traditional classroom. Vygotsky is a constructivist, and poetry teaching in South African schools is identical to Vygotsky's constructivist methods of teaching.

Table 2.2: Constructivist versus traditional classroom teaching

Constructivist Classroom Teaching	Traditional Classroom Teaching
This form of teaching promotes group work.	The learner works independently and individually.
The learners act as active agents in the learning process.	The educator is an instructor and the learners receive instructions.
The educator guides and provides, supplies interaction and support, and becomes a tutor.	The educator is an authoritarian and is the director of the whole teaching process.
The learner is a problem solver.	The educator makes decisions and the whole class adheres to that decision.
The individual is the active person in the process of thinking, learning and coming to know.	Teaching is educator directed. The instructor gives, and the learners receive. The educator talks, and the learners listen and absorb knowledge.
The learner interprets the world based on their experiences and interactions with the world.	The educator adheres strictly to a fixed curriculum, and uses textbooks, worksheets and workbooks.

Source: Adapted from Vygotsky (1978)

Packer and Goicoechea (2000) provided a good example of a Grade 6 educator who was strict and could not tolerate noise. New children coming into this educator's classroom have to adjust to the discipline of the new educator, and become members of a new community. Vygotsky believed that relationships have a cultural context and that children have thoughts that are culturally constructed. The social constructivist perspective on learning created by Vygotsky is relevant to the development of young children constructing the world. Vygotsky believed that culture is a product of social activity (Conkbayir & Pascal, 2014). Vygotsky (1987) further states that culture is a product of human social activity.

2.5 THE CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT ON TEACHING POETRY

The South African curriculum is set out in the CAPS document, which was designed by the DoE. In their teaching, educators are required to adhere to the CAPS curriculum, which is a uniform policy. CAPS (DBE, 2011) states that a Grade 3 learner should be able to read different poems in their home language as well as in their FAL, and that the learner must be able to discuss meanings in the poems. Grade 3 learners must also be able to answer higher-order questions based on the poem, and must be able to recognize punctuation when reading a poem. In relation to listening and speaking, which happens daily or weekly, Grade 3 learners must be able to talk about their daily experiences and express their feelings. The Grade 3 learner must respect the speaker and must not interrupt the speaker when the poem is read. A Grade 3 learner must be able to read aloud with a group or with an educator, and must be able to decode what they are reading. Reading with expression and fluency and the use of a dictionary to find new vocabulary are what define a Grade 3 poetry learner. The CAPS document (DBE, 2011) stipulates that poetry be taught in the third term, and only two to three times a week, in conjunction with big book stories, plays and posters, which also take time to teach.

The CAPS document (DBE, 2011) was introduced by the DoE in 2011 as part of Jikimfundo, a new programme designed to enhance the teaching of languages and mathematics. The intention was to improve the education system and learning to achieve the National Development Goal of achieving at least a 50% pass rate in mathematics, sciences, and languages by 2030. Jikimfundo has, however, been criticized for allowing learners with inadequate levels of competency to progress to the next grade. This results in classrooms in South Africa being filled with multi-grade learners, with radically different levels of competency because of misguided assessment and automatic promotion policies.

Jikimfundo is not a policy, but it assists educators in planning their lessons and tracking themselves in relation to the CAPS requirements. Jikimfundo was first piloted by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) in King Cetshwayo District in 2014, and was designed by scholars from the University of Zululand. The

pilot was conducted with a sample of educators, HOD's and principals at eight rural primary schools. The course pack consists of lesson plans, a tracker, and assessment plans. The lesson plans are aligned with CAPS and the tracker ensures that each day the educator is not lagging. The lesson plan is planned strategically, and ensures detailed coverage of the lesson with activities for each lesson. The educators in this study used the educator toolkit for isiZulu Home Language Grade 3 (term one to four).

The Jikimfundo tracker advises educators to teach at least one poem per term on day two. However, there is no clear indication as to what type of poem this should. The lesson plan simply states that children will memorize and perform simple poems, and only 30 minutes is allocated for this. There is no further explanation on how the poems should be taught. In other words, educators must use their own imaginations to teach these poems. Even though one of Jikimfundo's special aims was to promote a standard method of teaching, there is no specific or universal method in place for educators to teach poetry.

Language, poetry and culture are intertwined. One cannot separate language from poetry. Language is embedded and intertwined with a poem as well. Language is the primary method of communication with learners at school. Culture is also a significant factor in teaching poetry. The relationship between culture, language and poetry is illustrated by the interlinking circles in Figure 2.2.
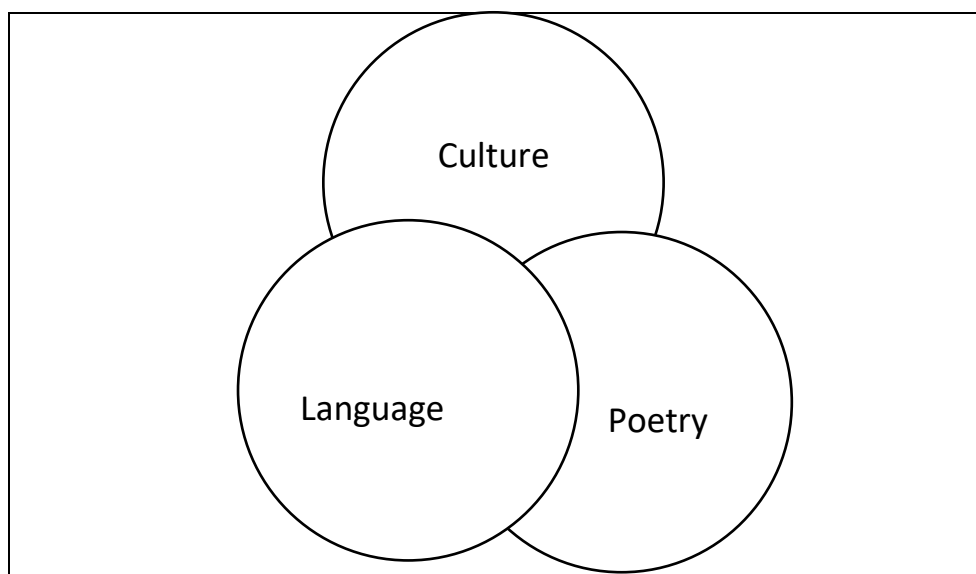
Figure 2.2: The relationship between culture, language and poetry.

2.6   APPROACHES TO POETRY TEACHING

Educators, poets, and scholars are always asked why so much emphasis is placed on poetry. Gioia (1992) points out that that pleasure needs no justification, as life with no happiness is not with justification. Gioia (1992) also points out that poetry inspires and provides comfort, and as a result we turn to it on occasions like parties, weddings, funerals, and other celebrations. Elster and Hanauer (2002) state that reading and writing poetry improves a learner's literacy level, by focusing on language structure and conventions. Poetry uses language creatively and symbolically to communicate. Certo states that poetry is rich in culture and is a distilled form of language. He further states that at school level poetry is neglected and is mostly taught in a traditional way. Certo feels that poetry is underrepresented in the foundation phase. I concur with Certo; as an educator, I also observe that there is not much emphasis on poetry, except on special days like Readathon and during the matric year. This creates a problem for matric learners in South Africa, as they are not familiar with poetry.

Dymoke (2000) and Scherrf and Piazza (2005) conducted a study to assess if and how poetry was being taught in South African schools. Dymoke (2000) observed student educators and concluded that they need to be exposed to poetry while they are still training. Scherff and Piazza (2000) also conducted a study with high school learners and found that poetry was seldom taught in schools. A study conducted by Painter (1970) on university students criticized lecturers for their lack of knowledge of poetry and their dull presentation of poetry. The students found poetry to be too difficult and saw it as a useless exercise. Some students were asked by their lecturer to memorize the poem, and were punished when they could not do so. Other students mentioned the complexity of the language used in poetry. One frustrated speaker, as cited by Certo in Billy Collins (1996), said he wanted to tie poetry onto a chair with a rope and torture a confession out of it to understand the poem. Meyer (1994), however, disagrees with Painter (1970) and defines poetry as a literature that evokes a response from readers. Collie and Slater (1987) also agree with Meyer (1994) and states that using poetry in the classroom creates a freer atmosphere. Poems provide inspiration and serve as a good model for creative writing (McKay, 1982).

McClure (2001) describes poetry positively as a source of poetic words, and as a happening or event from which the reader draws feeling and imagines an experience. Charles Elster from Purdue University in America once observed a poetry reading conducted by a Grade 1 educator. The educator, Mr Perry, invited the children to the reading area. The educator sat on the rocking chair and made the children sit in a semi-circle on the carpeted floor. He held the book up to show that it was a book written by Lezlie Evan, and explained that he would have to read the poem loud. He asked the learners about the previous day's weather, as it had been raining. He asked the learners questions such as ―What does the sky look like? and

What does the rain sound like? and listened attentively to the answers. Mr Perry then turned to ―The Rain Song‖, explained that it was a poem and asked the learners to listen attentively. He held the book so that they could all see the pictures and then began to read. As he read he adapted the tempo of his voice to the sounds made by the rain and thunder. One of the children stood up and stamped his feet to imitate the sound of thunder. Mr Perry finished reading the poem and then asked the children to focus on the sounds of certain words by repeating the words after him. The educator asked them to be silent and imitate the calm just before the storm starts, and then read the poem again, this time with the children acting out the sounds and repeating some of the phrases. At the end Mr Perry said, ―Aaaaah! Now the storm is all gone and asked the children to listen to how quiet it becomes after a storm, emphasizing the silence by touching his ears. He told them he would continue with the poem the following day. The children were very happy and clapped their hands. This example shows that there is no distinctive method for teaching poetry, and an educator can come up with his or her own method of teaching, if it helps the learners to understand and be able to interpret the poem.

