



**Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Poetry to English Second Language Learners: A Case
Study of Four High School Teachers in KwaZulu-Natal**

BY

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DECLARATION-PLAGIARISM

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This dissertation is submitted with my approval.

.....*APillay*.....

PROF ANSURIE PILLAY

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EFL	English First Language
ESL	English Second Language
FET	Further Education and Training

ABSTRACT

The teaching of poetry has evolved over the years in classrooms focusing on First Language speakers of English and in classrooms in which English is learnt as a Second Language (ESL). Teachers working in ESL classrooms within various post-apartheid South African contexts grapple with the teaching of poetry to ESL learners. It is these experiences that this study aimed to explore, as lived experiences help us to gain insight into people's perceptions, motivations and behavior. The objectives of this study were to understand teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners from rural and township schools. This was done to understand the extent to which such experiences were positive or negative and to what they attributed these experiences. The study also explored the methods that teachers used when teaching poetry as these choices could have a direct bearing on the experiences that emerge from the teaching process. In this interpretive, qualitative case study underpinned by phenomenology and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, data was collected from a purposive sample of four teachers, two from rural high schools and two from township high schools. To collect data, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and document reviews of poetry lesson plans were used. The data was analysed using a qualitative analysis method which allowed for themes to emerge. The findings revealed that teachers' engagement with poetry at high school or tertiary level played a part in their views about and experiences of teaching poetry in English Second Language classrooms as these earlier experiences directly influenced teachers' pedagogy and in turn their experiences. However, the participants recognised the value of poetry in language learning, despite language barriers and a lack of resources at rural and township schools which has a direct bearing on their experiences. Teachers' experiences of teaching poetry were also shaped by understanding who the learners are and the experiences learners bring with them into the ESL classroom. Finally, the findings revealed that some teachers indicated that they used a technicist stylistic form of engagement when teaching poetry and some indicated a more integrated, collaborative form of teaching both these methods spoke to the emergence of differencing experiences. However, there was sometimes a discrepancy between what teachers said they did when teaching poetry in classrooms and what their lesson plans revealed. This shed light to the fact that experiences cannot be investigation in isolation but that poetry teaching practices were closely linked to teachers experiences.

Keywords: teachers' experiences; poetry; English Second Language; teaching strategies

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

An important and ongoing discussion among the language teaching fraternity in South Africa is how to improve learners' performance in literature. The country has seen a decline in results within the languages, with English First Additional Language (EFAL) (called English Second Language (ESL) internationally) being no exception. Annual diagnostic analyses by the Department of Basic Education (2019) have revealed that learners perform poorly in their final literature examinations. It is difficult to ignore the need to interrogate the possible causes of this decline and poor performance.

One of the important role players in deciding learner performance is the teacher. Teachers play an important role in the delivery of the curriculum and in ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning within South African classrooms. This has manifested in the increase in research on the experiences of teachers within the scope of their pedagogy. This makes sense as teachers are a valuable part of the teaching process as policy relies on teachers' effective delivery and compliance.

Their experiences are useful insights into what happens during the teaching process. This dissertation seeks to understand the experiences of teachers in rural and township contexts when teaching poetry to ESL learners. The choice of researching teachers' experiences in teaching poetry in particular to ESL learners stems from the need to understand the experiences of rural and township teachers with the often-figurative genre of poetry in a language that is secondary to them and their learners. The dissertation will further give an account of both positive and negative experiences while attempting to understand why they have had such experiences. In addition to the above, the dissertation aims to explore what teachers do when teaching poetry to learners in rural and township schools as this has a direct impact on their experiences due to the nature of the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the dissertation critically discusses these elements through the application of data collection methods that lend themselves to teachers providing in-depth descriptions of their experiences. Therefore, in understanding teachers' experiences this study provides a lens through which teachers may be viewed, understood and ultimately developed

in an attempt to improve not only their experiences of teaching poetry but moreover their practice within ESL classrooms.

1.2 Rationale and motivation for the study

As an English Second language teacher at a rural school, I am aware of the demands of the curriculum, and understand the various contextual challenges in teaching poetry. These challenges could possibly be a result of the way I perceive and was taught poetry or perhaps a result of the way in which I teach poetry to learners, as some of them express how poetry is “old-fashioned” and “difficult.” A need to, therefore, explore and understand the various factors that teachers are faced with in similar and different school contexts has led to the conducting of this study in order to shed light on teachers’ experiences regarding the teaching of poetry to second language learners of English. Furthermore, in so doing, insight was needed to understand the effects that different contextual factors have on the way that teachers impart learners with knowledge but also the way that their perceptions and experiences are shaped. Lastly in conducting this study, not only were teachers’ experiences and teaching methods explored but, through the study, their perceptions of poetry were also brought to the fore. While this study aimed to explore and understand the experiences that teachers have when teaching poetry to ESL learners within the South African rural and township contexts, it also brought forth an understanding of Second language teachers, not only as practitioners but also as learners of English themselves. My choice of focusing on the teacher is that teachers hold the key to creating an interest in poetry among learners and their actions could affect learners’ views and attitudes towards poetry.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to ESL learners in rural and township schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The data collected sheds light on the challenges and victories that participants in this study experienced. The data was generated through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and document review. This was done to ascertain the factors that shaped teachers’ experiences. Recent developments in South Africa’s curriculum have heightened the need for teachers pedagogical experiences to be understood, as the EFAL

Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement has been amended in order to allow for improved curriculum coverage (Department of Basic Education, 2019). These amendments mean that teachers will be provided with additional teaching time with the streamlining of School Based Assessments.

As indicated, in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in improving learner performance in literature as it remains an area of concern for teachers and policy makers alike. The experiences of teachers when teaching poetry to learners in different contexts could bring to the fore a critical aspect of the teaching and learning process. In practical terms and within schools, debates are taking place between teachers and departmental educational specialists concerning how poetry is taught in ESL classroom as well as why many teachers across the province of KwaZulu-Natal, where this study is located, shy away from teaching poetry in ESL classrooms. Teachers anecdotally mention that poetry is too complex and abstract to be taught to ESL learners, and that this complexity has led to teachers being aware of varying experiences in ESL poetry classrooms.

1.4. Background

1.4.1 Brief historical overview of the development of Black Education in South Africa

The South African nation is multilingual. The Constitution adopted for post-apartheid South Africa in 1996 was to provide for certain human rights, amongst which were language rights. For the first time nine African languages, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu, were added to English and Afrikaans, the only two languages that enjoyed official status in the apartheid era.

The teaching of literature and more especially poetry in apartheid South Africa was shaped by the need to advance its political agenda. Under the apartheid system (from 1948 to 1994), schools in South Africa were administered by 19 education departments. Within South Africa, the education system was divided along racial lines, with the Department of Education and Training (DET, commonly referred to as Bantu Education) in charge of the schooling of the Black population (Gilmour, Soudien & Donald, 2000). The black population comprised of people who were

classified by the apartheid government as being non-white and included coloured people as well as people of Indian descent. The DET curriculum promoted basic knowledge, stated exclusively in terms of information that learners had to master in various subject areas at particular levels. Teacher expertise in content areas varied from poor to shockingly low, especially in rural schools. Many rural teachers had no academic qualifications; some had not completed high school. The DET schools used the students' home languages as the medium of instruction for the first 4 years of schooling, replacing them with English in Grade 5, which had disturbing effects on teaching and learning (Macdonald, 1990a, b; Van Rooyen, 1990). The majority of rural teachers had very little exposure to English and could not speak, read or write it competently. Short's study (1996) of teachers' content knowledge revealed that the teacher's level of understanding was the same as that of their learners in Grades 5 and 7. This study not only presents a view of South Africa's apartheid education system but questions the progress made by these teachers, as many still remain within the education system in present day South Africa.

Looking at the current educational curriculum in South Africa, after over 25 years of democracy, it is clear to see that the historical gaps in the quality of education received by learners of different racial background, while not erased, has been reduced as a single curriculum is administered across all racial and social groups. In terms of languages, language streams are determined by learners' home languages. In most KwaZulu-Natal rural and township schools, English is taught and learned as a Second language, which tells of the level at which the language is offered.

In unpacking the second language curriculum, it is noted that poetry forms a key part in the endeavour of administering a holistic curriculum. As the literature will reveal in subsequent chapters, the teaching of poetry has been contested rigorously throughout history, as there have been various theories and methods that are attributed to the effective teaching of poetry. In the classroom context, research, as pointed out in my literature review, reveals that learners need assistance in understanding literature and are dependent upon their teachers for guidance in analysis and interpretation. In addition, it is understood that a teacher's enjoyment of a subject can influence their learners' subsequent enthusiasm (Lambirth, Smith, & Steele, 2012; Dreher, 2003). Learners may develop increasing interest in poetry and its place in history and society should they

be exposed to teaching methods that foster it (Pike, 2000). That being said, teaching methods alone cannot ensure meaningful learning as teachers' pedagogy is shaped by a number of multi-layered aspects which is revealed in the conducting of this research into teachers' experiences of teaching poetry.

While poetry is described by Levy (2001, p.143) as 'a way of negotiating experience, of attending to external and internal worlds, bringing diverse worlds into close relation for arriving at renewed perception', the quote implies that poetry in its essence should appeal to all individuals in all spheres of life as it is in essence an expression of the lived experiences of people. However, the methods through which this genre is to be taught and learned are not specified in any regulations or policies, especially in the school curriculum with the focus being by and large on surface level contextual questions that are aimed at preparing learners for assessments and examinations leaving the teaching of a deeper appreciation of poetry to the teacher.

1.4.2 Background on the teaching of poetry in South Africa

With the complexities that often come with the acquisition of a new language, poetry has always fallen within the scope of a genre that is challenging for English Second Language learners to master despite the fact that poetry is embedded at the heart of most languages, and South African languages are no exception. It was therefore the purpose of this study to explore and understand teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from KwaZulu-Natal. My focus on poetry stems from the prominence of poetry, in not only the curriculum but also in cultures in general, a love for poetry teaching, as well personal interest as to the experiences of colleagues in contexts that are similar to the one in which I teach.

In terms of the South African English Second Language curriculum, it is stated that "the main reason for reading literature in the classroom is to develop in learners a sensitivity to a special use of language that is more refined, literary, figurative, symbolic, and deeply meaningful than much of what else they may read" (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p.18). This statement not only serves to explain the purpose of literature teaching and learning and more importantly poetry

teaching in the classroom, it also speaks to the various skills that an English Second Language teacher should have. In addition, poetry plays a key role in the English curriculum as it makes up fifty percent of the English literature paper (Paper 2) written by learners in mid-year examinations, preparatory examinations, and end-of-year examinations, in the Further Education and Training (FET) (grades 10-12) phase and forms part of the fulfilment of learners' final matriculation pass requirements. This means that poetry forms a third of learners' annual English mark (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

1.5 Location of the Study

This study was conducted in the greater Durban area within two rural and two urban working-class township schools, where English is taught as a second language. These schools are located in rural and township communities that are characterized by varying social and economic challenges such as a lack of resources within the communities and at schools. Teachers from the schools in this study are Second Language speakers of English, who now teach it to their learners. This means that they speak isiZulu as their home language and English as a second language. I have chosen to use two rural and township schools so as to provide a small-scale overview of pedagogical practices and experiences in rural and township school classrooms.

1.6 Overview of key studies

Since research does not take place in isolation, the present study conducted draws and builds on research studies that focused on teachers' experiences. While the literature is reviewed in a separate chapter, I draw on two studies from South Africa as being key to my study. These studies include a study conducted by Newfield and Maungedzo (2006) at a high school in Soweto and a study conducted by Kapp (2004) in Cape Town. The study conducted by Newfield and Maungedzo revealed that due to poetry being "difficult" for teachers and learners at Lamula Jubilee High School where English was being taught a second language it was removed from the school's curriculum. What their study hoped to achieve was to revive the teaching of poetry within the school, through the experiences of Maungedzo, who was a teacher at the school. The researchers introduced a multimodal approach to teaching poetry which provided the teacher with positive

experiences as learners at the school responded positively to the methodology used. This reveals that teachers' experiences are shaped by a number of elements that at times can be perceived by teachers as contextual but that can also be methodological, as in the above-mentioned study. Kapp (2004) researched the experiences of teachers who teach poetry to ESL learners in Cape Town. The study revealed that teachers used surface level teaching methods that only expected learners to identify literary devices. Additionally, it was found that the type of assessment issued to learners at this school was inadequate as it sought to only assess low order concepts. Kapp's study revealed that during the course of the study, gang-related violence disrupted the study and the teaching and learning in the academic programme. While these studies are explored in detail in the Literature Review, the studies are mentioned at this point to contextualize the research related to the topic of this dissertation as they foreground some of the issues interrogated in this study.

1.7. Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore teacher' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools.
2. To understand how teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools are perceived by the teachers.
3. To understand the factors attributed by teachers of their experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools.
4. To explore what teachers do when teaching poetry to English Second language learners in rural and township schools.

1.8. Questions Asked

Main question:

1. What are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools?

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools perceived positively or negatively?

2. To what do teachers attribute their experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools?

3. How do poetry teaching practices in English Second Language classrooms in rural and township schools influence teachers experiences?

1.9. Overview of the research process

This study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm. Johnson & Christensen (2010) describe researchers within this paradigm as wanting to understand human behavior rather than predicting it. The interpretivist paradigm focuses on the lived experiences of participants and reinforces the use of phenomenology as a theoretical framework. The approach that was used in conducting this study was, qualitative. According to Creswell et al. (2007) qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data on a particular phenomenon or context with the goal of forming an understanding of what is being studied within a naturalistic context. In conducting this study, a case study was used. A case study is defined by Yin (2003, p.87) as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.'