However, Charles Elster (cited in Hanauer, 2004) stipulates that a poetry lesson should be divided into three phases. The first phase helps learners to connect with the content of the poem. He chose a rain poem, as the content is something that all children have experienced. He drew attention to this prior knowledge. The second phase of the lesson involves the performance of the poem. The educator used the tempo and volume of his voice to recreate the rainy season, and he asked the children to perform the sounds of the rain. This helped the language in the poem to come alive, as it is

experienced as sound and is used to recreate experiences. The third phase of the lesson involved reading. But before reading the poem the educator asked the learners to listen carefully and to reflect on their own experience of rain.

Adding creative writing as a module combines both poetry and prose. Specialization in children's literature at postgraduate level is possible, but unfortunately very few universities can afford that. Educators who want to study literature can only do that through correspondence courses and workshops (Jenkins, 2006). Wandor (2004) states that even when we assume that teaching and learning can be done in a universal language (which is not always the case, especially when the subject is presented for a diverse audience), it becomes difficult to understand language and culture. Creativity does not happen in a vacuum (Lubart, 1999), and a creative person's environment plays a pivotal role in stimulating and supporting creativity. I agree with Todd that when considering the psychological perspective, one must be mindful of the act that educators as well as learners must be stimulated by the environment for teaching and learning to take place effectively. For an educator to be able to choose a poem that is suitable for the learners, the educator must look at the environment (the weather, animals, people, culture, etc.) to gauge the relevance of the content of the poem. Learners must be able to relate to the content for them to understand it, and to generate and express thoughts and feelings about the content.

Todd further states that the issue of tradition also plays an important role in the choice of poem. For example, an educator needs to be able to ascertain whether the learners would relate better to a traditional or a modern poem. Lubart (1999) cautions against translating English poems into African languages. The poet could be a person who is not even from South Africa, and as a result does not know the culture, behaviour, language, feel and tone of the country. The regions differ, and it is important for children to own and understand clearly what they are reciting. The pictures also play an important role in the choice of poetry that the educator chooses. Lubart (1999) states that the educator should have a clear understanding of genres and reading needs, and of whether the poem is Eurocentric or Afrocentric.

Cassirer, Lukay and Recki (2006) state that humankind is constantly in search of itself, as people need to question, know and understand the truth of their existence. Arlington

Robinson, one of the most renowned poets, once said that through poetry and poetic language we can say what is not normally said. Geertz (2000) stated that humans interpret the world through symbols and symbolization. A study that was conducted by the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality in 2000 (Spaull, 2012) highlighted the poor performance of South African learners. In the reading test, the mean scores of SA learners placed the country in position nine out of fourteen, ahead of Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zanzibar, but behind Uganda, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, Tanzania, Mauritius Kenya, and the Seychelles.

Hennessy and Hinchion (2009) agree with Lubart (1999) that teaching and learning do not happen in a vacuum. Hennessy and Hinchion (2009) postulate that teaching a poetry lesson forms part of a time-table that forms part of a syllabus. The designers of the syllabus operate at the level of policy making by the government department and ministries. All these factors impact on the educator, but the policy decisions are not in the hands of the educator, and the educator has no say in the planning of the lesson of the curriculum. Policy is dictated at a higher level and educators must implement that policy. Other limitations are imposed by evaluation and assessment. The process is conducted by the educator, but the educator becomes the moderator or invigilator, especially for Grade 12, which is standardized by the assessing agencies or higher-level decision makers. The educator provides no input on the decisions on what must be taught, or at what pace it should be taught. The diversity of the learner's cognitive abilities is not recognized when planning the curriculum.

2.7   THE EDUCATORS EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING POETRY

While various studies have been conducted on the teaching of poetry in other countries, with a large number having been conducted in the USA for example, there have been very few studies conducted on teaching poetry in South Africa. Qwabe (1996) notes that there is limited literature on the methods used to teach poetry by educators of English at the Junior Certificate level in the SADC region in general. Baart (2002) describes teaching poetry as a thankless task which has no meaning, and

maintains that this negativity towards teaching poetry is created by the lack of model educators.

Parmar and Barot (2013) postulate that the challenges in teaching poetry in English arise from the heterogeneous socio-economic backgrounds of the learners, which also impacts their home language. The fact that the LoLT is often not the learner's home language becomes a barrier for both the educators and the learners. It takes extra time for the educator to explain and translate a poem into the learner's home language, and the language structures and symbolism are often too complex for the learners. Another obstacle to teaching poetry is the lack of resources at many schools (Parmar & Barot, 2013). Negative perceptions towards poetry can also stem from the educator's experiences, lack of skills or personality (Vasutharan & Kunaratnam, 2009).

Finnegan (1970) states that the praise poems of the Bantu peoples of South Africa are one of the most specialized and complex forms of poetry to be found in Africa. Praise poetry is categorized into three types: formal, ritual and personal panegyric. The person being praised is frequently compared to an animal or series of animals.
The king's strength, for example, may be conveyed by referring to him as a lion, a rhinoceros, or an elephant. In Southern Bantu praise poetry, the actions and qualities of the hero may be almost completely conveyed in metaphorical terms. In contemporary South Africa, it not only the kings and chiefs who have praise singers. The President of the country also uses praise singers when delivering special speeches in parliament. Goebel (2002) states that religious songs, hunting songs, medicine songs, lullabies, game songs, personal achievement songs, love songs, war songs, social dance songs and honour songs are some of the different categories of early Native American poetry. The literature reveals that foundation phase educators love teaching poetry.

2.8   CONCLUSION

The literature review in this chapter has defined poetry in relation to teaching, and has described the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. Poetry teaching is discussed in terms of a constructivist approach, where learners play a pivotal role in their learning, and educators act as a guide. The effects of the CAPS curriculum on poetry teaching are described. Various approaches to poetry teaching are outlined, and literature on educator's experiences in teaching poetry is discussed. The literature reveals that the South African educational approach to teaching and learning has evolved from traditional classroom teaching to a constructivist classroom.

The following chapter sets out the research design and methodology used to conduct this study. It presents the research strategies, instruments, data collection methods, and data analysis methods, while discussing the stages of the research process and the trustworthiness and validity of the study. The design and the methodology of the study is critical in giving the in depth understanding as to how the study was designed and the various methods that were used to conduct the present study.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Terre Blanche et al. (2009) and Kumar (2005) suggest that a research design has two basic functions: the development of procedures and logistical arrangements required to undertake a study, and ensuring the quality of these procedures to ensure validity and accuracy. The research design and methodology provide the blueprint for a research study. This chapter presents the research design and research methodology selected to collect data for this qualitative study informed by the interpretive paradigm. The research problem and research questions are articulated, the research approach is clarified, and the research site and sampling strategy are discussed. The research instruments used to gather data are presented (in-depth, face-to-face, semi structured, recorded interviews and classroom observations), and the elements of validity, reliability and trustworthiness are established. Lastly, the ethical consideration is considered by the researcher are discussed.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The researcher obtained data from three schools in Ugu District, south of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. The schools are in three different contexts: a deeply rural area, a peri-urban semi-township, and a city. One educator from each of the schools was selected as a participant. The three different types of school are discussed in detail in section 3.5.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS AND APPROACH

This research study endeavours to fill gaps left by other researchers in establishing why school educators are not enthusiastic about teaching poetry. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2009) and Kumar (2005) suggest that a research design has two basic functions: the development of the procedures and practical arrangements

required to undertake a study, and assuring the quality of these procedures to ensure trustworthiness, validity and reliability. The research design and methodology provide the blueprint for the entire research study.

Three types of schools were selected for this study: one was in a deeply rural area, one in a semi-urban area, and one in a city. In this qualitative study, the researcher used structured interviews and classroom observations to collect data. Qualitative methods are subjective and inductive in nature, as explained by Creswell and Miller (2000), and were appropriate for this study, which aimed to determine the experiences of Grade 3 educators in teaching poetry in the context of the everyday lives of the people involved (educators and learners) in their familiar environment. The researcher conducted the interviews and analysed the data personally, which is one of the attributes of qualitative research according to Creswell (2013).

Vygotsky's constructivism and socio-cultural theory underpinned the research approach and the data analysis in this study. A more detailed discussion of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study is presented in Chapter 2.

3.5   THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research questions for this study were as follows:

•   What training and experience do Grade 3 educators have in teaching poetry?
•   How do Grade 3 educators teach poetry?
•   Why do Grade 3 educators teach poetry in the way that they do?

3.6   RESEARCH APPROACH AND STYLE

The decision to choose a specific methodological approach and style should be based on its suitability for answering the research questions (Bryman, 1988). In this study, I have chosen to use a qualitative approach because it lends itself to exploring educator's experiences in teaching poetry in Grade 3. The qualitative method is different from the quantitative method because qualitative data is in the form of words whereas quantitative data consists of numbers.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 23) and Creswell (2013) describe the research approach as the plans and procedures that guide the steps taken by researchers, from their initial assumption to their detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The research approach informs the research methods that are used for the collection of data. There are three types of methods that are used: qualitative methods, quantitative methods, and mixed methods. In this study the researcher uses qualitative methods. The use of numbers in the qualitative method is the main factor that separates qualitative from quantitative methods. The other distinctive difference, according to Creswell (2013), is the instruments that are used to collect data. The qualitative method uses interviews and open-ended questions. Creswell, (2013) describes the qualitative approach as a way of observing and understanding a group or individual according to their human social problem.

In planning for this study as a researcher, I had to consider the philosophical paradigm. The paradigm is related to specific methods and procedures of research which translate the approach into practice. The constructivist or social constructivist paradigm states that individuals seek to understand the world that they live in and develop meaning based on their experiences. These meanings are varied, according to Creswell (2013), and it is up to the researcher to interpret the complexity of views.

To gather evidence for the study the researcher had to ask questions based on the information desired from the educators. The questions were:

- What is the main methodology for the research?
- How will I address validity in the study?
- What instruments will use to collect data?