The first data collection method used in the study was an open-ended questionnaire that was completed by the teachers (See Addendum F). In building towards data collection, semi-structured interviews were used (See Addendum G). The third tier of the data collection methods that was

used in this study was document review of lesson plans (See Addendum H). The purposeful sample used in this study comprised four teachers, one teacher from each of the four schools that were part of this study. In analysing the data that was collected, qualitative data analysis methods were used, using thematic analysis. The analysis aimed at identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within data. This formed the basis from which the three sets of data (questionnaires, interviews and lesson plans) were analysed. Another purpose for the use of thematic analysis was that it organized and described data sets in detail. However, it went further than this, and interpreted various aspects of the research topic. Furthermore, thematic analysis was used to emphasize organization and rich description of the data. These aspects will be discussed in greater detail in the Methodology chapter.

1.10. Ethical Issues

In conducting this research, I applied for gatekeeper permission from the principals of the schools where the teachers are based (See Addendum B). This was obtained through the means of letters (See Addendum C). I then applied for and received ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (See Addendum A). I then recruited participants, explained the research process to them and sought informed consent from the participants (See Addendums D and E). In protecting the identity of participants and schools and in ensuring confidentiality of the participants and the schools, pseudonyms were used. All data collected has been secured in a locked space and will be kept for a period of five years, after which all data will be destroyed. Questionnaires, interview transcripts and lesson plans will be shredded, and interview recordings will be incinerated.

1.11. Researcher's stance

Often when research is conducted, the researcher is required to set aside their perceptions and bias in order to ensure objectivity. In presenting this study, I chose to use the first-person pronoun - I - because of how closely the study resonates with my current experiences as a teacher. I chose not to attempt to maintain a distance from my study. While I aimed to be unbiased and objective in the conducting of the study, I also remained a teacher who teaches poetry in a rural community. In

addition, I believe I am a teacher who promotes the teaching of poetry because of the language acquisition and writing skills it develops. The participants in this study were thus similar to me in what we teach and the contexts in which we teach. I ensured that I did not lead but followed them during the semi-structured interviews in order to allow for genuine responses to be given by participants.

My school in a rural community does not have many resources to foster and nurture the teaching of poetry, but the learners still manage to perform adequately when being assessed. I understood going into this study that teachers in similar contexts may have varying experiences when it comes to the many factors that shape their teaching contexts, while in other instances, teachers in different contexts can have similar experiences. This has been an important element that this study has taught me. Teachers' experiences reveal a lot in terms of what the educational system is getting right as well as what can be done in order to support teachers in their pedagogy.

1.12. De-limitations

A study of this nature takes into consideration a number of aspects for inclusion in the body of work presented but there are elements that the research did not consider. Primarily, the study was limited to four teachers in four school, thus making the sample size small. Additionally, teachers from schools in urban areas where Afrikaans is taught as a first language and English as second language would have added a more complex layer to the data collected. However, I chose to focus on schools where isiZulu is the first language and English is the second language to keep a closer focus. A study of this size, therefore, did not aim to be generalizable.

With that said, only teachers from rural and township schools were selected, not teachers from urban schools. Anecdotally, learners in urban have a far better command of English as opposed to those in rural and township schools which would have possibly presented data that was somewhat impaired in terms of the kind of experiences that teachers in these contexts would have, based on the competency of the learners in their classrooms.

This study chose to use three data collection methods only. While classroom observations could have been employed as a data collection method as this would have allowed me to observe teachers

within their natural teaching contexts and presenting an opportunity for me to get a firsthand view of the experiences, I weighed the possibility that classroom observations could have led to teachers being uncomfortable and possibly ‘staging’ a lesson as a result of my presence as the researcher in the classroom and possibly making the teacher unnatural in their teaching. Ultimately, this study focused on teachers’ experiences, not on their actions. I needed to focus on what they said verbally and in writing and considered their lesson plans to further verify their experiences.

Finally, this study did not focus on learners’ experiences of poetry. While the inclusion of learners could have provided a rich insight into poetry teaching and learning, I chose to keep the focus on teachers’ experiences within the scope of this study.

1.13 Outline of the study

Chapter 1

This chapter gives an outline of the study. The chapter highlights the background information of the chosen study and explains how the study was established. Within this chapter I set out to describe the motivation, rationale, purpose and focus for the study including the objectives and research questions to be answered.

Chapter 2

The second chapter of this study is a literature review. The purpose of the literature review in this study is to ascertain possible gaps in the literature on the experiences of teachers in the ESL classroom when teaching poetry. I aimed to building on scholars’ previous studies.

Chapter 3

This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the research design and research methodology, including which methods had been used to help answer the research questions. This chapter comprises the research paradigm, research approach, research design, sampling method, methods of data collection, and an explanation of the data analysis process that was followed.

Chapter 4

The chapter focuses on the data analysis of the experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to ESL learners within rural and township schools. In this chapter, the data that was gathered is analysed, with themes being formed and discussed. The main findings are proposed. In this chapter, the key research questions are answered from the findings.

Chapter 5

The final chapter focuses on the findings and a link is made with the literature reviewed. As a result, from the findings, various views are explored to further unpack the research questions. This chapter also concludes the study at hand and mentions possible recommendations for policy makers and scholars to consider.

1.14 Conclusion

This chapter is an introduction to the research that was conducted in an attempt to understand the experiences of teachers in the teaching of poetry to second language learners of English in rural and township schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. I explained the rationale and motivation for the study, discussed the focus and purpose, and provided an overview of the main studies on which I drew, and the research methodology used. I also provided the research questions that were addressed. In the next chapter a detailed review is provided of literature on the experiences and determining factors that exist in an English Second Language classroom.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As poetry falls within a broader landscape of literature, an overview of the discussion on literature and second language teaching is necessary to present a wide-angle view on the topic. Teaching literature in second language classrooms has experienced several historical phases. Accounts disclose it as the “only valuable source for language teaching” and it has been perceived as “moral and social, as content and entertainment, and today it is seen as a source of authentic language” (Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000, pp. 554-567).

Moving specifically to poetry, Povey (1979), a strong advocate for teaching poetry in English Second Language classrooms, believes that teachers of poetry are responsible for causing the negative attitude of learners towards poetry, thus leading to their negative experiences. Ironically, he states that often one of the most difficult things about teaching poetry to English Second Language learners is handling the teacher’s own deeply wrought unhappiness with poetry, the result of experiences he or she has suffered (p. 164). This leads to negative experiences by both teachers and learners.

While the above may be true, the literature and theoretical framework in this chapter aim to show a clearer and more detailed view of teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners in varying contexts. The teaching of literature involves a considerable package of critical concepts, literary conventions, and requirements. Teachers are expected to equip learners with these concepts and conventions so that the learners are able to show an ability to use such terms and concepts when speaking and writing about and responding to literature. The following is therefore a discussion of the theoretical framework and a review of the literature that surrounds teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to learners who are non-native speakers of English. It presents the various research studies concerning the position of poetry in classrooms

where English is a Second Language. Additionally, existing experiences of teachers are also presented. Fundamentally the literature reviewed served as a benchmark for the research that was conducted.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this study, I aimed to underpin the research conducted with phenomenology and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory.

2.2.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology began as a school of theoretical thought during the 18th century. It later grew into the science of unfolding what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience. It is considered interchangeably as a theory and methodological tool and is used as such in this study.

Theoretically, phenomenology's first step, is to seek to avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience prior to their exploration, whether these are drawn from religious or cultural traditions, from everyday common sense, or, indeed, from science itself. Furthermore, explanations are not to be imposed before the phenomena have been understood through interaction with those involved in the phenomena. The German philosopher, Husserl, focused on defining the essences of experiences; phenomenology is knowledge as it appears to one's consciousness (Husserl, 1965). The assumption of this theoretical thought is that there is an essence to shared experience (Husserl, 1965). According to the phenomenologist Husserl (1962), every perception takes place within a certain site of a person's mind. A person's view of the world is not based upon generic "known" truths, but rather perceptions that are experienced within this mental background. It is through this lens that a person will determine their view of the world. Husserl asserts that life is a string of perceptual moments that transform into the passage of time. It is important to note that individual perceptions are based upon a person's region in life; this position determines the specific angle or worldview a person will have.

Hegel (1967, p.324) suggests that “when people share similar experiences, it is assumed that each person is beholding the exact same perception, often without question.” Basically, phenomenology studies the structure of various types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity. The structure of these forms of experience typically involves what Husserl called “intentionality”, that is, the directedness of experience toward things in the world, the property of consciousness that it is a consciousness of or about something. Overall, phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophizing, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense it appears to the person going through a particular experience. It is interested in the various structures of consciousness that lend meaning in life. Thus, it does not restrict itself to formal reasoning, but instead focuses on all the structures of relationships that may emerge in individual consciousness that shape meaning. Among the patterns that emerge may be relationships of self and world, means and ends, and power. As a result, phenomenology often investigates what psychologists refer to as practical reasoning or folk psychology (Bruner, 1990).

Methodologically, phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2018). This essence is discovered through description, rather than through analysis. While phenomenology was selected for this study due to its lending itself to a deep exploration of human experiences and revealing the multifaceted nature of these experiences, scholars often critique it by stating that phenomenology often does not follow systematic procedures when collecting data, this is due to allowing for the strong subjectivity of participants. This is supported by Holloway (1997) who states that researchers who use phenomenology are reluctant to prescribe research techniques. Hycner (1999, p. 143) concurs by stating that “there is an appropriate reluctance on the part of phenomenologists to focus too much on specific steps”. While this may be a critique, in conducting this study, participants were given an opportunity to present their experiences through semi-structured interviews which gave them full expression but the data collected from the interviews was grouped along with a questionnaire and document review which ensured that the objectives

of the study were met as well. This addressed the issue of validity as subjective research often presents issues with validity. Thematic analysis also ensured that the data collected from the interviews was analysed purposefully to ensure that the study kept its focus. In the application of phenomenology the study was conducted with the aim to collect rich descriptive data that was made up of teachers' experiences as learners of English as a second language, their valuation of poetry within the ESL curriculum and their practice within the ESL classroom in rural and township KwaZulu -Natal. In researching the above-mentioned components warranted investigation as experiences are not only shaped by factors that exist within the classroom context but also those that are external, but which have an impact on ones experiences.

2.2.2Socio-Cultural Theory

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of development focuses on language, social and cultural influences on a child's developing mind (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's theory states that culture along with social interaction and language all directly influences one another and influence cognitive development. This theory requires learners to use cognitive tools to understand their surroundings and the world. These cognitive tools are created in one's culture. In the socio-cultural theory, learning occurs within a social situation, and is first between the teacher and the learner, and then is inside the learner, or internalized. Active participation, another component of this theory, in activity creates a framework for dialogue to occur, and ideas are exchanged which leads to advanced development. In addition, Vygotsky extended the emphasis on culture and society in his argument that all higher mental functions are social in origin and are embedded in the context of the sociocultural setting.

Vygotsky (1978) believed this is a primary mechanism for cognitive development. Miller (2011) claims that the theory opposes the idea of the discrete teaching of skills and argues that meaning should constitute the central aspects of any unit of study. Furthermore social interaction and mediated learning are central to Vygotskian (1978) socio-cultural theory, particularly to the role played by adults in instructing and guiding learners, which helps develop the language of learning, which in turn allows learners to acquire knowledge voluntarily (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky also asserts that there is a strong link between formal learning, which takes place within the school context and informal learning, that which takes place at home. He further highlights that an

effective link should be established between the two for learning to be seen as important, relevant and of value to learners. This in turn makes it imperative for teacher pedagogy through their (teacher) experiences to be understood so as to fully grasp the nature of the complexities that are involved in the establishment of the link between formal and informal learning which takes place at home and through social interactions.

Additionally, Paran (2008) provides a clear explanation as to how language learning should be structured. He states, “language learning is not only about language it is about learning” (p. 469) and the classroom focus should include “holistic perspectives that look at the whole person and the whole culture in which literature is part...” (p. 469). This suggests that learning involves the acquisition of a number of conventions and skills that should be interlinked to assist learners in their interaction with a language. Additionally, Nasr (2001) states that when language exercises are derived from literary texts, the components are no longer isolated unrelated sentences but “become thematically coherent in addition to their linguistic cohesion” (p. 351). This speaks to the key elements of this study in a sense that by looking at teachers’ methodology when teaching poetry to English Second Language learners and their experiences as learners of English it can be established as to the reasons why their teaching experiences are either negative or positive. The cognitive development of teachers’ can therefore be perceived as a key element in investigating their experiences as this accounts for a large proportion of the teachers they have become and thus shape their experiences.

The findings were consequently assessed in terms of Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory to understand teachers’ experiences of mediating learners’ understanding of poetry. Most importantly the research further required teachers to draw from their own experiences of learning poetry in a second language because if we are to teach a language that can be meaningful for English Second Language learners, then we need to have some understanding of their cultural background and educational experiences. As cultural understanding allows learners to work with issues from perspectives of the poet as well as their own linguistic and cultural knowledge. In merging the socio-cultural theory and phenomenology, the research conducted was not only analysed through both lenses but assisted to further understand teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry and the multiple factors that shape such experiences.

2.3. Literature review

It can be understood that poetry is an essential part of the high school curriculum, and English teachers have a crucial role in encouraging its value and use in the classroom. The attitudes of teachers towards poetry and their experiences with poetry teaching differ, therefore this necessitates the study of this phenomenon. Prior to making sense of teachers' experiences, one must look into the literature that exists to understand the scope of work and research that has been completed. The teaching of poetry holds a considerable area in terms of the literature that revolves around it. To draw the existing literature down into being suitable for this particular study, the information presented sought to present, how poetry has been defined over time, how and why poetry is valuable within the ESL classroom, the methods that have been used in the teaching of poetry, teachers' language proficiency and its impact on their experiences and finally the experiences that teachers have with teaching poetry. Similar to how the study was conducted, the review of the literature was grounded in the objectives of the study.

2.3.1. What is Poetry?

Poetry has over time been described in many ways, some referring to it as art and others describing it as expression. Hanauer (2001 p.67) defines a poem as

a literary text that presents the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the writer through a self-referential use of language that creates for the reader and writer a new understanding of the experience, thought or feeling expressed in the text.

Although Hanauer mentions that this definition can be useful to other types of texts, he also states that what is so unique when studying poetry is that "the learning process relates directly to the way language is used in poems. The language of the poem directs and mediates the process of understanding." This indicates that in poetry, language is not a clear-cut medium that merely transfers the author's message; the language of the poem is the author's message. Dodsworth (1975) identifies poetry as different from the novel or drama due to it usually not containing a plot. In addition, he contrasts poetry with philosophy and notes that poetry is neither thought nor

philosophy, and though people might associate poetry with wisdom, the wisdom to be found in poetry is mainly associated with the form of the words. Dodsworth's ideas raise many questions in terms of the present study. Uppermost to consider is how word form and pedagogy are engaged with in rural and township schools since meaning is contained in the way in which lines and words are formed. What is the implication for ESL learners who are still continuously acquiring the language? How do they engage with this unfamiliar word form in their study of poetry?

I agree with Hanauer (2001) and Dodsworth (1975) that poetry is often a very personal form of text that usually has no explicit plot and thus demands more of the reader, in this case both teacher and learner in order for meaning to be constructed. Moreover, the power of language, and its ability to shape opinion and feelings, is seen in all its capacity in poetry. By writing, reading, and speaking poetry, this understanding of the power of language, and how even one word can affect meaning in a context, is best learnt (Longenecker, 2014).

Another view of poetry comes from Creely (2018, p.35) who defines poetry as

language use in its most creative, distilled, and elemental form. Poetry is steeped in emotion and thought. It is built on tight description and careful artistic creation. It carries a rich vein of meanings associated with individual words and the nuances of those words.

Poetry thus encourages and presents a precision and skill with the use of words, not just in poetry writing but in other forms as well. This definition suggests that not only does poetry foster acquisition of English, but the skills of language use and manipulation may be used across the English spectrum such as language structures, other forms of literature and creative writing as some possibilities. More than ever, poetry is "powerful, dynamic and multimodal" (Dymoke & Hughes, 2009, p. 93). It is "embedded in the rhythms of everyday life through song lyrics, tweets and text messages". In examining the literature around the value of poetry it is clear that the value of poetry is undisputed as being beneficial, but the teaching and learner responses thereof are an aspect of further exploration.

2.3.2 The value of poetry and its pedagogy in the English Classroom

In exploring teachers' experiences of teaching poetry, it is key to look at the value of poetry as a genre, along with the value that teachers place on the teaching of poetry. Many advocates of literature, educators, and poets of the 19th-century Romantic Era believed in poetry's "imaginative richness" as well as its "capacity to provide moral guidance, or even instruction" (Hanratty, 2008, p. 149). Arnold (1880) claimed that poetry contains the utmost worth to all of humanity, as it forms "the soul and character"; it produces "a love of beauty and of truth"; it suggests "high and noble principles of action" and it inspires "the emotion so helpful in making principles operative" (as cited in Benton, 1999, p. 521). Rorty (2007) warns those advocating against poetry: "No imagination, no new words. No such words, no moral or intellectual progress" (p. 129). In other words, poetry as an imaginative, language art can be seen as the base of all human expression in relation to language use.

When teaching poetry, Sigvardsson (2017) states that a key aim of poetry curricula is to develop learners' interpretations. However, in a study she conducted in Sweden on the teaching of poetry, she found that most of the participating teachers stated that interpretation was the one thing that learners struggle with most. According to participants, learners may find it difficult to "experience a poem emotionally" (Sigvardsson, 2017, p. 586) thus making its value diminish because of this. Additionally, for some teachers, poetry is just not seen as a vital link within their classrooms. An example of this is drawn from Ray's (1999) study, where many negative or neutral responses to poetry in survey responses were provided by teachers, with teachers commenting that while they believed poetry to be somewhat worthwhile and they contrastingly held "a vague, underlying optimism" for its study, they were not always convinced of its value in the classroom (p. 406). Similar feelings are also found in the work of Certo et al. (2012), who investigated the attitudes of 23 pre-service English teachers, with their interviews inquiring how they felt about poetry and its pedagogy. In agreement with Ray's (1999) study, two-thirds of the pre-service participants in Certo et al.'s (2012) research recounted negative or neutral experiences with the genre. Ray (1999) further suggest that teachers often display fear and learned dislike of the genre of poetry and cannot relate any personal, past experiences that they found to be encouraging. This is often a result of

how they were taught or first encountered poetry. Ray's (1999) analysis of pre-service, primary school teachers in England further uncovered that many do not often engage with poetry, with some respondents admitting they would only read poetry if by accident, or only if they were forced. Their inherited distaste for poetry often stems from their past intellectual confusion, as many teachers surveyed admitted that they never understood the poetry given to them in English class (Ray, 1999). In her research, Lockwood (1994) also discovered that many high school teachers expressed that they had never had an English teacher who taught the genre well, and that they therefore had no positive role models to emulate. Compounded negative experiences are particularly troubling, as Parr and Campbell (2006) argue that teachers' poor attitudes can be passed down from one generation of teacher to the next and, consequently, from one generation of learners to the next, leading to a cycle of poetry dislike.

Similarly, Benton's (1992) work revealed poetry to be the area of the curriculum "where teachers feel most uncertain about their knowledge, most uncomfortable about their methods, and most guilty about both" (p. 127). The teacher's anxiety is then transferred onto the learners, "so that the classroom ambiance of poetry becomes one of anxiety... rather than one of enjoyment" (Benton, 1992, p. 127). Part of the reason for this phenomenon may be that pre-service teachers do not have enough deep, compelling experiences with poetry in their teacher education (Certo et al., 2012), a sentiment shared by Moore (2002), a high school English teacher, who stated that neither his English major nor his methods courses prepared him to effectively teach poetry. But even if their training had been good, English teachers still seem to experience many reservations when tasked with poetry pedagogy, and their self-doubts can be damaging. This reveals that the value that teachers place on the teaching of poetry will ultimately have an influence on the kinds of experiences that teachers will have when teaching.

In contrast, Benton's (1998) study found that 70% of surveyed teachers viewed the study and discussion of poetry as "very important" (p. 524). Similarly, Hanratty (2011) classifies poetry as an essential weapon in a teacher's armory. Wilson's (2013) surveying of 33 primary and secondary teachers in England likewise elicited positive, metaphoric responses to teaching poetry, calling it "a lifeline" and "a pool of freedom around a rock" (p. 80). Overall, it is common in the literature to find teachers expressing a "keen interest and commitment to poetry" (Pullinger, 2012, p. 383)

for a variety of reasons. It can be shown then that many scholars and teachers will promote the significance of poetry pedagogy in some way. Certainly, the academic as well as the cultural and critical value of poetry seems not to be in dispute.

In addition, teachers acknowledge that poetry can be used in teaching across the curriculum. Januchowski-Hartley et al. (2018) report the use of poetry in teaching about conservation. It can also be used in teaching mathematics, the multiplication table and the number of days in a month are usually reduced in poetic form to make them memorable and increase learners' retention (Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019). Likewise, many teachers commend poetry as a useful genre in opening the minds of unwilling learners and those who struggle with learning.

This notion suggests that poetry is of even greater benefit to ESL learners as they commonly come into the ESL classroom with reservations about English as a whole. Within the English Language curriculum, poetry is proven to be valuable in helping learners make connections between literary genres (Ackerman, 1968) and can be used effectively as a means of conversation between literary works and writers to reinforce themes within the teaching process (Moore 2002, p, 46).

2.3.3 Teachers Language Proficiency and Self-efficacy

Language proficiency is the ability to use a language accurately and appropriately in its oral and written forms (Cloud et al. 2000, p.60). The four areas of proficiency include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency can also vary according to the function, purpose and context of communication (Lamberger, in Manyike, 2007). According to Cummins (2001, p.68), language that is used in informal settings (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills – BICS) may be easier to master than language that is used in formal settings (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency – CALP). Language proficiency forms the basis of all learning and is closely related to a person's experiences and general knowledge.

In an attempt to understand teachers' experiences, a look at the impact of language proficiency and efficacy on the teaching process lends itself to the revelation of the complex make-up of a

teacher's personal pedagogy as English Second Language speakers. Teachers' beliefs about their own effectiveness, known as teacher efficacy, underlie many important instructional decisions which ultimately shape learners' educational experiences (Soodak & Podell, 1997, p. 214). Teacher efficacy is believed to be strongly linked to teaching practices and student learning outcomes. Teachers' sense of efficacy can potentially influence both the kind of environment that they create as well as the various instructional practices introduced in the classroom (Bandura, 1977). Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are confident that even the most difficult learners can be reached if they exert extra effort. This is important especially in the teaching of poetry which may be received with resistance by learners. Further, teachers who are non-native speakers of English may have had their English proficiency linked to several personal and contextual variables, important teacher behaviours, and student outcomes. Guskey (1984) and Ghaith and Yaghi's (1997a) studies showed, among other things, how teachers' sense of efficacy affects their attitudes toward implementing instructional innovation within the English classroom.

Teachers' second language proficiency and their beliefs about language learning are two major factors that determine their classroom teaching practices and their use or non-use of the second language in their classes (Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob, 2005) and language proficiency is often listed as an area of interest in language studies (Mahboob, 2004; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). Butler (2004) studied teachers in South Korea, Taiwan and Japan, and looked at the gap between teachers' self-perceived language proficiency and their perceived minimum level of proficiency needed to be effective teachers at the elementary school level. Butler's study showed consistent gaps in all three countries between the teachers' self-assessed language proficiency and the proficiency they believed would enable them to teach elementary school English most effectively.

Language proficiency constitutes the foundation of the professional confidence of non-native English teachers. Language competence has been rated as the most essential characteristic of a good teacher (Lange, 1990). Berry (1990) conducted a study of two groups of English teachers teaching at the secondary level in Poland. His aim was to determine which of three components (methodology, theory of language teaching, or language improvement) they needed most.

Language improvement was ranked as the most important for both groups, and methodology was second, while the two groups ranked theory a poor third.

According to Doff (1987), a teacher's confidence in the English classroom is undermined by a poor command of the English language. Poor command of the language can affect the self-esteem and professional status of the teacher and interfere with simple teaching procedures. This lack of confidence is a culmination of various aspects which include teachers' experience as English Second Language learners. Mgwashu (2009, p.296) points out that learners from disadvantaged educational backgrounds are faced with the dilemma of 'swimming against the tide', and, unfortunately, most of them sink. If these learners continue to become teachers of English, the negative implications on their experiences may be serious.

In a study conducted by Nel and Müller (2010) on the impact of teachers' limited English proficiency, which was conducted amongst final-year student teachers enrolled for the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), they found a great deficit in teachers' English proficiency. On conducting this empirical inquiry, which was done through the collecting of portfolios (evidence of practical teaching including lesson plans), it was found that 64% of the respondents indicated that they did not assess all learners equally, making special provision for second language speakers. They also assessed listening, reading, writing, and spoken skills individually. In addition, the student teachers' limited English proficiency affected their learners' acquisition of English as a second language negatively and, subsequently, their learning. The study conducted by Nel and Müller (2010) focused on the direct link between student teachers' language proficiency and learners' language acquisition and found the adverse effects that teachers' language proficiency and self-efficacy may have in the language classroom. While understanding that language proficiency and self-efficacy might play a role in how teachers teach any aspect of the English curriculum, including poetry, I also understood the importance of exploring what teachers say about their poetry teaching experiences within the context in which they teach.

2.3.4 How is poetry taught?

Upon investigating the various debates that are centered on the teaching of poetry, it should be noted that one of the primary goals of educational systems around the world where English is taught and spoken as a second language, is to ensure that acquisition of English is achieved. One of the main tasks for the teacher is to provide learners with language input and activities that best

aid them in their learning process (Hanauer, 2001). In addition to this, it must be considered that many curricula have become more and more examination driven (Hanratty, 2008). With the aforementioned in mind, one may begin to investigate the complexities and contentions that come with the teaching of poetry, in second language classrooms, where acquisition rather than the deeper interaction with English is often seen to take precedence.

As it has been reported, including poetry-based activities in the English second language classroom is beneficial (Hanauer, 2001; Maley and Duff 1989). Among other reasons, poetry is a source of content-rich reading material; a model of creative language in use; a way to introduce vocabulary in context; and a way to focus learners' attention on English pronunciation, rhythm, and stress (Hanauer, 2001; Maley and Duff 1989). Additionally, the universality of poetry is found among all human languages and "no known language is without it" (Maley & Duff, 1989, p. 8). Similarly, black people also have a widely varied heritage of poetic traditions and orality (Finnegan, 2012). Further benefits for using poetry in teaching is that it can strengthen and integrate language skills (vocabulary, grammar, authenticity, motivation, pragmatic knowledge) and it can develop cultural awareness through language development because culture and language are intimately linked in the past and present (Khatib, 2011a; Kramsch, 1998; Lazar, 1996; Finch, 2003; Nasr, 2001; Cetinavci & Tutunis, 2012).

It can be understood that literature further strengthened the premise that meaningful learning of language skills would take place if poetry was chosen carefully and taught properly in ESL classrooms. Moore (2002) is of the view that in-depth reading and close analysis of texts in pairs or other small groupings, can make poetry an integral part of the ESL classroom. Coupled with the selection of appropriate poems for learners, poetry teaching has often rested upon two main pedagogical approaches to teaching poetry and literature which have their roots in literary criticism, which entail Stylistics, an approach that analyses the language forms of the text, and Reader-Response theory, an approach that concerns itself with the reader's interaction with the text. It has often been argued that reading a poem is different from analysing its linguistic parts.