- What kind of data do I need?
- How will I generate data?
- How will I record and store information?

This is a very critical step as it involved careful planning, and questions for semi-structured interviews were formulated. It is a critical also to clarify a distinction that needs to be made between methodology and methods, approaches and instruments. For this study the researcher decided to conduct interviews before the actual poem was introduced to the learners, and to conduct observations after the poem had been

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taught. Babbie (2010) notes that these research approaches are basic modes of inquiry that function within the realm of culture when used to investigate African phenomena. This study used an exploratory approach because it sought to understand and explore Grade 3 educator's experiences of teaching poetry. Employing socio-cultural methodologies in exploratory research involves investigating African phenomena for developing a culturally accurate understanding of African realities (Babbie, 2010).

The researcher decided on utilizing case study as a research as what the study seeks real life events of teachers when teaching poetry. In collecting data, the step by step methodology is vital. In the process of collecting data the type of sample the researcher decided on it during the proposal stage as sampling involves several factors like expenses, time, accessibility and many other factors. The schools in the district where the research is conducted are approximately six hundred. The district where the schools are, is a multi-cultural location with diverse families. As the researcher, these diverse backgrounds had to be incorporated to get the true data of the research. The following four key sample factors as identified by Cohen (2000) were considered:

i.   sample size
ii.   representativeness and parameters of the sample
iii. access to the sample and the
iv.   strategy to be used.

The group of each population was represented in the sample and as a result, the three schools were sampled. According to McKee (2001, p. 1), when we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations of that text. For a working definition of text, McKee (2001) notes that whenever we produce an interpretation of something's meaning, we treat it as a text. A text is something that we make meaning from. As a research style, textual analysis, also referred to as content analysis, is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world (McKee, 2001). It is for those researchers who want to use text and content to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live. By understanding the variety of ways in which it is possible to interpret reality, we also understand our own cultures better

because we can start to see the limitations and advantages of our own sense-making practices (Fairclough, 2003). Qualitative research focuses on capturing, through word descriptions instead of numbers, the meanings people assign to their experiences and realities, instead of merely categorizing data that the researcher predetermines (Creswell, 2009; Check & Schutt, 2012). In this case, textual analysis was employed to understand the cultural values present in prescribed literature and how they are represented. For this purpose, textual analysis in this study will attempt to understand the likely interpretation that should culturally apply to those who consume them, in this case most African learners studying prescribed literature in their home language or FAL.

3.7   RESEARCH SITE

The researcher obtained data from three schools in Ugu District, south of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. The schools are in three different contexts: a deeply rural area, a peri-urban semi-township, and a city. One educator from each of the schools was selected as a participant.

The first school is in a deeply rural area. The pseudonym used for this school is Zi Primary. The school is 23 km away from the tar road, and has no electricity or running water. The road leading to the school is partially damaged, as there have been heavy rains in the region. To reach the school, one must leave one's car near the neighbouring homes and walk to the school. The closest primary school is 14 km away. At Zi Primary, Grade 2 and Grade 3 are taught together, as the DoE has not allocated enough educators to this school and the school cannot afford to pay another educator. There are very few learners at this school and there are very few homes scattered around the school. The DBE allocates funding according to the number of learners enrolled in the school. If there are few learners, then there will be very little funding from the Department. The community around the school depends on government grants to survive, as there are no places of employment nearby. The school is a no-fee school and is categorized as quintile 1 (determined according to the location and dynamics of the school).

The second school is in the same district but in a semi-township, and is 25 km away from Zi Primary. The pseudonym used for this school is Khu Primary. This school is situated not far from the tar road and has electricity and running water. The toilet system is still a pit-latrine, and there are three taps at the school. There are roughly 1000 learners enrolled at this school, which means there is substantial funding from the DBE. There is electricity in every classroom, and no classes must be combined, as every class has its own educator. There are four to five educators per grade. The school is often used as a plot school by the DBE. The school is not very far from a small town, which is about nine kilometres away.

The third school, whose pseudonym is Hib Primary, is a former Model C school. This school is situated in a city, and has double the enrolment of School Khu. The parents of the learners in this school are mostly government employees who pay school fees for the upkeep of the school. The school can therefore afford school governing body (SGB) posts, where the school remunerates additional educators they may need using school fees. There are five to six educators per grade at this school.

3.8 SAMPLING STRATEGY

The quality of a piece of research stands and falls not only on the appropriateness of the methodology and instrumentation but also on the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been used (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Nieuwenhuis (2007) points out that qualitative research generally uses non-probability and purposive sampling, rather than random sampling approaches. Cohen et al. (2000) cite five different types of sampling: systematic sampling, stratified sampling, multiphase sampling, convenience sampling, and cluster sampling. For this study I made use of cluster sampling, which is a type of sampling that the researcher utilizes if a very large population makes it impractical to generate data from the whole population.

One educator from each of the three schools described in section 3.5 was selected to participate in the study. These participants are profiled in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Profile of participants

	EDUCATOR 1 FROM SCHOOL A	EDUCATOR 2 FROM SCHOOL B	EDUCATOR 3 FROM SCHOOL C
The participants qualification	Bachelor of Education	Higher Diploma in Education	Primary Teachers Diploma
Number of years in the field	22 years	14 years	32 years
Number of years in Grade 3	2 years	4 years	7 years
Number of educators in the Phase	1 educator	3 educators	4 educators
Gender	Female	Female	Female

The researcher believes that the sample for this study is a fair representation of the different dynamics of KwaZulu-Natal schools.

3.9   RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Research instruments are the tools that are used for collecting data in the research process. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) note that for qualitative studies, in-depth interviews, observations, focus groups and document analysis are the methods that are used for collecting data. This study used two research instruments: in-depth, semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview schedule with closed and open -ended questions (Appendix D); and classroom observation.

3.7.1 Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews

Greeff (2002) considers the interview to be the dominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) describe in-depth, face-to-face interviews as a conversation with a purpose, or a knowledge-

producing conversation and a meaning-making partnership between the interviewer and the respondent. In conducting a face-to-face interview, one can discover information that is not always communicated in writing via questionnaires. During an interview, the researcher can also ensure that the critical questions are answered.

The researcher identified three schools, as mentioned above, and one educator participant from each school. The researcher had to submit a formal written request to conduct the research to the DoE, as the educators and the institutions fall under the DoE. Formal written consent to conduct the research was provided by the DoE (Appendix A). A formal written request for ethical approval of the research was also submitted to UKZN's Ethics Committee, and ethical clearance was granted (Appendix B). The researcher also submitted a formal written request via email to the principals of the schools (the gatekeepers of the institutions), asking for permission to conduct the research (Appendix C), and permission was granted. The researcher specified that research would only be conducted during break time, at lunchtime, or after school, in order to avoid disrupting teaching time.

The researcher conducted interviews with the Grade 3 educators, who consented freely and who allowed the interviews to be audio recorded. Educator Banana and Educator Cherrie were recorded, but unfortunately the audio recording of Educator Apple was very unclear and fuzzy. However, the researcher was able to write down notes and scheduled another meeting to take place off the school premises to gain clarity on questions that were not clear. During the interviews, the researcher asked specific questions that had been formulated in advance (Appendix D), and the participants responded. Some questions were open-ended and required the researcher to pause and write down the responses. This note-taking process was very time consuming and the researcher resorted to audio recordings for data analysis and to establish validity.

The questions in the interview schedule (Appendix E) were derived from the three objective questions of the present study. The researcher formulated the questions in English, even though the educator participants taught in isiZulu. The researcher felt there was a need to gather diversity perspectives to get an in-depth understanding of teaching poetry in both isiZulu and English. The interview questions that the

participants responded to had further open-ended sub-questions associated with them. The researcher designed the questions in such a way that they functioned as a structured guide, but that she could also probe the participant's answers and elicit further information.

The first set of interview questions (Section A) sought to profile each participant according to the number of years they had spent in the foundation phase, the number of years they had spent teaching Grade 3, the number of years overall teaching experience they had, and their qualifications. The second set of questions (Section B) sought to prompt the participants for information about their experiences in teaching poetry, as they had been in the field of teaching for 22 years, 14 years and 32 years — a total of 68 years of combined experience. Section B also sought to gather information on the challenges these educators face in teaching poetry, and the strategies they used to teach poetry.

3.7.2 Classroom observations

Cohen et al., (2000, p. 315) note that observation methods are powerful tools for gaining insight into situations. The classroom observations allowed the researcher to verify if what the educators stated in the interviews about what they were doing in the classroom was really taking place in the classroom. The researcher observed each educator teaching poetry to a class on a separate date. The researcher had already explained to the participants during the interviews that she would like to observe a class on a day when a poem was being introduced, and not when the learners had already mastered and understood the poem. The researcher explained why she wanted to observe how each educator presents or teaches poetry, and that it wouldn't help her to conduct an observation of poetry when the learners had already mastered it. The classroom observations helped the researcher to record information that had not been expressed or emphasised during the interviews. The researcher used a semi-structured form of observation to look closely at the approaches the participants use to teach poetry. The researcher observes different settings i.e. physical setting as well as the interaction of the teacher with the learners during the lesson. The researcher observes each teacher before the lesson begins and as well as during the process of teaching

until the end of the lesson. It is important that as a researcher I should compare the level of confidence on the learners as they pronounce the words at the end from when they started the lesson. The researcher also observes the movement and actions of the learners from the beginning to the end. Observation is a vital tool for both the teacher as well as the observer to compare if the learners have mastered the poem or not. Other observations are issues of the setting in this case the classrooms. The setting should be conducive for the learners to around the class if there are actions that are needed in the poem.

Hibbert et al. (1996) observes that the constructivist approach focuses on activities that are in the classroom, while the sociocultural approach focuses on what the learners can take out of the classroom with them. However, Hibbert et al. (1996) find that these approaches are complementary. On the other hand, Cobb (1994) believes that each one of the approaches tells half of a good story. Wertsch and Toma (1995) postulate that the constructive and sociocultural approach are dependent on the assumptions that the study has validated this with the amount of advocacy present in the research and the writing up of this study. In selecting the socio-cultural paradigm, the researcher has continuously acted as an agent for researchable truth and justice. It must be noted that this should not be mistaken for a politically radical approach.