Short (1996), notes that stylistics is the direct application of linguistic evidence to interpret and analyse literature and is a general analytical tool that uses explanations of formal aspects of a poem to discuss meaning. In a study focusing on teaching poetry to Saudi ESL learners using a stylistics approach, Ahmad (2014) found that various methods of linguistic analysis can be used to teach poetry to ESL learners in order to improve their proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, accent, intonation and integrated language study skills. Ahmad recommended using poetry with “predictable language patterns, repeated words, phrases, lines, and identifiable rhymes” so that they are easier for learners to read. Kapp (2004) draws on a study in a South African township previously designated for ‘African’ people and found that stylistics is a popular theory applied by a large number of teachers in their teaching. However, Kapp found that teachers “merely presented the linguistic structures to their classes without any conceptual investigation”. According to Vincent (1979) traditional stylistic methods for teaching poetry resulted in impressionistic and teacher-centered ways where the teacher was seen as the bearer of knowledge. Gower (1986) suggests that stylisticians are concerned only with analysing the language of a poem, and he recommends the inclusion of personal reader responses in which learners talk about whether they liked the poem or thought it was any good.

Moreover, Mora and Welch (2000) point out that the expected outcome of using reader response in the teaching process ensures that learners read more and make richer personal connections with texts than learners using more traditional stylistic methods. Learners tend to be more tolerant of multiple interpretations, and because they learn techniques that help them recognize the ways in which their own arguments are formed, they are better equipped to examine the arguments of others. In short, reader response helps learners to become better critical readers. This observation is indicative of the sharp divide between the Stylistic and Reader-Response approaches in the context of English Second Language instruction, where both language acquisition and the construction of meaning are of great importance.

Methodology used by teachers within their English Second Language poetry lessons has a great bearing on the experiences that they draw from their teaching. McCarthy (2009, p. 112) offered “a number of ideas for guiding learners in their exploration of poetry from their own cultures” and

points out that poetry may give learners a chance to expand vocabulary knowledge, to play with language, and to work with different rhythms. Khatib (2011) suggests that, for effective poetry teaching in the ESL classroom, dividing learners into groups and then distributing the poems to the class at the beginning of each lesson was an effective way of teaching poetry. A short biography of the poet should be given to the learners thus allowing the learners to work collaboratively to build meaning about the poem. This, according to Khatib (2011), moves the teaching of poetry away from being teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach that he recommends works better in English Second Language classrooms.

Additionally, Panavelil (2011) states that a teacher may adopt an integrated approach where the learners are fully involved. In this method, language skills are not be taught in isolation but in an integrated way, incorporating a set of text-based, learner-centered activities which as Collie & Slater (1987) suggest "add fresh momentum into the teaching of literature by stimulating learners' desire to read and encouraging their responses" (p.8). An integrated approach to teaching a poem should involve pre-reading tasks, interactive work on the text and follow up activities. Activities like predicting, gap-filling, creative writing, group work, and integrating spelling with vocabulary. These activities not only create a challenging environment where the learners try to put forward their efforts in the best way possible, but also call for a great deal of attention on the part of the teacher who becomes a facilitator and as Dutta (2001) points out the teacher at this stage can have both the "intuitive response of a practicing literary critic and the analytical tools of a practical linguist" (p.522).

According to Jakobson (1960), in an integrated approach, a teacher ceases to teach and instead s/he becomes a participant and guide who works with his/her learners. Here, the classroom activities may be divided into three categories namely. "Pre-Reading Activities", "While- Reading Activities" and "Post- Reading Activities" (Jackobson, 1960, p 63). Pre-reading activities can provide a forum to elicit from learners their feelings and responses to ideas and issues in a prescribed text. "While- reading activities" aim at helping the learners to experience the text holistically by developing a fruitful interaction between the text and the reader. Scholars such as Heldenbrand (2003) and Chauhn (2004) support the inclusion of dramatic performances in the

teaching of poetry and how this can be applied under the “While-reading activities”. The use of dramatic performances provides an opportunity to improve learners’ language and communication skills. Heldenbrand (2003) and Chauhn (2004) point out that drama helps develop learners’ communicative skills, its role is complementary to conventional language classes, and it gives learners the chance to experience personal language learning. Heldenbrand (2003 p.2) further contends that “although textbooks prepare the learner with language, drama activities propel the learner to participate with real communication” and allow for the learner “to experiment with personal language learning.” This notion suggests that such activities add to the teachers’ repertoire of pedagogic strategies giving them a wider option of learner-centered activities to choose from for use within the classroom thereby improving their effectiveness in teaching. Additionally, Chauhan (2004) doubts traditional teaching methods’ ability to develop learners’ abilities further than answering simple and separated questions.

Post-reading activities encourage learners to reflect upon what they have read, and they generate thoughtful discussion on different issues related to both language and literature arising from the text (Jakobson, 1960). Post-reading activities may include any activity that assesses learners’ knowledge of the teaching and learning experience. Overall, the literature indicates that poetry is understood to be a valuable art form (Ciardiello, 2010; Hanratty, 2008; Link, 2003) and that its pedagogy is important and relevant to the modern age (Lopez, 2011; Roberts, 2007; Jocson, 2005; O’Brien, 2004; Perfect, 1999; O’Neill, 1973, Stiles, 1965). Yet, the attitudes toward and experiences of poetry, as expressed by teachers themselves, reveal many different viewpoints coming to the fore. It can definitively be gleaned from the available literature that English teachers often support the teaching and learning of poetry, which is seen to have value in academic, cultural, and critical ways (Dymoke & Hughes, 2009; Hanratty, 2008; Jocson, 2005; Wade & Sidaway, 1990; Ackerman, 1968). The classroom experiences of poetry educators are often positive, with many pedagogical strategies proving effective and rewarding for both teachers and students (Keddie, 2012; Curwood & Cowell, 2011; Hennessey et al., 2010; Hanratty, 2008; Jocson, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995a). On the other hand, though teachers may largely agree that poetry itself is worth teaching, they do not always do it, and when they do, their experiences are sometimes negative. Many teachers do not teach poetry in effective, critical ways, or they avoid, rush through,

sterilize, or gloss over the subject. There are a number of possible reasons for this phenomenon, including doubts on the part of the teacher (Certo et al., 2012; Hanratty, 2008; Keil, 2005; Benton, 2000; Ray, 1999; Wade & Sidaway, 1990), a menacing culture of curriculum standardization and high-stakes assessment (Dymoke, 2012; Weaven & Clark, 2011; Benton, 2000; Pike, 2000), and student resistance to the genre (Hennessey & McNamara, 2012; Hanratty, 2011; Mecklenburger, 1970).

While the literature teems with quantitative and mixed-method studies (Hanratty, 2011; Hennessey et al., 2010; Hanratty, 2008; Ray, 1999) and informal questioning (Brewbaker, 2005, Perfect, 1999; Lockwood, 1994; etc.), the process of qualitative, interpretive interviewing is also not fully realized. This qualitative study, therefore, attempts to gain further comprehension of the lived phenomenon of teaching poetry in the high school. The study is planned to extend the insight of existing literature by completing research examining the perceptions of high school English teachers in rural and township school in KwaZulu-Natal and to make meaning of their experiences.

2.3.5 Teachers' experiences of teaching poetry

Teachers experiences of teaching poetry are diverse. There are many factors that come into play when the culmination of experiences is considered. Context, resources, English proficiency of teachers, methodology, and learner attitudes are just some of the many factors that contribute to a teacher's experience. English teachers often remember failed personal experiences with and/or apathy toward the subject of poetry, while others are discouraged or dissuaded in their pedagogy by their experiences of learners' poor reactions to the genre (Benton, 2000; Ray, 1999). Still other studies have found that teachers experience feelings of not being competent enough because they lack foundational content knowledge (Meyer, 2013), and they feel ill-prepared to teach poetry themselves (Lambirth, Smith, & Steele, 2012; Keil, 2005; Benton, 2000; Pike, 2000; Wade & Sidaway, 1990). These feelings of incompetence when teaching poetry could be a key factor in shaping teachers' negative experiences. Linaberger (2005) notes that, "poetry can be daunting to some students (and some teachers, too)" and True (1982, p.44) adds that, "some teachers are actually afraid of poetry". This fear of poetry is referred to as metrophobia (Fritscher, 2019).

Linabarger (2005, p.370) highlights the factor of incompetence and notes that “when teachers choose to only read poems with learners, learners become confused by the complexity of the poetry.” This surface level reading of poetry could be because of a lack of skills to meaningfully teach poetry. Viana and Zyngier (2019) state that teachers usually approach the teaching of poetry in a manner where learners are expected to find information in texts rather than experience them. This in turn reduces the value of poetry as a tool for language use and acquisition. Khatib (2011) goes further and notes that the methodology used in poetry teaching is to blame for learner dissatisfaction and disinterest in poetry, thus resulting in negative experiences by teachers. He (and other researchers) argues that traditional teaching methods worldwide have created an environment that does not inspire learners to investigate, to rely on their own intuition, nor instil a reflective posture (Edmondson, 1995; Hanauer, 2004; Khatib, 2011). Traditional methods include formal row seating, teacher-centred lectures, limited student activity, and restricted small-group participation where learners get to express their own understanding of a poem instead of listening to answers formulated from a lecturing teacher.

Many teachers find learners uninterested in literature and ask, “why bother?” However, the research by the above-mentioned scholars demonstrates it is not necessarily the learners’ lack of interest in literature but in the way the classroom is structured and how teaching materials are delivered. Considering the methods used by teachers in teaching poetry and understanding their perceived incompetences are only part of the process of examining their experiences.

In a summary of his 1999 survey of 100 high school teachers in the United Kingdom, Benton reported that many teachers felt a "sense of inadequacy about their own knowledge and teaching skills where poetry was concerned" (p. 521). A survey of approximately 56 candidates in two pre-service English methods classes, one in the Midlands, England, and one in Ontario, Canada, yielded similar results. Some could not remember any kind of poetry study in elementary or high school, and others shared stories of negative experiences with poetry, in particular, memories of having to "dissect" poetry line by line. Only a handful of these candidates shared positive, formative experiences with poetry in the classroom. It is not surprising then that many of them reported feeling nervous or anxious about the prospect of teaching poetry. However, all teachers

believed it should be taught and was worthwhile, regardless of their experiences. Thus, existing literature supports the view that many teachers shy away from teaching poetry for a variety of reasons (Benton, 1999, Lockward, 1994, Pike, 2000).

Kearney (2008 p. 112) additionally suggests a reason for negative experiences in the teaching of poetry to the preparation-for-examinations mode of asking specific questions about a poem, rather than inviting comprehensive analysis. He notes that there is little chance for learners to have wholehearted contact with a poem in its own right without being immediately distracted by questions about it. Kearney notes that learners are asked to work on complex matter such as tone before more fundamental aspects have been unravelled. Kearney (2008, p.271) emphasises that “there are no formulae for understanding a poem”. Kearney (2008, p. 271) adds that one needs to know the main concepts and terms, but when one faces a new poem it is important to “let it ‘take us over’ in a way and forget the concepts and categories for the time being.” This highlights the need for teachers to possess the necessary confidence and proficiency in order to teach in a meaningful way. The aim is to induce learners to ask questions themselves. What is needed in any case is a constant interplay between response and analysis. This notion is underpinned by Hanratty (2008), Heaney (1983) and Shelley (1988) who assert that the teaching and learning of poetry includes an awareness and appropriation of the broader educational and personal benefits that accumulate from it being read and enjoyed.

Research into teachers ‘linguistic pedagogical practices in English Second Language classrooms across the world reveal varying results in relation to poetry teaching as research shows that the experiences of teachers and their learners on poetry lessons do not always match (Block, 1994). Allwright (1984, p.163) adds that “very many teachers seem to find it difficult to accept their learners as people with a positive contribution to make to the instructional process.” It can therefore be understood that the supporters of the traditional approaches to teaching literature consider learners as empty containers to be filled by the knowledge imparted by an all-knowing teacher. The practitioners of these approaches normally bombard learners with biographical information about the author, political, religious, and philosophical ideas related to the text and explain rhetorical devices and figures of speech (Khatib, 2011).

Rudduck (1991, p.25) refers to ignoring learners' views as "our blind spot" as this hinders teachers' ability to draw from learners' experiences and consequently to review and possibly change their teaching processes. This is closely connected to the teaching of poetry as many teachers see themselves as bearers of literary knowledge. Ignoring learners' input could result in negative experiences by the learners. Akyel and Yalçin (1990) found that the learners did not see literature as a way to reach language learning goals because they were often not called upon to respond personally to poetry, nor were the language-based activities in the classroom communicatively useful. Likewise, Davis et al. (1992) found that although learners in English second language contexts have favourable attitudes toward literature, language learning goals are not realized when the teaching style does not allow for personal responses that would make the literature relevant to learners.

Taking forward the idea of the relevance of poetry to learners, and thus its knock-on effect on teachers' experiences, Hanratty (2008), in a study in Northern Ireland, aimed to understand teachers' perceptions of learners' attitudes towards poetry within the classroom context. Hanratty (2008) found that teachers believed that learners from more affluent, middle-class backgrounds where, it might be assumed, there already existed a culture of books and reading, were more sympathetic to the idea of poetry than learners from less privileged homes. Children of teachers or lecturers, especially, were cited as willing listeners and readers. Sixty-five percent of the respondents complained that the harmful influence of an examination-driven curriculum could be particularly detrimental where the teaching of poetry is concerned. This research gives rise to the role of context on the teaching and learning process as teachers' work is directly influenced by the learners' socio-cultural context, as underpinned by Vygotsky's theory.

Benton (2000, p.89), too, highlights how the need for English Second language teachers to focus on outcomes of the curriculum is detrimental to the teaching process. He found that teachers felt a sense of pressure when teaching. Benton notes that 'poetry requires a sense of leisure and elasticity to allow for contemplation of a poem but these days the conveyor belt is rarely switched off.' For

many teachers, what Benton characterizes as a highly structured, traditionalist, test-orientated curriculum, is a reality they currently face.

This then strikes at the heart of how teachers regard the teaching of English. In Benton's 1982 study, 31% of teachers believed that 'the teaching of poetry is at the heart of English teaching' and 30% disagreed. 39% of teachers were unsure. In a 1998 survey, 51% of teachers agreed that 'the teaching of poetry is at the heart of English teaching' and only 15% disagreed. Nobody 'strongly disagreed'. These figures mark a shift towards the place of poetry in English teaching and that teachers are aware of the need to ensure sound poetry teaching but are often faced with deadlines and commitments that may be outside of their control. A similar study by Hennessey, Hinchion, and McNamara (2010), found, using mixed method interviewing and surveying of 80 teachers in Ireland, that 60% of poetry teachers asserted positive experiences and optimistic reactions to teaching poetry (Hennessey et al., 2010). The teacher-respondents made common, affirmative comments about poetry's ability to enrich learners' lives and open their minds to critical issues, but also revealed that teaching the genre gave them confidence as instructors, allowing them to encourage passionate engagement and a lifelong love of poetry in their learners (Hennessey et al., 2010). Likewise, the 33 teachers surveyed in Wilson's (2013) study in England overwhelming believed that teaching poetry improved their efficacy and confidence by allowing them opportunities to test their own beliefs, values, and pedagogical approaches, to be innovative, and to offer critically important lessons to their learners.

While this could be interpreted as positive perception, for some teachers, poetry is not seen as vital in their classrooms. A relevant example is in Ray's (1999) study which found teachers believing that they were not always convinced of its value in the classroom (p. 406). Similar feelings are also found in work the work of Certo et al. (2012), who investigated, via interviews, the attitudes of 23 pre-service English teachers. In line with Ray's (1999) study, two-thirds of the pre-service respondents in Certo et al.'s (2012) research recounted negative or neutral experiences with the genre. There are many possible reasons why English teachers may report such pessimism. Some of their negative experiences, along with certain barriers teachers are up against in teaching poetry effectively include, among others, negative experiences with the phenomenon of poetry

instruction, teachers' self-doubts, the current curricular requirements of forced standardization, and negative responses from learners to the genre.

It becomes evident that teaching poetry to English Second Language Learners, a good grasp of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and an understanding of learners' interests and needs, are some of the requirements needed to be effective (Agee, 1998). Learners favour teaching techniques that encourage them to respond personally, contribute to class discussions, give their own opinion, and concentrate on the content of the text as opposed to analysing details of language structure (Davis et al, 1992). Learners enjoy imagining themselves as the characters, writing letters as one of the characters, and retelling the story from others' points of view. Learners indicate negative attitudes towards activities that require them to memorize facts, answer multiple-choice questions, read aloud, and where classes are teacher-centred where interpretations are provided only by the teacher (Wan Kamariah, 2009).

Studies on poetry teaching methods provide different results. Fauziah and Jamaluddin (2009) found that teachers used more learner-centred approach in class compared to teacher-centred strategies which created a better learning atmosphere and improved learners' perception and motivation towards poetry. However, Daimah (2001) found the methods used by teachers in literature classes are mostly teacher centred. Teachers agreed that their classes were usually divided into three stages which started with explanation by the teachers, followed by discussions in groups or with the whole class and concluded with some form of exercises. Teachers noted that a teacher-centred approach is necessary in order to save time and finish the syllabus in time for examinations. Another reason cited was learners' low proficiency level which prevented teachers from using learner-centred techniques like group discussion, debates, and role plays. Learners' unwillingness and anxiety to speak or answer questions about the text for fear of providing the wrong replies also did not help. Focussing on learners' views, Kaur (2003) found that learners viewed teaching strategies used by their teachers as boring, dull, and uninspiring as it involved mainly doing written work, especially among learners with higher proficiency levels. Learners with lower proficiency could not understand the texts and therefore found poetry lessons boring.

This present study understands that teachers have varying experiences of teaching poetry and that they emerge from various contexts. As this study aims to understand teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners in rural and township high schools in KwaZulu-Natal, a brief background to each context is considered at this point. Rurality is understood differently in different parts of the world. South African rural areas are characterized by poverty and lack of infrastructure which has an impact on schools in these areas (Pettman, 2000). A rural area is a geographic area that is located outside cities and towns. Typical South African rural areas have a low population density and small settlements (Pettman, 2000).

South African townships were originally created as separated areas for black people (Africans, Coloureds, Indians) and located on the periphery of towns and cities. They are characterised by being underdeveloped urban areas set up via legislation by the apartheid regime. While some townships have improved their infrastructure and facilities, many have not. Township schools, in the main, serve children living in the township or from nearby areas.

In many rural and township schools, teaching through the learners' home language or code switching is common. In a study conducted by Gumede (2003, p. 60) at a South African township school, it was found that "it is not a rare phenomenon to hear an English teacher, who teaches language, literature and creative writing and who is almost always black in rural schools, offer explanations to learners in their mother tongue." Teachers often justify their use of the mother tongue by saying that learners do not understand English, and that IsiZulu is used to facilitate understanding. This may seem to be a valid reason, as a study of language classrooms in Swaziland, by Rollnick and Rutherford (1996) found the use of learners' main languages to be a powerful means for learners to explore their ideas. They go on to argue that without the use of code switching some learners' understandings of conceptions would be very low. A key finding was that learners' written work often conceals misconceptions and that these are more likely to be revealed in peer discussion in the learners' home language.

However, Gumede (2003) points out that sympathetic teachers, who code switch in an attempt to simplify the content, continually deprive learners who are deficient in English, of exposure to, and practice of, this medium. This is especially pertinent to poetry as concepts cannot always be simplified, which could often lead to mistranslation and further difficulties in teaching. Furthermore, language alternation and translation, as the term is commonly known, is still viewed very negatively in the educational context in many developing countries, where a large group of the population uses English as a second language (Brumfit, Moon & Tongue, 1991).

This negative perception is fair, because it does not promote bilingualism or multilingualism, but, instead, it promotes the one-sided use of the mother tongue where learners only listen to explanations made in their home language. Gumede (2003, p.40) notes that “opportunities for language use are seriously lacking in Black schools.” Learners’ only exposure to the English language may be the language of literature, which is mostly often merely read to them, and explained in another language. It is worse when one considers that only 20% of the learners in each class may have a text (Gumede, 2003). Other findings of this study present a perspective held by teachers that learners are uninterested in school, so much more when a complex aspect such as poetry is presented to them.

In a study conducted by Newfield and Maungedzo (2006, p.24), a view of the history of poetry in township schools was revealed. Newfield and Maungedzo found poetry is a defunct genre in most South African English Second Language classrooms. They draw from a case study they conducted in Lamula High School, Soweto, where the teaching of poetry was discontinued in 1996 since it was, according to teachers “too difficult” for learners. Teachers indicated that poetry was a ‘condensed, dense and sometimes complex genre’ that often loses its position of prominence in English classrooms. In addition, the study found that the multilingual student body not only found the genre of poetry difficult, but also the language of poetry.

Teachers expressed that ‘learners were not interested in any form of literature. They did not read the prescribed books; many senior learners did not even have the books on which they would write

the final school examinations.’ Newfield and Maungedzo (2006, p.80) highlight that ‘it is not a question simply of relevance; even where the set text was Bessie Head’s *Maru*, which would appear to deal with themes relevant to the learners’ lives, their response was the same.’ As a teacher said, ‘They just want me to tell them the characters and themes and they write it down’. Teachers at the school had to deal with student apathy and resistance, with a breakdown in the culture of learning. This experience also involved teachers being forced to lead the discussion in a poetry classroom and speaks to the value or rather the lack of value that is placed on poetry in the South African township classroom.

This lack of a culture of learning amongst learners perpetuates the perceptions held by teachers and scholars on the teaching of poetry. However, such perceptions are not new and have been held by scholars in the past as well. One such scholar is Margaret Ackerman (1968, p.998) who expresses in her article entitled “Why I don’t teach poetry” that she does not believe in teaching poetry, noting that ‘learners come with a built-in hostility to poetry’ and identifies what poetry means to learners and includes, among others, ‘sentimentality, effeminacy, pretentious diction, circumlocution, and obscurity as poetry as a genre is too comprehensive, too indefinable, and too abstract to teach.’ Similarly, Fox and Merrick (1987) affirm that poetry was rarely popular with learners in schools.

A study conducted by Kapp (2004, p. 253) at a township school revealed that in the literature examination, which included poetry, surface-level, ‘wh-’ (what, who, why, where, when and how) questions were predominant. These required learners to summarize plot, identify themes and describe character and setting. There is little sense of critical engagement with the metaphoric layer of texts or with narrative point of view, and the technical vocabulary associated with figurative language is hardly used. There was only one exception from a teacher at the school who aimed for free speech and affirmed all efforts despite errors.

The study also revealed that the teachers used a ‘rule-based’ study of English, which resulted in teachers’ inability to express themselves without first thinking through all the rules, thus hindering

the teaching and learning process. Apart from the in-class challenges faced by teachers, Kapp (2004) noted that during her research period, gang and vigilante violence (adjacent to the school), vandalism and theft of school property disrupted the academic programme on numerous occasions. This tells of some of the various challenges, over and above academic ones, that teachers in township schools face.

2.4 Conclusion

The literature discussed has presented aspects that are fundamental to the teaching of poetry in English Second Language classrooms. These include theory that is used in the teaching of poetry, practices of English Second Language teachers, poetry's position in the curriculum and the experiences of English Second Language teachers in different teaching and social contexts. The chapter commented on the overall state of poetry teaching in schools and highlighted that English Second Language teaching tends to focus solely on outcomes of the curriculum which often poses a threat to the teaching and learning in the Second Language classroom. For many teachers, the curriculum is understood to be a highly structured, traditionalist, test-orientated curriculum which shapes how they teach poetry.

The above literature further reveals that teachers often are aware of the need to ensure sound poetry teaching but are often faced with deadlines that are outside of their control. Secondly, in reading the literature at hand it is glaringly obvious that there are various challenges that are faced by teachers in rural and township schools, which range from a lack of a culture of learning to a lack of facilities that are needed to develop learner's language skills outside of the classroom. In addition, the literature discussed reveals teacher's vulnerability in terms of poetry teaching, teachers are found to, firstly yield to translation in an effort to facilitate understanding amongst learners, furthermore teachers have their own insecurities that are conveyed to learners, which stem from the way that teachers perceive their own poetry teaching ability. Additionally, poetry has been considered more difficult to teach than other literary genres, thus it is then, a complex subject and one that is not uncontested partly because it is less popular with readers in our society

generally. Its practice and pedagogy are deeply embedded in conflicting ideologies and a range of historical contexts.

Additionally, literature suggests that using poetic structures in the classroom can have positive and negative outcomes on language learning. Lastly, teachers' personal feelings toward poetry have been revealed as a key component that shapes teachers' experiences and perceptions and ultimately teachers' pedagogy. This foregrounds the research conducted with rural and township schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal, in which the focus was to understand to what extent are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools perceived positively or negatively and further ascertain to what do teachers attribute their experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools, and lastly to gain insight as to the methods used by teachers when teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The research conducted aimed at contributing to the debate on English Second Language teachers' pedagogy of poetry teaching, through the evaluation of their experiences in the teaching process. Understanding teachers' perceptions and beliefs is important because teachers are involved in various teaching and learning processes and are practitioners of educational principles and theories. While theoretically, literature has provided some working models that can be applied to the teaching of poetry, it has been revealed through the evaluation of the above literature that poetry is important and our need for its insights and comforts is perhaps greater than ever in our world.

The chapter has been an evaluation and presentation of the literature surrounding the issues involved in the teaching of poetry and the experiences of teachers in various contexts. I have included a historical educational context that shows the various transformations in language policy and pedagogy. The literature not only forms the basis of the continuing discussion around teaching literature in second language classrooms but furthermore the theoretical framework that has been presented will serve as a lens through which the data collected will be viewed. The research conducted therefore, attempts to gain further comprehension of the lived phenomenon of teaching poetry in the high school classroom through its qualitative methodology. The study is designed to deepen the well of existing literature by completing research examining the experiences of

practicing high school English teachers and to make meaning of their lived pedagogical practice. In summation the chapter serves to introduce the dialogue about the experiences of teachers and the various components that shape and develop these experiences.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the theoretical framework and literature review were discussed. In this chapter a description and justification of the research design and methodology that was used in this study will be undertaken. The chapter begins with describing the research paradigm, followed by the research design employed in the conducting of this study in order to achieve the research aims. The chapter will further discuss the selection of participants, data generation methods and then data analysis methods used in the study. I will further explain how rigour, credibility and trustworthiness were ensured in the conducting of this study, with ethical issues and limitations of the study being the final aspects to be discussed in the chapter.

3.2. Research paradigm

A research paradigm comprises of a system of beliefs and practices based on the researcher's positioning for the study concerned. It is vital to choose the paradigm that influences the study from the onset as the choice of a paradigm informs all other choices a researcher is to make in the research process. (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Additionally, a paradigm is the framework within which theories are built, that fundamentally influences how you see the world (Mackenzie and Knipe 2006). A paradigm also provides the lens through which the researcher endeavours to understand, make meaning and interpret particular contexts and phenomena. A research paradigm additionally sets the context for an investigator's study (Ponterotto, 2005). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) the world is changeable, and it is people who define meaning of a particular situation depending on their experiences of it. This use of the correct research paradigm, "fosters particular ways of asking questions and particular ways of thinking through problems" (Check & Schutt, 2012, p.24).