3.8 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Validity is the strength of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, or the readers of an account (Creswell & Miller, 2000). For this study the researcher used three different types of participants to ensure accuracy. To ensure validity, the questions were sent to the researcher's supervisor for analysis. The supervisor read and assessed the questions to verify their appropriateness and effectiveness. To identify and overcome possible bias, the researcher checked the socio-economic background of the participants before selecting them for the study. Although balanced gender representation amongst the participants was desired, it was not possible as most schools have female educators in the foundation phase.

The researcher ensured that the interviews were conducted in person, and were carefully designed and recorded. The reason for this was to gain a detailed description of the experiences of the educators in teaching poetry, in order to ensure trustworthiness. To prove trustworthiness, the researcher's subjectivity was established, and measures were put in place for any possible bias to not influence the findings of the research, and for the research tools to measure accurately what they were supposed to measure (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). The socio-cultural paradigm also requires that all accounts be substantiated if they are to prove reliability.

Cohen et al. (2000) believe that ethical relationships and practices are vital aspects that enhance the quality of the research. Also, Rule and John (2011) state that ethical research requirements flow from three standard principles, namely:

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability are defined differently by different authors writing from different methodological positions. For this study Hammersley's (1987) definition of validity was selected, which states that an account is valid or true only if it represents accurately those features of a phenomenon that it intended to describe, explain, or theorize. Reliability is an agreement between two efforts to measure the same thing using different methods (Campbell & Fisk, cited by Hammersley, 1987). For this study the researcher aimed to conduct classroom observations of the participants teaching poetry, to verify the information obtained from the interviews and to thus present accurate features of the phenomenon under study (Hammersley, 1987).

I have always been interested in conducting research into and understanding the feelings of educators towards poetry. Poetry has gained ground in most parts of the world and I have noticed that stars are born through poetry. As a researcher I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the educator's experiences in teaching poetry.

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the research design and research methodology used to collect data for this qualitative study informed by the interpretive paradigm. The research site and sampling strategy were discussed, and the research instruments used to gather data were presented (in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured, recorded interviews and classroom observations). The validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the study were established, and the ethical considerations considered by the researcher are discussed.

The following chapter presents the data and findings of the study in relation to the three primary research questions. Analysing of data is crucial so as answer the three research questions. The researcher engages with the data word by word so that there is as understanding of the experiences teachers in teaching poetry.

CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data and findings of the study in relation to the three primary research questions, which were as follows:

•   What training and experience do Grade 3 educators have in teaching poetry?
•   How do Grade 3 educators teach poetry?
•   Why do Grade 3 educators teach poetry in the way that they do?

The data collection procedure involved an interview with each participant, followed by a classroom observation of their teaching process. The responses are broken down into themes or categories that relate to the research questions. The participants are all Grade 3 educators, and are identified by the following pseudonyms:

•   Educator Apple in School Zi (a school in a deeply rural area) Educator Banana in School Khu (a school in a semi-urban area)   Educator Cherrie in School Hib (a school in a city).

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE DO GRADE 3 EDUCATORS HAVE IN TEACHING POETRY?

The educator's training in teaching poetry varied greatly, and it seemed that none of them has received explicit training in *how* to *teach* poetry. Their knowledge of poetry was dependent on the quality of teacher they had in high school and in teacher training college. Those who had a deeper knowledge were able to try to develop their own teaching methods based on this knowledge, and on the CAPS requirements and recommendations. The educators therefore focused on structure, punctuation, rhymes and the pronunciation and meaning of new words found in the poem. The fact remains that explicit approaches to teaching poetry were never taught to them, even in training workshops that they have attended.

Educator Apple in School Zi stated the following:

Under the content we were taught that when choosing a poem for the Grade 3 learners, the teacher must look for an exciting poem, short and simple poem. Other features of the choice of the poem that we were taught to look for are that the stanzas of the poem. We also must look for the words in the poem which form basis of the language that will be taught once the poem has been recited. We also looked at language that is used in the poem and that the language must be as simple as possible for the learners and must be in the level of our learners. We were also taught on the HOW do you teach poem in a way that the learners can recite the poem correctly as well as rhythm that the teacher should be able to teach the poem with. The movements were also taught which goes hand in hand with the rhythm of the poem as well as the facial gestures.

Educator Apple was trained to teach the very basic elements of poetry — the basic shape of a poem. She emphasised how the CAPS curriculum requirements influence how she teaches poetry. In line with the CAPS recommendations (DBE, 2011), she emphasises the new vocabulary that is found in the poem, and the language structures in the poem that illustrate the appropriate language development skills for Grade 3 level.

Educator Banana in School Khu stated that:

During my college years in teaching I do not remember the lecturers teaching us on how to teach poetry. There was not so much emphasis that was placed on the methods of teaching poetry. I only learnt poetry in class during her English class and that what was it. I remember the methods that were used by my teacher when I was in matric. There was no method that was taught to us then as teachers in the Foundation Phase. There was not much emphasis as teachers then on the choice of poem that they were supposed to teach. As a teacher I only learnt that when I was in teaching in school that I must look for the language that is simple and suitable for my learners. There was always one type of poems that we were supposed to teach which we used to learn as kids as well so there was nothing new that the college taught me except that I will have to recite the poem well and do the correct actions as required by my teacher. [The teacher paused, and she was thinking.] *On the language choice*

as well, we were taught on our mother-tongue poems as they were simple to understand than FAL poems.

Educator Banana emphasised that she had received no proper instruction on how to teach poetry during her teacher training, or how to select appropriate material. She explained how her teaching college had simply taught her that she had to recite the poem and perform actions. The college also used only poems in her home language (isiZulu) as examples, rather than FAL poems. As a result, she has had to develop her own methods of teaching poetry, and without specific skills and guidance she bases her choice of poem primarily on the simplicity of the language it contains.

Educator Cherrie in School Hib stated the following:

> *I have been teaching poetry for the past twenty-two years as a teacher and I had gained the knowledge of poetry in my high school years. In high school I learnt on how to identify the type of poetry that is at hand by looking at the stanzas and the rhymes of the poem. I also learned the deeper poetry when I went to the Higher Education Institution whereby in English my English back then placed so much emphasis on poetry teaching as she had the love of poetry. I remember….* [She stops and smiles, reminiscing on those days.] *I will look forward to the English class especially when we are learning poetry as she was able to take us to the through into the mind of the poet. The first thing my teacher will say, was that when reading the poem for the first time you must be able to identify the mood of the poet and the situation that the poet was in. The mood is so important as it set the rhyme and the tone of the poem when you are reciting it. My teacher will then proceed to the structure of the poem looking at the number of lines of the poem e.g. sonnet, lullabies etc. I was taught that a poem is made of lines which when those lines are together they are then called stanzas. I have been able to impart that to my learners as a teacher during my poetry lesson.*
> *Unfortunately, there is very little that we get during our English workshops.*

Educator Cherrie is well versed in the physical and conceptual structure of poems, having learnt basic and advanced poetry during her high school years as well as during her training as an educator. Her ability to articulate her knowledge illustrates

Vygotsky's (1978) argument that language forms the foundation of an individual's conceptual ecology and the means for conceptual growth, and that language serves to mediate higher order thinking. According to Vygotsky (1978), language serves as a psychological tool that causes a fundamental change in signalling, significative, social, individual, communicative, intellectual, nominative, and indicative functions. Educator Cherrie's experience also illustrates Wertsch's (1979) challenge to educators to reconsider the critical role of language in the teaching-learning process.

Educator Cherrie bases her knowledge and understanding of poetry on how she was taught, and is applying those same strategies in how she teaches poetry. This enables her to extend her learner's understanding, as can explain the type of poem, mood of the poem, and the feelings of the poet. This is advanced for Grade 3 level, but will stand them in good stead as they advance further in their education.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: HOW DO GRADE 3 EDUCATORS TEACH POETRY?

4.3.1 Teaching strategies

Question 2 in Section B of the interview schedule (*What are the strategies that you use in teaching poetry?*) focused on the participant's teaching strategies and sought to understand why the educators teach poetry in the way that they do. The researcher aimed to identify any similarities or differences between the methods used to teach poetry by educators in a rural, semi-rural and former Model C school, to establish whether the teaching and learning environment was a factor. The educator's responses indicated a lack of alignment with the CAPS curriculum requirements, and a lack of appropriate learning materials, in accordance with Potenza and Monyokolo's (1999) findings.

Educator Apple from School Zi responded as follows:

> *When I teach poem, I use the method that I remember during my primary school days whereby the teacher will divide us according to our groups or*

sitting arrangements in class. If the poem has about three stanzas we will be divided according to three groups. The first group will read stanza one and the second group read stanza two and so forth once we have all mastered the reading then the teacher will make us swop the stanzas and each group read a different stanza until we all have read the stanzas in the poem. The next day we will do the same until such time the teacher feels we are now capable of reciting the poems as individual groups. There will be a short competition on the group that will be able to recite the poem correctly and then after that the teacher will let one individual from each group to recite the poem and after about five people from each group have recited the poem we will allocate points for each person that recited and then after we will have the winner and the group that the most people that are winners will be the overall winner in the class. As a teacher I felt that this was the best method for me to use also in my teaching years as it has a conducive competition in class and the learners love to compete amongst each other and it also makes the learners learn the poem fast.

The method described by Educator Apple represents a largely Formalist approach, as understanding and interpretation of the poem is based on poetic structure only, and does not consider other factors that may affect interpretation of the poem, such as tone, and language structure. Dressman and Faust (2014) believe that the Formalist approach to poetry is a pedagogical orientation that focuses purely on recitation as the goal of mastery of the poem, and nothing else. There is no emphasis on the pronunciation of new words or the tone of the poem.

Educator Banana from School Khu stated the following:

When I introduce a new poem I first start by writing the new words that are unfamiliar to the children. The is a whole lesson on drilling the new words and if time permits then I will then start reading the poem word by word and they will repeat after me. I will then make the learners read the poem in groups and then again as a class. I will give them copies each to take home and practice to recite the poem and then after that we will do the punctuations which will explain the rhythm of the poem as well as the tone of the poem. Once we are done with the recitation I will have written work that is derived from the poem,

for example find the synonyms and antonyms of the following words from the poem. I will also ask them questions based on the poem as well so that they understand that poem is not only about reciting but also about understanding what the poet was thinking and feeling when she or he wrote the poem.

Educator Banana teaches different linguistic elements in poems, including the pronunciation and understanding of new words, and awareness of antonyms and synonyms. This is a method that supports rhizomatic learning, as learners must learn to look deeper into a poem not simply recite it. Learners engage with meaning, and are better able to answer questions based on the poem.

Educator Cherrie from School Hib seemed to employ a combination of Formalist techniques and more innovative, exploratory approaches to poetry:

The type of poem that I teach is very important in my choice of poem. I always choose a poem that has humour. I love to see their happy faces when they recite the poem. I enjoy seeing them laughing and performing those actions when they recite the poem. I find that it gets easy for them to learn it as they learn the poem through play. I choose a poem with few lines and with easy words so that they can pronounce it easily. We read the poem together in class and in groups and then I make copies for them to take home and practice it at home. When they come back again we recite the poem in class and then I give them activities which are based on the poem where they look for punctuations and we discuss on how we pronounce a word with exclamation mark for example. When I am satisfied that all learners can recite the poem I design activities that are based on the poem like writing of the following words in past tense, present tense as well as future tense. The learners can also fill in the missing words.

4.3.2 Group-teaching experiences during poetry lessons

The participants were asked, ―*When teaching poetry, do you teach in groups? Explain your process.* This question was asked to establish if the participants teach in groups when they are teaching poetry, because in my experience as an educator, I

realised that learners perform much better when they work with their peers in groups, particularly learners who may be very shy.

The response from Educator Apple from School Zi was as follows:

I have thirty-five learners in my class and there is not much time to divide the learners in groups already as far as time is concerned we are compromised as teachers with poetry teaching time, so I just teach poetry at once for the whole class. It makes it easy for me to teach poetry in this way as I do not compromise the syllabus as requested by CAPS policy. I make my children read each line after me and then they can read the poem individually and after that we do actions and if there is written work that is based on the poem. We do that written work and all this takes at least two weeks of the fifteen minutes per day.

Educator Banana from School Khu stated the following:

I have thirty-nine children in class who seat in groups but when I teach poetry I teach them all at once as there is not enough time to teach in groups. Poetry is one lesson that the children enjoy and love. I find that there is that conducive competition amongst them that makes them want to excel on poetry. I find that even those learners who are performing well in class, do well in poetry. I do not know why but it happens. As teachers we always give lead roles to top performers on extra mural activities, but poetry does not work like that even a learner that does not perform well in other subjects still does well in poetry.

Group teaching is one of the most under-rated methods of teaching in the foundation phase. Learners in the foundation phase are very competitive by nature. They love competing with one another and this can benefit educators in helping them to learn a new concept. Constructivists believe that group teaching benefits learners, learners love to learn from each other. According to Constructivists, learners learn more during social interaction, and they also construct meaning and develop on their own. Berger and Luckmann (1967) agree that a person can produce a world that he or she then experiences as something other than a human product. The relationship between a person as the producer, and the social world as his or her product, remains a complex one. However, all three participants displayed a shift away from the constructivist

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theory of teaching in groups during poetry lessons, and adopted a whole-class approach. The reason given was that there is no time to teach poetry through group work, and that the whole-class approach is more feasible and practical given the time constraints.

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHY DO GRADE 3 EDUCATORS TEACH POETRY IN THE WAY THAT THEY DO?

4.4.1 Not enough time is allocated for poetry teaching in the foundation phase

All three educators stated that there is not enough time allocated for teaching poetry in the foundation phase, yet the CAPS curriculum (DBE, 2011) places a great emphasis on teaching poetry in the FET phase.

Educator Apple from School Zi stated the following:

> *In Grade 12 exams languages are divided into three papers i.e. Paper comprises of Comprehension and Language and the total is eighty marks, Paper two comprises of poems and literacy and Paper three comprises of Compositions which makes a total of one hundred marks. Take a close look at poem which total to seventy marks which is a huge mark of the overall mark of two hundred and fifty marks. Poetry is given enough time to teaching time in the FET Phase but that is not the same with Foundation Phase. Even though I am not familiar with the CAPS policy with regards to the FET phase, but I know poetry is not the underdog like how they make it to be in the Foundation Phase. CAPS in the Foundation Phase stipulates that poems must be taught in Term three and Term four and that must be fifteen minutes per week or maximum five hours per week. There is no poetry in Term one and Term two, what I normally do I make them recite the poems that they have learnt in Grade 2 and then I maximize activities around those poems that they previously known for instance ask them to look for words that rhyme in the poem and ask them to write synonyms for certain words or antonyms etc. I don't feel that I*

should wait until Term three to start teaching poetry. I feel it should be an ongoing thing and there should no limits.

Educator Apple's observations are supported by the English FAL CAPS document (DBE, 2011), which stipulates that poetry be taught in the third term, and only two to three times per week. According to the CAPS document (DBE, 2011), poetry can be taught in conjunction with stories, plays and posters, which also take time to teach. In other words, this time is not specifically allocated to poetry. Poetry is therefore not given much teaching time. During the third term, activities such as the Readathon, Spellathon and Poetry Day, which are run by the DoE, also take place.

Educator Apple continued:

> *There are also follow up activities that we conduct with the learners that also take up a lot of time which the CAPS syllabus does not take into consideration about poetry. In the fifteen minutes of poetry I must assess as proof that I am teaching poetry but now 15 minutes is way too little. Another aspect that the Policy under estimated is the fact that when the children start writing they are very slow and the do not finish on time and do not write at the same speed. Let me show the evidence that I am talking about we did on the day you came for an observation and then you will have an idea of what I am talking about. The questions are only five marks but that took almost one hour for them to write. Fortunately, there are one or two of the children that finish earlier but the whole class is slow.*

Educator Banana from School Khu offered similar observations:

> *There is not enough time that is allocated for poetry especially in First Additional Language. When I introduce the poem, I must take it into cognizance the fact that the children that I am teaching are not speaking the language at all. Most of them only encounter the FAL in school only so there is a lot of interpreting, explaining of different words and translating words that are in the poem. That takes a lot of time when teaching and when you want your learners to really do understand the poem as compared to just recite it with no meaning.*

Educator Cherrie from School Hib stated that to improve the teaching of poetry, poems should be studied rigorously and read intensively, and attention should be given to structural elements and literary devices such as rhyme, meter, and literary allusions. Educator Cherrie believed that poetry cannot be taught like other subjects; it should be taught with greater oomph, humour and vigour, and meaning should be transferred from the educator to the learners. This is in accordance with Dressman and Faust's (2014) opinion that educators must meet high goals and standards to teach poetry effectively, and should be ambitious and select poems from leading contemporary poets.

4.4.2 Multiple selection factors must be considered

Each educator decides on the poems that they teach, as the poems are not specifically prescribed as is the case in the FET phase. There are different factors that the educator considers when choosing a poem. In Grade 3 the language must be simple and easy to understand. The length of the poem also needs to be considered, as the longer the poem, the longer it will take for the learners to understand. Another aspect is rhythm; Clacia (2002) states that rhythm is the foundation upon which all other elements of poetry lie. The poems therefore must be fast paced, as Grade 3 learners are very energetic. Poems can be recited and sung, so rhythm is very important in choosing a poem. All the educators agreed that a poem must be short and easy for the learners to understand. The vocabulary of the poem must be simple for the learners to understand and must be easy to pronounce. Educator Cherrie stated that she like to use poems by a famous poet named Jack Prelutsky, as his poems are full of humour. The other educators choose their poems from the language book, but they take into consideration the aspects of language, length, and rhythm.

One of the interview questions was, —*Does culture play a part for you when choosing the type of a poem?* This was one of the most important questions for the researcher, as this study is based on socio-cultural theory. According to sociocultural theory, culture plays a vital role, as it is the way in which people describe themselves. Poetry is linked to culture, and culture plays a vital role in the lives of African people. Irele (2001) states that language forms the foundation of an individual's conceptual ecology

as well as the means of conceptual growth. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) argues that language serves to mediate higher order thinking.

Educator Apple from School Zi responded to the above question as follows:

> *I normally choose a poem that the learners can relate to. I choose a poem that talks about something that they know if it is a small thing something that they have seen, touch and something that they might have used in their homes and mostly it about food i.e. fruits, veggies, sweets and so on. I try not to use something that is farfetched from the environment so that they are able to talk freely also have a thorough knowledge of the poem. If the poem is based on culture is should be a reality to them for instance „Uncibijane" even if they do not really use the term "Uncibijane" but once we in the middle of the poem they will be able to think that Oh yes! that is the poem is talking about the New Year celebrations. As South Africans we celebrate the New Year and that is what happens in almost in the whole of South Africa.*

Educator Apple also said she chooses poems that her learners can relate to. Figure 4.1 shows an isiZulu poem, —Imvula, that speaks about the rain. Educator Apple chose it because rain is something that all her learners can relate to. The community in which the school is located relies on subsistence farming, and therefore the rain plays a major role in the lives of the learners, who know when it is time to plant and when they receive rain: *"Above all children love the rain and playing in the rain I have yet to see a child that does not like the rain especially in the summer rain which is cooling after a log hot day."*

Imvula
Imvula
Woza wemvula
Uzosithela we
Ngawo amaconsi
Abandayo qa
Siyawathanda thina bantwanyana
Uma sidlala ucabhayiyane
Umoya uyasitshela um'usuzofika
Kugcwal imifula
Kugcwale imihoshane
Kukhale umabhengane
Woyi
Siyolala phi na
Siyolala'emakhaya Sidle
izindoni.