This study uses an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism as a research paradigm, focusses on subjective human experiences, allowing for in-depth detailed understanding of the participants within their specific contexts (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Interpretivism entails a

researcher to focus on, “particular people, in particular places, at particular times – situating people’s meanings and constructs within and amid specific social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and other contextual factors” (Shankar-Brown, 2008, p.14). This study made use of the interpretivist paradigm, as it is a paradigm that is based upon the researcher’s desire to understand the meaning behind something (O’Donoghue, 2006). Interpretivism further focuses on the centrality of meaning and understanding. The aim of an interpretive study is to understand the lifeworlds, the meanings and understandings of participants in a context, making this paradigm suitable for this study.

Cohen, et al., (2011) conceive that in the interpretivist paradigm, there is no single truth, but there are multiple realities that exist, and people’s actions are underpinned by their experiences. This paradigm focuses on the lived experiences of participants and reinforces the use of phenomenology as a theoretical framework. Walsham (1993) argues that in the interpretive tradition there are no ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ theories. The purpose in using this paradigm was to understand teachers’ perspectives and experiences in teaching poetry to learners in different contexts, drawing from the experiences of their immediate contexts. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world from subjective experiences of individuals, in this case the teachers, which means research within this paradigm calls for the collaboration of the researcher and the researched. Central to interpretivism is that reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed (Maree, 2007; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Interpretivists maintain that the social world is a product of human knowledge, and its very existence is reliant on human knowledge, therefore the role of the participants is critical to the researching and understanding of the researched phenomenon.

Researchers are susceptible to their own knowledge and preconceived ideas of the object under investigation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Therefore, researchers adhering to the interpretivist paradigm need to be aware that they approach research with their own baggage drawn from their life experiences. Within the research that has been conducted, I understand the experiences of being an English Second Language teacher, who teaches in a context similar to the participants in this

study. It was therefore imperative that I set aside my inclinations, beliefs and preferences and to remain aware of such as a researcher. Through the interpretive paradigm the researcher experiences how people make sense of the context in which they live and work. The researcher therefore endeavours to understand these experiences through understanding the interpretation and meanings given by the participants to their actions and not what the researcher assumes to be the meaning (Neumann, 2011).

3.3. Research Approach

The research approach that was used in conducting this study is qualitative. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data on a phenomenon or context with the goal of forming an understanding of what is being studied within a naturalistic context. According to Henning et al. (2004) qualitative methods are used to check interpretations and understanding by the participants. Creation of meaning is central to qualitative research. Furthermore, Babbie, in Bloland (1992) outlines qualitative research as “the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observation for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships”. The relevance of the qualitative research approach chosen in this study seems to be compatible with Ross’s (2005, p. 1) definition as “the orderly investigation of a subject material for the purpose of understanding and adding knowledge”. Page and Meyer (2000, p.18) additionally describe qualitative research as “emphasis on concepts and peoples’ perceptions about the world and events”. It can therefore be understood that qualitative research is “pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

I have chosen the qualitative research methodology as it allows a “broad approach to the study of social phenomena” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.27). Qualitative researchers believe that the best way to research a phenomenon is to “view it in context” In qualitative research, the researcher seeks believability, insight and trustworthiness through a process of verification. Moreover, qualitative research allows the researcher to “understand meanings, to look at, describe and understand experience, ideas, beliefs and values” (Wisker, 2001, p.22). Many qualitative researchers work with the ontological assumption that there are many different realities or multiple

realities (Krauss, 2014). Qualitative research involves “the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.27). By employing the qualitative approach, the researcher also makes knowledge claims based on the interpretive paradigm. The qualitative approach is interpretive in that the researcher interprets the data (Creswell, 2018).

As my study is located in the interpretivist paradigm, it works seamlessly with a qualitative approach. Besides interpretation, the qualitative researcher aims to produce a rich description of the phenomenon under study (Hancock, Windridge, & Ockleford 1998). Here the qualitative approach suited my research in that I was able to produce a rich description of the experiences of teachers who teach poetry to English Second Language learners in different rural and township contexts. Additionally, qualitative methodology is required in order to come to understand participants’ lifeworlds from their perspective, to avoid imposition of researcher’s meaning upon the participants. This implies that the focus in qualitative research is on how individuals or groups perceive the world and how they go on to construct meaning from these experiences and will allow me to have deep interaction with the participants.

The selection of a qualitative approach stems firstly from an understanding that qualitative research is driven to understand phenomena rather than quantify and measure it with the hopes of drawing linear conclusions it ranges beyond the what, where, and when of quantitative analysis to investigate the why and how behind human behaviour and the reasons that rule such behaviors. Moreover, qualitative methods were chosen because they are particularly designed towards discovery and they allowed the researcher to explore identified themes and issues in great depth and detail (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Furthermore, the use of qualitative research lends itself to the interviewing of different participants (English Second Language teachers from rural and township schools) in order to find multiple realities as constructed them. Additionally, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009).

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), qualitative research seeks to explore a particular group and does not generalise the results over the whole population. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. It provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often-contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying abstract factors, such as social norms and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, qualitative research methods can also allow the researchers a degree of flexibility in the conduct of a particular study; moreover, they can facilitate the exploration of sensitive or difficult issues if the appropriate rapport is developed between the researcher and participants. Participants have the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail than is typically the case with quantitative methods. In turn, researchers have the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participant has provided. This study only used a particular group of teachers; therefore, findings cannot be generalised.

3.4. Research Design

A research design is a practical plan that is implemented by researchers to answer questions, accurately, economically and with validity (Kumar, 1999). Yin (2014) highlights that in the most elementary sense, a research design is the rational sequence that connects the empirical data, research questions and conclusions made from research. Bryman (2012) progress from what the previous scholars have stated and explain that a research design should present the overall structure and orientation of an investigation as well as a framework within which data can be collected and analysed. Moreover, Yin (2014) highlights that the main purpose of a research design is to help avoid a situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions and to Malhotra (2011), a research design is a framework or blueprint for conducting the research project and it will specify the details of the procedures necessary for obtaining the confirmation needed to structure and solve the research problem or question. Rani (2004) described a research design as a blueprint or a plan for action, detailing the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information, fulfilling the research objectives, and finding the solutions. Zikmund

(2000) concurs that a research design is a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information.

The research designs for this study were based on an exploratory premise, as I wanted to provide insight and understanding of teachers' experiences in teaching poetry to English Second Language learners within the scopes of the contexts that the teachers work in. In selecting the appropriate design for the conducting of research, methodology provides one with the necessary guidelines as to how to go about conducting and analysing the data collected. For this study I have selected the case study design whose methods rely heavily on verbal descriptions of a particular social context being studied. Creswell (2014) affirms that a case study is an in-depth exploration of a confined system. Being confined essentially refers to being unique, according to place and time and participant characteristics (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). According to Yin (2014) a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study.

One of the advantages of working within a case study design is that it allows the researcher to use an assortment of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the investigation (Denscombe, 2007). This, in turn, allowed me to work with different data methods, which will be discussed in detail below. The case study also offers a means of investigating complex social units made up of numerous variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). The main advantage of using a case study approach is that the focus on one or a few instances allows the researcher to deal with the details of complex social situations (Denscombe, 2007). This results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. Lastly, a case study is flexible and is neither time dependent nor constrained by method and is responsive to shifts in focus and unanticipated consequences (Simons, 2009). Additionally, case studies are useful for describing or answering questions about, localized occurrences or contexts and the perspectives of a participant group toward events, beliefs, or practices. (Baxter, 2008).

A case study employs quotes of key participants, anecdotes, prose composed from interviews, and other literary techniques to create mental images that bring to life the complexity of the many variables inherent in the phenomenon being studied. Case studies may utilize multiple methods and sources of data in order to generate data that are more descriptive. Hence, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used in this study. Case studies are set in temporal, geographical, organizational, institutional and other contexts that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case. Furthermore, Rule and Vaughan (2011, p.8) state that ‘the singularity of focus of a case study can make it more manageable than a large-scale survey.’ This is the reason why I have opted to use only four schools. A case study allows the researcher to examine a particular instance with a great deal of depth as opposed to looking at multiple instances superficially.

However, one of the features of case studies is that the researcher has no control over the context and the phenomenon that is studied. This suggests that a case study may be defined with reference to characteristics defined by individuals and groups involved in the case. In this study I had very little influence over the participants under study and only the participants had a strong influence over what happened within it. In this study the phenomenon of interest was the experiences of teaching poetry of English Second Language teachers from rural and township schools. In this case, I aimed to understand and explore teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners. With that said, a limitation of case study methodology is that the data collected cannot be generalized because of the use of only four particular schools.

3.5. Sampling

‘Sampling involves making decisions about which people, setting and behaviour one wishes to make use of for the purpose of the research’ (Bartram, 2010, p. 41). The main types of sampling in qualitative research are random or probability, purposive or non-probability and stratified sampling (Cohen, Manion& Morrison, 2011).

In this study purposive sampling was used. In purposive sampling a particular case is chosen because it demonstrates some characteristics that are of interest for a particular study (Strydom & Delport, 2011). Purposive sampling simply means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed to answer the research questions for the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

The sample used in this study comprised four teachers, one teacher from each of the schools that was part of this study. I made use of a purposive sample in order to obtain the rich, thick data that was needed for my case study. A sample is “a selected and chosen group upon which you carry out your research” (Wisker, 2001, p.138). As a sample they are chosen to indicate the larger whole of which they are but a small part (Wisker, 2007).

This study recruited only teachers who are speakers of English as a second language and who teach English as a Second language. In South Africa, such teachers are usually categorized racially as Black. They drew from their personal experiences of the way poetry was taught to them and how this in turn informs their experiences in teaching poetry to their learners. I also recruited these teachers from either rural or township schools. The reasoning behind this is that I was curious as to the contentions, challenges, experiences and perceptions of teachers, who are second language speakers of English, as they grapple with teaching poetry to English Second Language learners in those contexts.

With the above in mind I began by seeking permission from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, the principals of the selected schools, and lastly, I requested to speak to the English teachers in each school and presented the study to them, thus allowing them to understand the research conducted. I then requested the participation of teachers teaching either grade 10 or 11 English as I too teach these grades and it is therefore of interest to me as to how teachers experience teaching poetry in these grades. Two experienced and two novice teachers comprised the sample as this presented a holistic view of teachers’ experiences in teaching poetry to English Second Language learners.

All the responses provided by participants were anonymous, indicating only gender, where they teach (rural or township school) and the years of experience each teacher has in teaching poetry to ESL learners. In quoting the answers provided by the participants, I will refer to the different teachers as **MT26 and MR5** (M for male, T/R for township or rural school and 25 and 5 for the number of years of teaching experience) and **FT20 and FR12** (F for female, T/R for township or rural school and 20 and 12 for the number of years of teaching experience). The table below provides a summary of participant classification.

Table 1 – Summary of participant classification

Gender	Context	Poetry Teaching Experience	Classification
Male	Township High School	26 years	MT26
Male	Rural High School	5 years	MR5
Female	Township High School	20 years	FT20
Female	Rural High School	12 years	FR12

3.6. Data generation methods

Data generation methods are, “the techniques or processes used to gather data related to some research question or hypothesis” (O’Donoghue, 2007:27). The concept of methodology refers to “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (O’Donoghue, 2007:27). As Denscombe (2007) states, the case study approach to research allows for a variety of methods to be used in data collection. In this study, the, qualitative nature of this study as well as the interpretivist paradigm, informed the data collection processes used. Data was generated through the use of open-ended questionnaires, interviews and document review.

3.6.1. Open-ended questionnaires (See Appendix F: Open-ended questionnaires)

The first data collection method that was used for the study was an open-ended questionnaire that was completed by the teachers as an initial means of data collection. These were aimed at understanding teachers' personal experiences as, firstly, learners of Second language poetry and, secondly, as teachers of the same, as well as how they position the teaching of poetry in their classrooms. Creswell et.al (2007, p.82) state, that 'open- ended questionnaires ask participants to come up with their own responses and allow the researcher to document the opinions of the respondent in his or her own words.' The same can be said for the participants in this study, as they were given an opportunity to answer questions in their own words.

Open-ended questionnaires allow respondents to provide their opinions in their own words, with all the subtleties and nuances this implies. They can make distinctions and add conditions that are far more descriptive than closed-ended responses that are often restricting. Participants can add examples and contexts to expand on and clarify their answers in a way closed-ended response simply cannot, adding richness and depth to research findings.

3.6.2. Interviews (See Appendix G: Interview Schedule)

An interview, as defined by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000; 2004:104), "involves direct personal contact with the participant. Interviews further resemble everyday conversations but differ in that they are focused on the researcher's needs for data. They also differ from everyday conversation because we are concerned to conduct them in the most rigorous way, we can in order to ensure reliability, validity and trustworthiness. This means that both the researchers and the users of the findings can be as confident as possible that the findings reflect what the research set out to answer, rather than reflecting the bias of the researcher. As noted by Nieuwenhuis (2007), 'an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to generate data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participants' (p. 87).

In this qualitative study, I interviewed participants in order to find multiple realities as constructed by them, these realities being their experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners. Open ended questions were used so that participants could provide insight into events and their own perceptions of the phenomenon being studied (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Furthermore, Cohen *et al.* (2011) contend that an interview is a good data collection tool for finding out what a person knows (knowledge and information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). This means that the interviewee will reflect on their own behaviour or beliefs and report these to the interviewer.