Figure 4.1: "Imvula"

Educators may assess poetry orally, practically or in written form, but the CAPS document is not specific as to which form of assessment is best for poetry. It is left to each educator to decide. Figure 4.2 is an example of a learner's work provided by Educator Apple to illustrate written extension work based on the poem, conducted to verify if the learner understood the words that were explained and the interpretation of the poem. Educator Apple commented that the learners take a very long time to complete this type of written work, which counts for a total of just five marks.
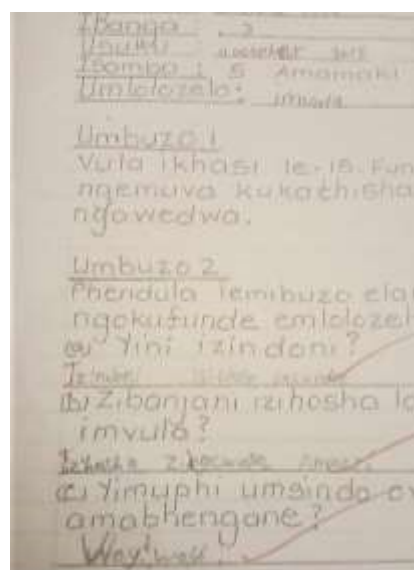
Figure 4.2: Example of written extension work based on a poem.

Educator Banana from School Khu provided the following response:

My learners are all African children and fortunately I know their culture so well as an African myself… so on the choice of the poem I choose the poems that are in the textbooks that are prescribed for the Grade 2"s, so I look at the content of the poem especially culture and I make sure that the poem that I choose is linked to the culture of my learners. Sometimes I teach the same poem in my class for two years and then I find that the Grade 2"s can recite my poems as they were listening to the previous Grade 3"s in the previous year. I find that it gets easier to recite the poem as they had already listened to their elder siblings the previous year as there is not much time that is allocated for poetry according to the Caps policy.

Educator Cherrie from School Hib stated the following:

I teach a diverse cultural class every year as you can see…. I always make sure that I respect each person's culture and in that way, I try and shy away in choosing a poem that will be limited to one culture so what I normally do I stick to humour poems and make sure that what the poem has nothing to do with the individual culture. I feel for this age my children are more receptive to poems that have humour and they love it when the audience is laughing and showing emotions towards their poems. I do no rely choose my poems based on culture. I love poems by Jack Prelutsky as most of his poems are humorous and my kids love them, and they are very easy to understand. I have a copy of this poem and I want you to take it. She went and reached to the cupboard and gave me the copy of the poem by Jack Prelutsky. I went on to ask the educator if the meaning of the poem has an impact for her choice. Oh definitely! She responded: I always choose a poem with meaning so that it easy for my children to make actions based on that poem. Take for instance this poem by this time we are both looking at the copy of the poem with the title Spaghetti! Spaghetti! … *There are action words that the children love and enjoy for instance in paragraph one sprinkled, paragraph two wiggle wriggle slurp and in paragraph three slushy, sloshy and gobble. All these words the children can imitate and place action even better than me because they know spaghetti and they love it too.*

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

Spaghetti! Spaghetti!
Jack Prelutsky

Spaghetti! spaghetti!
you're wonderful stuff, I
love you, spaghetti,
I can't get enough. You're
covered in sauce and you're
sprinkled with cheese, spaghetti!
spaghetti!
oh, give me some more please.

Spaghetti! spaghetti!
piled high in a mound,
you wiggle, you wiggle,
you squiggle around.
There's slurpy
spaghetti all over my
plate, spaghetti!
spaghetti! I think you
are great.

Spaghetti! spaghetti! I love
you a lot, you're slishy,
you're sloshy, delicious and
hot. I gobble you down oh,
I can't get enough,
spaghetti! spaghetti! you're
wonderful stuff.

</div>

Figure 4.3: Spaghetti! Spaghetti! by Jack Prelutsky

The responses the researcher received from Educator Apple and Educator Banana to the question —*Does culture play a part for you when choosing the type of a poem?‖* were almost identical. Both educators feel that culture plays a pivotal role in their choice of the poem. They are firm believers in culture and take culture into account when choosing poems, and tend to choose poems from their learners' culture. This is easy to do, since the learners all belong to the same culture. However, Educator Cherrie teaches a multicultural class. She still takes culture into account, but in a different way, as she needs to be culturally sensitive and inclusive. As a result, she tends to choose poems that are culturally neutral, and often chooses humorous poems.

4.4.3 Lack of adequate professional development in poetry teaching

One of the purposes of the face-to-face interviews was to gather information on whether the educators had received any training by the DoE on poetry teaching. In response to the question ―*Do you receive any teacher training or workshops on poetry?*‖ Educator Apple from school Zi said the following:

> *I only get an invitation for workshop at the beginning of the year which is an orientation workshop on language during the first term. It only lasted three and a half hours as teachers are not allowed to stay away from the learners and it was from twelve to 2:30 pm. There is not much time that we have for language as well and not to mention poetry there is none.*

Educator Banana from School Khu stated:

> *We get invited for language one a term which makes out to be four times a year but in that four times a year the only workshop that four times a year the only time the language specialist visit us on the first workshop and then after that the next three workshops are train a trainer. There are teachers who receive training on the circuit behalf and they then those teachers who have received training cascades the information to all the teachers. The language advisors cannot be in all the schools as there is a lot of schools to be visited and the language advisors are just few.*

Educator Cherrie from School Hib commented as follows:

> *The training that we receive is supposed to be one workshop per quarter but sometimes we do not get that as there are cancellations of scheduled workshops and the other workshops are conducted by teachers themselves as a cluster. In cluster workshops there is a poor attendance. I find that the way we are invited for those workshops is not one of the best as we only receive the invitation in the week. Late invitations place me personally at a compromising situation because I plan in-advance for my learners and we also have school based meetings weekly. It becomes hard for me to attend those workshops.*

The educators therefore had similar responses to the question of professional development in relation to poetry teaching. All said that they had not received any specific training in poetry teaching.

However, the educators are allowed and are required by the DoE to get together with neighbouring schools in the area to discuss issues affecting their teaching. These issues can be stated formally to the chairperson of the cluster, whose main task is to liaise with the Education Specialist in that subject and bring feedback back to the cluster. This study established that there are no cluster workshops that are designed specifically for poetry teaching. Educators receive training in other language areas, but not in poetry on its own. During the interviews, the researcher probed this question, and asked whether educators come together as clusters to try to tackle the issues and concerns that they have with poetry. Educator Apple and Educator Banana gave similar answers, while Educator Cherrie stated that her school tries to deal with such content matters internally.

Educator Apple from School Zi responded as follows:

> *We do not have cluster meetings with other teachers from other schools the reason being the schools are situated far apart. The other teachers are staying in a little place that is far away and, so they club together and use one car, so it becomes hard for the teachers to attend cluster meetings. Another issue that we have is that if we meet with the clusters teachers who are less than five as ladies it is very unsafe once the learners are gone. The schools are very remote and deserted when there are no children.*

Educator Banana from School Khu responded:

> *We do not meet very often we do try to meet at the beginning of the year but after that we try and communicate but unfortunately it does not happen that we meet as we are supposed to.*

Educator Banana did mention, however, that they used to meet in their school cluster and discuss matters concerning teaching, and would invite an educator who had been trained by the language advisors to come and address their cluster meetings. Educator Banana mentioned that at least in those meetings they would examine an assessment

language paper, and poetry would sometimes be part of that. However, the last time she could remember poetry being discussed in this way was a five-line poem discussed three years ago, so there was not much emphasis on poetry. All the educators stated that they receive training in language, but not in poetry. This puts new educators in a difficult situation, as they must use their own knowledge about poetry teaching.

Educator Cherrie from School Hib responded:

> *In my school we have our own grade meetings where we tackle issues on each and subjects. Though we discuss poetry, but we do not go into so much detail. I do not know why. I think as from now I will be asking my colleagues that we should also try and help ourselves with regards to issues that we face. Poetry and reading are the main issues that we have in my school as the children do not want to read. I think this conversation and interview that we are having now is an eye opener for me as well. I am finding out a lot of things that help with teaching poetry.*

4.4.4 Language factors when teaching foundation phase poetry

Vygotsky (1978) challenged educators to consider the critical role of language in the teaching-learning process. According to Vygotsky, language serves as a psychological tool that causes a fundamental change in mental functions, and social, individual, communicative, intellectual, nominative and indicative are all functions of spoken language.

The educators in School Zi and School Khu teach two language subjects, the home language and the FAL, while the educator from School Hib only teaches one language (English as the home language subject). Educators Apple and Banana therefore spend a lot of time explaining words in the FAL classes, as their learners are taught in their home language for all subjects, and the FAL is only taught during the FAL period. They also stated that insufficient time is allocated for the FAL in the foundation phase, as they need a great deal of time to explain new vocabulary and language structures. The educator from School Hib, on the other hand, teaches one language (English as

the home language subject) to learners who are already multilingual, and as a result the language factors mentioned by Educators Apple and Banana do not affect her.

The researcher asked the question: *Do you think African languages get enough exposure in poetry?* The responses from Educator Apple from School Zi and Educator Banana from School Khu concur, and they both said that they taught more English than isiZulu poems. Both educators taught isiZulu and English, but said that English has much more exposure. Educator Banana from School Khu said:

> *To prove that English gets the greatest exposure, you must think of the Readathon day. The competition is based mainly on English and the teacher put a lot of emphasis in teaching in English because there is that special day where the learners are assessed based on English fluency and competency.*

In other words, African languages are marginalised, in terms of policy and in terms of the time devoted to teaching poetry in African languages.

4.4.5 Lack of adequate teaching materials and school resources

4.4.5.1 Teaching and learning materials

The researcher asked, ―*Do you need resources when teaching poetry or do you make do with what you have?*‖ The purpose of the questions was to establish whether the participants found it difficult to get access to literary material for the foundation phase. Educator Apple and Educator Banana both stated that they teach both the FAL (English) and home language (isiZulu), and that they have not seen any literature books for the foundation phase. The participants agreed that they depend on the language books that are prescribed by the DoE, which do incorporate some poetry.

Educator Banana commented:

> *Most of those poems are so long and they do not relate to their environment. You find that the poem speaks about animals that are not around the area or even in our country.*

However, Educator Cherrie stated that she does have access to literary material that she refers to:

The books have a content from oversees so I try and translate so that it suits my children. There is a lack in terms of South African poetry books and materials. I cannot talk about the isiZulu books as I have mentioned before that I do teach isiZulu.

4.4.5.2 School infrastructure and resources

Another resource issue that affected Educator Apple from School Zi and Educator Banana from School Khu was the issue of insufficient space. In the foundation phase, learners are energetic and active, and enjoy engaging with content through active participation and movement. This is particularly relevant to poetry teaching, which involves rhythm and recitation and performance.

Educator Apple from School Zi (a deeply rural school with limited resources) described how her small classroom prevented the learners' active engagement:

It is difficult in my class to move along the aisles during the lessons because our classroom is small and very congested and there is no space to move around. Sometimes I invite my learners outside for poetry lesson when I want to teach them to the poetry with movement. Unfortunately, there are days whereby it rains, and I planned to teach poetry on that day. I get forced to use the classroom and teach anyway.

Educator Banana from School Khu (a semi-urban school) used the example of the children's rhyme, ―Three Little Gentlemen,‖ to illustrate the issue of insufficient space. Teaching this poem ideally requires a lot of space for the learners to move around, as at one point they need to run to the window to look out:

Table 4.1: "Three Little Gentlemen"

Three little gentlemen
Three little gentlemen Standing in the road; One little two, little three **Bow** down gentlemen Bow down low, **Walk** little gentlemen Right across the road, Little gentlemen, Standing in the road; One little two gentlemen, Standing in the road; Then one little gentlemen, Standing in the road; Once I **ran** into the window, to say, how do you do? But there were no little gentlemen.

Educator Banana explained that learners simply cannot actively engage with this poem, as she has fifty learners in her class and the small classroom only has five windows. Learners would get hurt in the chaos. Active engagement with this poem is only feasible with a maximum class size of thirty learners and enough space for all of them to move about in the classroom.

Educator Apple and Educator Banana also emphasised that even though the CAPS document is intended for all the schools, and all schools and educators are required to adhere to it, the basic conditions in South African schools are not the same. In their schools, for example, the school feeding scheme, and the fact that their schools don't has cleaners, has a great impact on teaching and learning. Although they understood the importance of the feeding scheme for their learners, and were very grateful for it, they related how the learners' involvement with serving meals and cleaning up afterwards eats into class time. Educator Apple stated: ―*In all fairness we do not have cleaners for the school so every cleaning that happens we do it ourselves.*‖ The educators felt that such additional tasks and responsibilities that affect schools in rural areas and under-resourced schools are not factored into the time allocations in lesson

plans. Educators and learners are required to clean the classrooms, and this either eats into contact time, or results in the teachers and learners finishing late.

In respect of materials and resources, School Zi and School Khu are still severely affected by the system of inequality that has characterised the history of education in South Africa, and that this has a direct impact on the teaching and learning at the schools.

4.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the findings from the face-to-face interviews and classroom observations according to the research questions. It was clear that the educator's training in teaching poetry varied greatly, and it seemed that none of them had received explicit training in *how* to *teach* poetry. The study found that the educators use slightly different methods to teach poetry, but the educators all expressed frustration at the lack of alignment between the CAPS curriculum requirements and the available time and resources to teach poetry. Various explanations were provided for why the educators approach poetry teaching in the way that they do, and these involved issues with time allocation, a lack of professional development in poetry teaching, language issues in the classroom, and a lack of adequate resources for poetry teaching.

The following chapter provides a summary of the findings, and presents certain recommendations based on the new knowledge that the researcher gained through conducting the research. It is paramount that the researcher writes a summary and wind up in a form of conclusion all the information. Once the information is gathered and the final stage is reached, the researcher writes the recommendations that is derived from all the data that was collected which is what the next chapter entails.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was influenced by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, which informed the approach to the study and the interpretation of results. Using socio-cultural theory was instrumental in establishing the usefulness of poetry teaching in language acquisition. This chapter contains the main findings of this study on the experiences of Grade 3 educators in teaching poetry, and presents them in relation to the three critical research questions:

1. What training and experience do Grade 3 educators have in teaching poetry?
2. Why do Grade 3 educators teach poetry the way they do?
3. How do Grade 3 educators teach poetry?

Recommendations for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning using poetry in the Grade 3 classroom are also provided, and an overall conclusion is presented.

5.2 THE MAIN FINDINGS

5.2.1 Research question 1: What training and experience do Grade 3 educators have in teaching poetry?

The educators' training in teaching poetry varied greatly, and it seemed that none of them has received explicit training in how to teach poetry. Their knowledge of poetry was dependent on the quality of teacher they had in high school and in teacher training college. Those who had a deeper knowledge were able to try to develop their own teaching methods based on this knowledge, and on the CAPS requirements and recommendations. The educators therefore focused on structure, punctuation, rhymes and the pronunciation and meaning of new words found in the poem. The fact remains

that explicit approaches to teaching poetry were never taught to them, even in training workshops that they have attended.

5.2.2 Research question 2: How do grade 3 educators teach poetry?

The researcher aimed to identify any similarities or differences between the methods used to teach poetry by educators in a rural, semi-rural and former Model C school, to establish whether the teaching and learning environment was a factor.

Educator Apple used an outdated Formalist approach that she modelled on how she had been taught poetry by her primary school teacher. Her approach relied heavily on reading and reciting the poem correctly, and did not address issues of interpretation or language development. Educator Banana, however, focused on the different linguistic elements in her teaching of poetry, including the pronunciation and understanding of new words, and awareness of antonyms and synonyms. This is a method that supports rhizomatic learning, as learners must learn to look deeper into a poem not simply recite it. Learners engage with meaning, and are better able to answer questions based on the poem. Educator Cherrie employed a combination of Formalist techniques and ways of encouraging her learners to engage with the meaning and interpretation of the poem.

It was therefore found that the educators adopted a variety of approaches, and that these were based purely on what they had observed from their lecturers during their teacher training, and on what was expedient given the obstacles they experienced daily (time pressures, lack of professional development, language barriers in the classroom, and a lack of adequate teaching materials and resources). The educators' responses emphasised a lack of alignment with the CAPS curriculum requirements and a lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials. It was also found that although group teaching is beneficial for teaching and learning (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), the educators did not implement it very often. All three participants displayed a shift away from the constructivist theory of teaching in groups during poetry lessons, and adopted a whole-class approach. The reason given was that there is no time to teach poetry through group work, and that the whole class approach is more feasible and practical given the time constraints.

5.2.3 Research question 3: Why do Grade 3 educators teach poetry in the way that they do?

It was found that many factors influenced the educators to teach poetry in the way that they do.

5.2.3.1 Time constraints

The lack of realistic alignment of the CAPS curriculum and lesson plans with the available time and resources, meant that the educators operate under severe constraints. All the educators stated that not enough time is allocated to poetry in the foundation phase CAPS syllabus, and that as a result poetry cannot be taught in the necessary depth, or with the necessary enthusiasm.

5.2.3.2 Lack of a uniform approach to poetry selection and teaching

Each educator decides on the poems that they teach, as the poems are not specifically prescribed as is the case in the FET phase. The educators explained the multiple factors that must be considered when choosing a poem. In Grade 3 the language must be simple and easy to understand. Poems must be an appropriate length, and must ideally be fast paced, and able to be recited and sung. The vocabulary of the poem must be simple and easy to pronounce. In addition, the educators stated that they needed to be culturally sensitive in their choice of poems. The educators from schools where the learners all belonged to the same culture tended to look for poems that reflected that culture. However, the educator who taught a multicultural class needed to be culturally sensitive and inclusive in her choice of poems, and therefore often chose poems that were culturally neutral and were humorous.

5.2.3.3 Lack of adequate professional development in poetry teaching

The educators had similar responses to the question of professional development in relation to poetry teaching, and stated that they had not received any specific training.

They stated that they receive training in language from subject specialists at cluster workshops, but that this training does not cover poetry. The educators also stated that they had not received much focused training in poetry teaching during their teacher training at university. This puts the educators in a difficult situation, as they must use their own knowledge about poetry teaching.

5.2.3.4 Language factors when teaching foundation phase poetry

The educators from the deeply rural and semi-urban school teach two language subjects, the home language and the FAL. Their learners are taught in the home language for all other subjects, so these educators spend a lot of time explaining new vocabulary and language structures in the FAL poetry classes, and stated that insufficient time is allocated for FAL poetry in the foundation phase. The educator from the former Model C school teaches only one language (English as the home language subject). In her school, many of the learners are already multilingual, and so English as the LoLT does not create a language barrier. The language factors mentioned by the other two educators do not therefore affect her.

All the educators believed African languages are marginalised in poetry teaching, in terms of policy and the time devoted to teaching poetry in African languages. They felt that this demonstrated the continued legacy of Bantu Education thinking in educational policy.