A semi-structured interview is defined by Nieuwenhuis (2007) as predetermined questions used to guide the interview. Semi structured interviews allowed me to guide participants back to the focus of the interview if unimportant aspects emerged. These were conducted based on a loose structure made up of open-ended questions defining the area to be explored. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to gather data because they are flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says (Rule & Vaughan 2011).

The majority of the questions were created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues. I used an interview schedule as a data generation instrument. A voice recorder was also used to record all the interviews. When interviews are recorded, Nieuwenhuis (2016) suggests that the researcher reflects on the recordings in order to analyze the data collected. In conducting these interviews, it is vital to ensure that you trail rather than lead the participants towards responses.

This method of data collection was appropriate to the qualitative research approach within the interpretivist framework as it requires direct interaction with the participants of the study, allowing for in-depth exploration of the research topic through open-ended and flexible questioning techniques, thus allowing the researcher to see, how individuals experience and interact with their social world. (Merriam, 2002, p.4).

The interviews took an average of 45 minutes. The duration of the interviews depended on how the participants understood the questions and the depth that I probed for after the respondents' initial responses. Interviewing is a good method to use for gaining in-depth data from a small number of people, in this case, the English Second Language teachers from each school. To set up the interviews I visited the sampled schools a week before the scheduled interviews. This was done to build a relationship and rapport with the participants and further explain the purpose of the study, although, the actual interviews were conducted outside of teachers' working hours. Lastly the semi- structured interviews were used in order to corroborate data that had emerged from the questionnaire (Creswell et al., 2007).

3.6.3. Document review (See Appendix H: Document Review Schedule)

The third tier of the data collection methods that were used in this research was document review in the form of an analysis of teachers' lesson plans, which provided insight into the thought processes used by teachers in preparing for lessons. These thought processes are undoubtedly informed by teachers' experiences and can possibly reveal why teachers use certain teaching methods as opposed to others. Teachers' lessons plans were the documents reviewed. The purpose of examining these documents as primary sources (Nieuwenhuis, 2016) was to complement the data obtained from interviews. A document analysis schedule was used as a data generation instrument.

Nieuwenhuis (2016) states that use of documents as a data gathering technique makes the researcher focus on all types of written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon investigated. Written data sources may include published or unpublished documents or any document that is connected to the investigation. Creswell et al (2007) further express that the use of documents as a data gathering technique allows the researcher to focus on written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon investigated.

3.7. Data analysis procedures

De Vos (2005) states that data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Qualitative data may be difficult to analyse in that it is an assortment of impressions gathered from interviews, researcher records, and personal documents, which can be vastly subjective. The analysis of such qualitative data is in many ways interpretive and subject to the individual perspective of the researcher (Creswell, 2014). As Yin (1994) points out, the objective of the qualitative researcher is to treat the evidence fairly and to produce compelling interpretations and conclusions. Creswell (2006, p.183) specifies that the process of data analysis includes,

making sense out of text data, preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and arriving at an interpretation and presentation of the larger meaning of the data.

In light of the above, the qualitative data analysis in this study involved organizing and explaining the participants' experiences of teaching poetry to English to Second Language learners. During and after the process of data collection, I recognized and listed the types of responses given by participants and condensed them into themes, since data analysis involves "breaking up" the data into controllable themes, trends and relations. Data collected was coded, categorized, and interpreted to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest. In order to sequentially analyse the data collected I made use of McMillan and Schumacher's (2010, p.369) five steps of qualitative data analysis as guidelines. These steps are briefly explained below:

The initial phase was data organization. In this stage, data collected was organized in terms of the data methods used and in terms of the research questions asked. Organizing the data separated data into workable chunks. The second phase was data transcription of interviews. I transcribed data collected during interviews and converted them into a format that would assist in analysis of the data. The third phase was coding. Data coding begins by identifying small pieces of data that stand alone. These data parts known as segments, divide the dataset. Segments are then analysed to create codes so that each section is labelled by at least one code and, it must also be noted that some segments have more than one code. In this phase data needed to be coded to provide meaning

to the section for easy interpretation. The penultimate step was the forming of themes. These are made up grouped codes. A single category is used to give meaning to codes that are combined. I divided the data collected into categories as data analysis involves “breaking up” the data into manageable themes, trends and relationships, to show similarities and differences within the experiences of the participants in their poetry teaching.

The final stage was discovering patterns. A pattern is a relationship among categories. In searching for patterns, researchers try to understand the complex links among various views of people’s situations, mental processes, beliefs, and actions. The major pattern(s) serves as the context for reporting the findings and organizing the reports which supported me in considering what was important and meaningful in the data. This formed the basis from which the three sets of data (questionnaires, interviews and lesson plans) were analyzed.

I understood that the purpose for the use of thematic analysis is that it organizes and describes data sets in detail. However, it often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, thematic analysis is used to emphasize organization and rich description of the data set. Thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting phrases or words in a text and moves on to identifying implicit and explicit ideas within the data, which will aid the researcher in developing the key facets involved within the mental space that forms and shapes teachers’ experiences.

Coding, which was initially driven by my research questions, was the primary process for developing themes within the raw data by recognizing important moments in the data and encoding it prior to interpretation. The interpretation of these codes can include comparing theme frequencies, identifying theme co-occurrence, and graphically displaying relationships between different themes. That being said, the theoretical lens that was employed to view the data was Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory of development which focuses on language and social and cultural influences on a developing mind, along with phenomenology which is focused on the

"lived experience". Phenomenology is further interested in individuals as meaning makers but is does not observe behaviour in isolation it draws in the contexts in which these experiences take place. Therefore, the use of the mentioned theoretical framework will merge in the interpretation of experience along with the socio-cultural context in which it occurs.

3.8. Rigour and trustworthiness

Rigorous research is research that applies the appropriate research tools to meet the stated objectives of the set research, and trustworthiness works synonymously with standards of truth and value (Winter, 2000). To enhance trustworthiness in qualitative research the following four issues have to be taken into consideration: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba (1984) view credibility as referring to the value of research findings. They assert that credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a 'credible' conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from participants' original data. Shenton (2004) states that member checking is a key element in ensuring the credibility of a study, and Stake (2006, p.235) notes that member checking involves 'allowing participants to read the transcription of their interview to ensure that they have been accurately recorded.' It is important to go back to the participants with the transcripts in order to check if what has been transcribed is in fact is what they intended to convey and allow them to comment on data interpretations and findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). To address credibility of this study the interview transcripts were given back to the participants to read and verify that whatever was transcribed was accurate. They were also given the opportunity to adjust their responses, if needed. Besides the interview transcripts achieving participant approval, the recording of the interviews has been kept for verification purposes.

Secondly, transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to another situation (Shenton, 2004). In my study, I ensured that sufficient information was provided.

I have attached copies of the data collection schedules as appendices for any other researcher who wants to repeat the study. Thirdly, dependability is an evaluation of the standard and quality of all employed processes and means of data generated, data analysis and generation of new theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability in this study implies reliability and showing that the findings are consistent and repeatable.

To attend to issues of dependability in this study, triangulation of methods (multiple data generation methods) were employed. Denzin, in Brink (1993 p.37) defines triangulation as, “the use of two or more data sources, methods, investigators, theoretical perspectives and approaches to analysis in the study of single phenomenon and then validating the congruence among them”. Creswell and Miller (2000, p.126) define triangulation as, “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources to form themes or categories in a study”. These quotes indicate that, through the methods that the researcher used in this study, she was able to corroborate or confirm the findings as valid because this brings rigor that comes with a good qualitative study. In this study, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and document reviews were used as data generation methods in the study to ensure triangulation. Thus, triangulation was used to provide different streams of data to ensure the authenticity of the data collected and was ensured by working with the three data methods. After analysing the data collected from the open ended- questionnaires, designed to help me gauge participants’ experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners and on the position of poetry within the curriculum, data from the transcripts of the interviews was used to provide another view of teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry. Finally, the participants’ lesson plans were used to further enable triangulation by evaluating the preparations that went into poetry lessons within the ESL classroom. These lesson preparations revealed the influence that teachers experiences had on the lessons delivered to learners in the rural and township contexts within the KwaZulu-Natal. These lesson plans served to reinforce the data given by participants in the questionnaires and interviews. Triangulation was conducted to overcome any possible issues of reliability involving researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008), I relied on triangulation to help alleviate such.

Lastly confirmability is a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped and supported by data generated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prior to conducting the study, the questionnaire and interview schedule were piloted amongst a group of my teacher colleagues in order to ensure that the set questions were within the scope of the research being conducted, and that the findings would be supported by the data. I have safely stored both voice recordings and transcribed texts of participants' responses in case these are required for further confirmability.

However, I was aware that, as cautioned by Berger and Luckman, cited in Neuendorf (2002), true objectivity does not exist. In line with the interpretive paradigm, they argue that 'knowledge' and 'facts' are socially decided upon and one can argue that all human research is by nature subjective. Whilst objectivity is unobtainable, researchers should strive for consistency.

3.9. Ethical Issues

Ethical behaviour is defined by Nieuwenhuis (2007, p276) as 'a set of moral principles, rules, or standards governing a person or profession.' Major principles of ethical conduct include that the researcher should do no harm, that privacy and anonymity of participants must be protected, that confidentiality of information must be maintained, that informed consent of participants needs to be obtained (including assurance that participation is voluntary, with the opportunity to withdraw from the research), that inappropriate behaviour must be avoided, and that data must be interpreted honestly without distortion. According to Rule and Vaughan (2011, p.112), research ethics, which are developed and embraced by a community of scholars, govern, and guide the practices of researchers.

Ethics in research is very important, particularly with research involving people; hence, ethical issues should be taken into serious consideration (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Cohen *et al.* (2011, p. 85) define ethics as "...a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others." This highlights the importance of protecting the rights of the participants, which is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether or not they want to participate (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Research ethics deals primarily with the interaction between researchers and the people they study. The extent to which participants are to share in data ownership and any benefits from the research must be considered. Researchers should make sure that they provide an environment that is trustworthy. At the same time, they need to be sensitive to the power that they hold over participants. Mouton (1996, p.42) highlights “the area of research ethics is concerned with the protection of the rights and interest of research participants” According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p.16), the researcher is, “ethically responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in a study”. I therefore ensured that the planned research was ethically accountable, that it conformed to acceptable norms and values, that it protected the rights and welfare of all participants in the study, and it worked with the principle of informed consent.

According to Ruane (2005, p.19), the principle of informed consent is about the “rights of individuals to determine for themselves whether they want to be part of a research project” and to obtain informed consent, researchers must clearly communicate the research procedure, purposes, risks, and benefits to the participants in “jargon-free” language (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011, p. 89). Also, researchers must clearly communicate that participation is voluntary and that the participant can withdraw at any time”. Thus, informed consent suggests the rights of research participants to be entirely aware of all aspects of a research project that might affect their decision to participate.

In order to comply with the ethical requirements as stipulated by the University, I obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (See Appendix A Ethical Clearance Certificate) Principals from the four schools had also granted me the permission to conduct the research (See Appendix C: Gatekeeper permission). As the researcher, I was ethically bound to ensure participants’ privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and acceptance of responses and viewpoints. In conducting the research, I acquired informed consent from the participants of this study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The participants were informed that the information that they would provide would be treated confidentially and used only for the study. The participants were further informed of their rights to privacy, and I guaranteed the principals and teachers of the schools that names of the participants would not be published if and when the findings of the research were published. I assured them that their identities were protected using pseudonyms or fictitious names instead of

the participants' real names. The purpose of the research was explained to all participants as well as their role as participants, and what would be done with the results. I assured them that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time and at any stage of the study if they wished to do so. I also explained to the participants that they would not be remunerated for their participation.

3.10. Limitations of the study

Case study research often seeks to look at unique phenomena thus often affecting issues of rigour and reliability, as the data found cannot be generalized. I have addressed this by applying triangulation measures in order to aid in the credibility of the study. In conducting the research, I considered the use of observation as a data collection method but could not use this method as I am a full-time teacher. I am aware that not observing participants' lessons might have affected my findings. I addressed this by using document review of teachers' lesson plans as a third method of data collection, aware of the limitation.

This study does not intend to generalize the results but limit them to these particular schools. The research depended on the availability of participants, which at times was difficult to secure as they are full time teachers and could only be interviewed after their working hours. There was always the possibility that participants might not be willing to participate in the research or might drop out but, fortunately, this did not occur. I was aware that if the participants decided to withhold information, it could possibly compromise the depth of the findings. I tried to overcome this through the use of three data generation methods.

3.11. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an understanding on how the research for this study was conducted. A qualitative research approach was chosen for this case study which was underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm as I wanted to gain insight into teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners. The data collection methods used and the issues of rigour and trustworthiness that were deployed in my study were discussed, as well as the ethical

considerations that were made during the process of this research study. Additionally, the chapter has been an examination of the course that the research process has taken in relation to issues of the research design and methodology. As far as possible, I have provided motivations for the research choices made in this study. With the above said, in considering the research conducted, it was understood that case study research is complex and requires the researcher to proceed cautiously in order to accurately capture the ideas, beliefs and experiences of participants. In the next chapter I will deal with the discussion of findings from the data on teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners.

Chapter 4

Discussion of findings

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will present a discussion of the findings of the data generated. In analysing the data collected a thematic approach was used. The aim of this chapter is to explore the various experiences of teachers teaching poetry to English Second Language learners within the rural and township contexts of Kwa-Zulu Natal. By so doing, I will be answering all the research questions.

The data will aim to understand what teacher's experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools are, by taking an initial look at their experiences as learners of poetry as ESL learners and then unpacking what they now do when teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools and the experiences of teachers within these two contexts. Additionally, I consider whether teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners from rural and township schools are positive or not. Finally, I try to understand to what teachers attribute their experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners from rural and township schools.