There is also a vast gap between the foundation phase and the intermediate phase in terms of language acquisition. Learners are taught in their home language in all learning areas in the foundation phase, but in the intermediate phase, seven subjects are taught in the LoLT, which is English for most South African schools. However, most learners do not speak English as their home language, so they are educated from that point on in an FAL. The LoLT therefore becomes a barrier to teaching and learning. The conceptual jump from Grade 3 to Grade 4 is already significant, and becomes overwhelming for most learners due to the added pressure of the language barrier.

5.2.3.5 Lack of adequate teaching materials and school resources

The researcher aimed to establish whether the availability of resources affected poetry teaching for the participants. The educators' responses were greatly dependent on their teaching environment and the type of school they taught in. In general, the educators from School Zi (a deeply rural school) and School Khu (a semi-urban school) found that a lack of resources did affect their teaching. The effects were felt in teaching in general, but also in specific aspects of poetry teaching. However, the educator from School Hib (a former Model C school) did not experience the effects of a lack of resources.

The educators from the deeply rural and the semi-urban schools stated that they teach both the FAL (English) and home language (isiZulu), and that they did not have any literature or poetry materials for the foundation phase. They depend on the language books that are prescribed by the DoE, which do incorporate some poetry. However, the educator from the former Model C school stated that she does have access to literary material, and that she is able to make good use of it.

Another resource issue that affected Educator Apple from School Zi (the deeply rural school) and Educator Banana from School Khu (the semi-urban school) was the issue of insufficient space. In the foundation phase, learners are energetic and active, and enjoy engaging with content through active participation and movement. This is particularly relevant to poetry teaching, which involves rhythm and recitation and performance. However, these two educators explained that this sort of engagement simply wasn't possible in their overcrowded classrooms with limited space. Educator Cherrie from School Hib (the city school) did not identify this as a problem. In general, she did not experience any barriers to learning and teaching because of a lack of school resources.

Another factor related to resources in general, and the under-resourced nature of School Zi and School Khu and the communities in which they are located, was how the school feeding schemes, and the fact that their schools don't have cleaners, has a great impact on teaching and learning. Educator Apple and Educator Banana explained how educators and learners are required to serve the meals and clean up afterwards, and how they are required to also clean the classrooms. This either eats

into contact time, or results in the teachers and learners finishing late. This is simply not a factor for Educator Cherrie in School Hib (a former Model C city school that has always been well resourced and that services a community that does not experience the socio-economic pressures felt by the School Zi and School Khu communities).

In respect of materials and resources, School Zi and School Khu are still severely affected by the system of inequality that has characterised the history of education in South Africa, and that this has a direct impact on the teaching and learning at the schools. Similarly, School Hib continues to enjoy the historical benefits of being a former Model C school, which used to cater for white learners only.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings discussed above, the researcher recommends the following:

- It was found that educators teach poetry in an ad hoc manner, based on their own personal acquisition of knowledge, and that there is therefore no uniform approach to poetry teaching. Specific training on poetry teaching must therefore be provided for language educators. This training should primarily take place during teacher training at university, and should be updated and refined through focused professional development training for school educators. In this way, a more uniform approach to poetry teaching can be developed, and a better implementation of the CAPS curriculum can be ensured.
- The lack of realistic alignment of the CAPS curriculum and lesson plans with the available time and resources means that the educators operate under severe time constraints. More time needs to be allocated to poetry teaching in the foundation phase in the CAPS curriculum.

- Using English as the LoLT creates a language barrier for learners whose home language is not English. More time therefore needs to be allocated to poetry teaching in the FAL.

- More time needs to be allocated to the inclusion of African languages and African culture in the poetry syllabus.

- Specific poems should be prescribed for the foundation phase, with focused teaching instructions and learning outcomes developed around those poems. In this way, greater uniformity will be brought to poetry teaching in South Africa.

- Poetry and creative writing need to be taught in more depth and detail in the foundation phase, to ensure a smooth transition for learners to the intermediate phase.

- The English language skills of foundation phase learners need to be built up to a much greater extent, to smooth the transition to English as the LoLT of most learners in the intermediate phase.

- Creative writing should be introduced during the foundation phase, in Grade 3, to ensure a smooth transition to the requirements of the intermediate phase.

- Adequate poetry teaching materials for the foundation phase (in the form of literary materials for learners and support materials for educators) must be provided for all educators at all schools, regardless of the type of school or socio-economic context in which it is located.

- To improve all teaching, schools must be equipped with adequate resources in terms of servicing and space, and additional classrooms and educators must be provided in instances of overcrowding.

5.4   CONCLUSION

Poetry teaching is a neglected area in the foundation phase. Inadequate educator training and professional development, and a lack of realistic alignment of time and available resources with the requirements of the CAPS curriculum, means that insufficient time is spent on poetry, and educators do not apply a uniform approach to poetry teaching during the time that is spent on it. A lack of adequate teaching and infrastructural resources in many schools, and a language barrier created by English as the LoLT, compounds the problems affecting poetry teaching. Many of these issues are not solely confined to poetry teaching, but affect teaching and learning in general

in South Africa. It is essential for these issues to be addressed in a focused manner to ensure that foundation phase learners in South Africa are adequately equipped to handle the conceptual leap to the intermediate phase, and for the long-term learning outcomes of all South African learners to be positive.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma   Tel: 033 392 1063
Ref.:2/4/8/1556

Ms CZ Fynn
PO Box 166
Hibberdene
4220

Dear Ms Fynn

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPERIENCES OF GRADE 3 TEACHERS IN TEACHING POETRY"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1.   The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2.   The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3.   Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4.   Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5.   A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6.   The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 June 2018 to 01 October 2020.
7.   Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8.   Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9.   Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10.   Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Ugu District.

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 19 June 2018

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Protocol reference number. HSS/0636/019M
Project title: Grade 3 teachers! experiences in teaching poetry: A case study in three

contextual variations

ACKNOWLEDGENENT:
BREACH OF ETHICAL PROCESSES AT UKZN

l, the undersigned,

Student Name (Student Nr):Mrs Charity Zakithi Fynn (217078589)

School:Education

Campus: Edgewood

as the Principal Investigator ("the Applicant") in the above stated project, do hereby acknowledge that:

1. The University KwaZulu-Natal's (hereinafter "UKZN") Research Ethics Policy (V) does not make provision for Retrospective Ethics Approval;

2. All researchers (both students and staff) at UKZN are obliged to be familiar with this policy;

3. have been informed that research cannot be done without obtaining full ethical

clearance as per the policy and guidelines of the University;

4. Research for the above project was undertaken by myself without final ethical clearance being obtained;

5. The University reserves its right to, at any stage and time, withdraw the relevant degree obtained by myself if:

    5.1 It becomes known to UKZN that there was an additional ethical breach during any field work or whilst collection data for the above stated project, and / or

    5.2 1 fail to apply for ethical clearance for any future research projects.

6. In addition to point 5 above, the appropriate disciplinary processes will follow should this occur again.

I further acknowledge that should there be any legal implications/actions emanating from the research in terms of any ethical violations, I will be personally liable and hereby indemnify

UKZN against any legal action that may arise from my failure to adhere to the University Research Ethics Policy (V).

Signed

Durban on the 13th day of March 2019

Signed

Signature of applicant: _____ at

at   on the   day of   2019

Signature of Chair (HSSREC): _____   Date: ___18/03/19___

at

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki W Building

APPENDIX C: GATEKEEPERS LETTER

21 June 2018

Mrs Charity Zakithi Fynn (SN 217078589)
School of Education
College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
UKZN
Email: czfynn@yahoo.com   ndlovuhl@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mrs Fynn

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Grade 3 teachers' experiences in teaching poetry. A case study in three contextual variations".
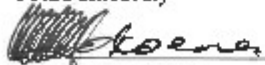
It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting semi-structured interviews with Grade 3 teachers on the Ugu District south of Durban.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:
- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

MR SS MOKOENA
REGISTRAR

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A — PERSONAL

1.   How many years have you been in the field of teaching?

2.   How many years have you taught in this phase?

3.   How many years have you taught Grade 3?

4.   How many years have you taught Grade 2 in this school?

5.   What are your qualifications?

SECTION B — POETRY

1.   What do you enjoy about teaching poetry in Grade 3?

2.   What are the strategies that you use in teaching poetry?

3.   Is poetry given enough time in the foundation phase?

4.   Does culture play a part for you when choosing the type of a poem?

5.   Do you receive any teacher training or workshops on poetry?

6.   When teaching poetry, do you teach in groups? Explain your process.

7.   Do you think African languages get enough exposure in poetry?

8.   What criteria do you use to choose a poem for your learners?

9.   Do you need resources when teaching poetry or do you make do with what you have?

APPENDIX E: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

OBSERVATION DATE:

CRITERIA	ACHIEVEMENT	
	YES	NO
TEACHER'S ATTITUDE TO POEM		
Is the teacher displaying a pleasant and interesting poem lesson?		
Is the teacher comfortable with the lesson?		
Does the teacher promote interaction between her and the learners?		
LEARNER'S ATTITUDE TO POEM		
Are the learners showing a positive attitude towards the poem?		
Are the learners participating before, during and towards the end of the poem?		
Do learners understand the poem?		
Can the learners answer questions that are related to the poem?		
THE CHOICE OF POEM		
Is the poem at the level of the learners?		
Do the learners understand the poem?		
Is the language use at the level of the learners?		

APPENDIX F: EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

P.O. Box 100715

Scottsville

3209

28 February 2019

To whom it may concern,

I have edited the following document for language errors, and in the process, have checked the referencing and layout:

Title: *Grade Three teachers" experiences in teaching poetry: A case study in three contextual variations*

Author: Charity Zakithi Ngubane Fynn

Degree: Master of Education

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Student no: 217078589

Supervisor: Dr Blanche Ndlovu

Please feel free to contact me should you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Debbie Turrell debbie.turrell@gmail.com

APPENDIX G: TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

- Processed on: 21-Jan-2019 10:44 AM CAT
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- Word Count: 28441 ☐ Submitted: 1

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