4.2. Teachers' Experiences and Methods

4.2.1 Teachers' experiences of learning poetry in English as a second language

In order to fully understand teachers' experiences in teaching poetry to ESL learners it becomes imperative to first explore their experiences as learners of poetry, as these experiences can have a pivotal role to play in shaping not only their teaching experiences but also their attitudes, perceptions and overall pedagogy. All the participants were first taught poetry at a secondary school level as part of their ESL curriculum. It was further found that they continued to be exposed to poetry at their respective tertiary institutions, which include teacher training colleges in the cases of **MT26** and **FT20** and universities in the cases of **MR5** and **FR12**. Additionally, both **MT26** and **FT20** attended rural secondary schools while **MR5** and **FR12** both went to Catholic boarding

schools, which are situated within township areas, but which employed the services of white teachers.

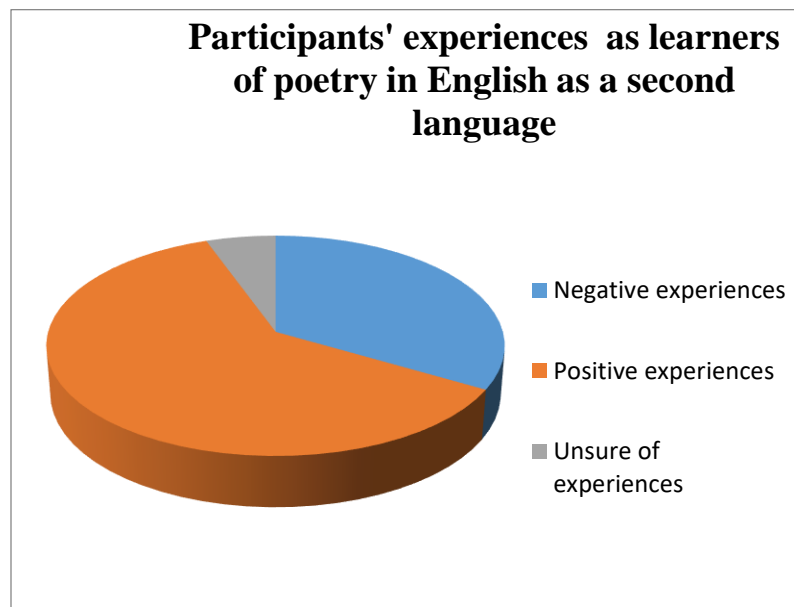
When providing data on their (participants') experiences of poetry lessons at a secondary school level, the participants initially noted in their interviews and questionnaire responses that they enjoyed poetry lessons, with **FT20** and **MT26** later conceding upon reflection, that they simply enjoyed the lesson because at the time there was no other point of reference that they had. **FT20** stated "at that time because I was not comparing to anything, it was good for me, but now if I can compare..." She did not finish the statement, which could possibly mean that she now questions the way she was taught poetry. This could further mean that what she initially held as a positive experience of learning poetry she now possibly perceives differently. The opinion held by the participant was further underpinned by her response in the questionnaire in which she wrote "as learner poems were memorised without understanding, we were not given an opportunity to reflect our thoughts on it". In telling of her experiences **FT20** continued to state in the interview that "when we were taught, what I can say is that we were memorising and looking only at the meaning of the words in the poem...we were not given the opportunity to explore what you reflect from the poetry." This suggests that possibly the teacher who taught **FT20** poetry relied on stylistics as a method of teaching which Ahmad (2014) suggests is concerned with analysing the language of a poem.

The participants' experience is underpinned by **MT26** who noted in his interview response about his teacher training days, stating, "I studied during the apartheid era, so things were hard and we were taught to use the question and answer method to teach the language of a poem and I have applied that a lot in my teaching." This statement possibly reveals a glimpse into the way in which he was conditioned not only to learn but also to teach poetry and further it shows how these participants' experiences as teachers have been gradually shaped. The participant has embedded his experiences within a social context which he sees as having an impact on his actions. This fits into Vygotsky's (1978) theory in understanding how culture and social interaction are intertwined. In contrast **MR5** offered a different experience of his learning of poetry as he stated in his interview response that, "as a learner I was encouraged to work on my own, we were given the poem the

previous day and I would study it at home and the next day in class I would know it and be able to participate in class, in the discussion of the poem.” **MR5** attributes this method of teaching as a positive experience and it reveals possibly that he was taught through the use of the application of the Reader-Response theory, an approach that concerns itself with the reader’s interaction with the text. This is revealed by his teacher allowing him to take the poem home and to create meaning by interacting with it initially on his own and then later in class. Theorists of the Reader –Response theory such as Beard (2000) recommend that the inclusion of personal responses in which learners talk about whether they liked the poem or thought it was any good is necessary in the teaching of poetry.

While the first three participants could easily express the factors, they attributed to their experiences as learners of poetry in English as a second language as being either positive, negative or in between, **FR12** showed apprehension in answering questions aimed at gaining insight into her experiences as a learner of poetry. When asked whether she enjoyed poetry as a learner she briefly said, “I don’t know, yes I did, not a lot but I did enjoy it.” When led to a further discussion of what she attributes this experience to, the participant responded by saying “I don’t know.” This likely could mean that she has never reflected on her experiences as a learner or she could possibly not want to address the issue as she understands how it can presently be affecting her pedagogy. Alternatively, she may not want to share this information. In a greater effort to understand the participant’s experiences further, she was asked what she thought of the way her poetry teachers taught her and she responded by saying that “they were fairly good.” The brief responses by the participant revealed a possible self-awareness on the side of the participant as she possibly did not want to provide responses that I might interpret as negative. While there have been similar and differing experiences in the way in which participants were taught poetry, the responses assisted in understanding the participants’ experiences and furthermore, a foundation has been laid in understanding how the participants’ experiences as teachers presently, were shaped. The findings are summarised in the figure that follows.

Figure 1- Participants' experiences as learners of poetry in English as a second language



The figure above groups the responses given by participants on their experiences as learners and how the experiences were perceived by the participants as being negative, positive or unsure of the nature of the experience. The participants' views of the world are based on their perceptions that they experienced, in line with the ideas of Husserl's (1965) theory of phenomenology.

4.2.2 The methods teachers use when teaching poetry to English Second Language (ESL) learners from township and rural schools

In understanding teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners in rural and township schools a look into the various methods that teachers apply in teaching poetry to ESL learners was undertaken as this built on the understanding of what teachers' experiences are and how these experiences are shaped. While theory provides two fundamental approaches to teaching poetry, the participants interviewed in this study described the ways in which they applied the various

approaches to teaching poetry in their ESL classrooms. Participants were asked in the questionnaire provided to them to first describe their teaching methods in two words and then to provide an explanation of each word. Asking participants to describe their teaching methods in this way revealed what they thought of the way in which they teach and how they possibly perceive themselves in respect to the way in poetry should be taught. However, just as importantly responses provided by participants revealed how their descriptions of the methods, they use in the classroom at times diverged from the actual methods being applied by participants as per the lesson plans submitted by them.

Table 2 – Summary of words given by participants in describing their perceptions of their teaching methods

Participant	Words
MR5	intriguing and indulging
FR12	interactive and creative
MT26	question & answer and analysis
FT20	research and visual

Looking initially at **MR5**, who used the words “intriguing” and “indulging” in his questionnaire response to describe the methods he used in the classroom, it was found that his methodology included giving the set poem and questions to the learners a day before the lesson, so the learners could take the poem and questions home to answer on their own. He then conducts a class discussion based on the responses given by learners in order to gauge the information they had gathered on the poem, as he states the following in his interview response, “this compels them (the learners) to interact with the poem before I even do any explanation.” Mora and Welch (p121, 2000) support this notion as they state that “learners in reader-response-based classrooms read more and make richer personal connections with texts than learners using more traditional methods.” This adds fresh momentum into the teaching of literature by stimulating learners' desire to read and encouraging their responses. **MR5** continued to express during his interview that, once that was done, he would then analyse the poem for them. This initially indicates that the participant

employs similar methods in teaching poetry that were used by his teachers, while he was a learner. While this is a method that **MR5** applauds as one that yields results, it is interesting to note how he is the one that analyses the poem for the learners. This could possibly be a means to save time as classroom discussions as beneficial as they may be time consuming. Alternatively, this could imply the role which the participant perceives himself playing, of being the bearer of knowledge. This enables further understanding of the relations within the participants' classroom as this indicates that the participant possibly uses his role as the teacher to control how and what the learners are learning. This is in contrast with the view held by the participant as he stated that the reason for using this method of teaching poetry rested on the notion that he believes in learners developing knowledge without the interruption of the teacher. By providing learners with explanations and analysis on the poems taught in class the participant in fact does interrupt learners' development of knowledge as they do not come to explanations and analyses themselves.

While these opinions emanated from the participant's interview and questionnaire, the lesson plan submitted by the participant revealed that he also used group work in the teaching of poetry as the lesson involved learners giving group presentations on Maya Angelou's poem, "Still I Rise". The groups were formed to give presentations on what they understood from the stanza of the poem that had been allocated to them by **MR5**. Although this revealed a differing view from that of the questionnaire and interview it revealed that that **MR5**'s lessons plan may detail lessons that are possibly more innovative than they actually are, in a possible attempt to be viewed by the school's management as creative in his teaching. While the participant was able to explain and support the methods he uses in his teaching of poetry, he failed to explain why the initial perception that he holds of his methods of teaching were as he had described the way he teaches as being "intriguing and "indulging." This could possibly mean that he does not fully understand the practical implications of his descriptions or it may be that he merely assumed that this was the perception held by his learners, a perception which may not necessarily be true.

In describing her poetry teaching methods **FR12** first used the term "interactive". She qualified this by explaining that "poetry teaching requires involving learners into the poet's background and the content of the poem." She then added that her teaching methods are "creative" explaining that

“learners need to be taught that poetry is rich in meaning which they can creatively construct.” This explanation is supported by Hanauer (2001 p.67) who defines a poem as “a literary text that presents the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the writer through a self-referential use of language that creates for the reader and writer a new understanding of the experience, thought or feeling expressed in the text.”

In reviewing the methods used by the participant it was revealed in the lesson plan submitted by the participant that she uses a systematic approach to teaching poetry which begins with the poem being given to learners to read before the lesson. In the questionnaire she expressed that learners were expected to first do silent reading then states that “in class we engage in discussion of the poets’ background, then understanding the vocabulary used in the poem.” This suggests the participant begins by contextualising the poem for the learners. The participant added that the learners are then allocated different aspects of the poem which they will present to the class in different groups. In discussing the use of group work the participant emphasised in the interview that “group work is better because when you give them tasks you can mix them according to ability and they can help each other in understanding the poem.” This suggests that the participant employs methods that are learner centered as she is not seen to be the sole bearer of knowledge in her classroom. Once the group discussions have been conducted the participant indicated that notes on the poem are then compiled and finally the class is given an assessment task in the form of contextual questions. The abovementioned methods of teaching according to Moore (2002) reinforce the idea that in-depth reading and close analysis of texts in pairs or other small groupings, can make poetry an integral part of the ESL classroom. Panavelil (2011) concurs by adding that a teacher can adopt an integrated approach where the learners are involved fully. In this method, language skills are not taught in isolation but in an integrated way, which includes a set of text-based, student centered activities which should involve pre-reading tasks, interactive work on the text and follow up activities. It also reinforces Vygotsky’s (1978) idea that culture, social interaction and language influence each other positively.

The findings from **FR12** suggest that she attempts to provide learners with integrated poetry lessons which not only validates her definition of her teaching method as “interactive” but is highly beneficial in an ESL classroom as the construction of meaning is as important as the learning of language. This is echoed by Khatib (2011) who suggests that group work which should include the teacher dividing learners into groups and then distributing the poems to be covered. This allows the learners to work collaboratively to build meaning about the poem. This, according to Khatib (2011), moves the teaching of poetry away from being teacher centered to a learner-centered approach that he recommends works better for English Second Language classrooms.

In analysing the responses of **MT26** and **FT20**, similarities in their teaching methods appeared. Firstly, in looking at the terminology used by both participants in describing their teaching methods **MT26** described the way he teaches as “question and answer” and “analysis”. This revealed that **MT26** uses a traditional teacher-centered method of teaching. He further explained his descriptions by stating “I ask questions and expect answers” and additionally he states, “I analyse the poem with the class.” While learners’ thoughts have not been documented, these statements possibly could show a disconnect in the views held by the participant and the views held by his learners. Rudduck (1991, p.25) refers to ignoring learners’ views as “our blind spot” as this hinders teachers’ ability to draw from learners’ experiences and consequently to review and possibly change their teaching processes. Upon reviewing the terms used by **FT20** it was noted that she describes her poetry teaching methods as “research”, which she explains as “to research information relevant to poem” and “visual” which she explains as “providing pictures relevant to the poem”. This suggests that the task of providing information about the poem was one set solely for her to conduct. She sources the information on a particular poem and goes on to provide her learners with that information. Her views and perceptions of the world shape her views of the poem while disregarding the views and perceptions of her learners.

However, the responses expressed by these participants indicated that upon introducing the poem to their class, they attempted to contextualise the poem according to the learners’ life experience. **MT26** stated. “I first use my learners’ experiences, if the poem is about township life for example, I ask them to comment on that particular aspect using their life experiences.” Further **FT20** added “I ask learners to interpret a theme and then to relate it to their own experience.” This method of

teaching is validated by Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory which considers the bridging of the gap between formal and informal learning in the constructing of meaning in a learner's mind.

While the above may be true in terms of descriptions provided by the participants in their interviews and questionnaires, an analysis of their lesson plans showed a divergence from this view. Participant **FT20**'s lesson plan did not indicate any contextualisation of the poem to the learners as it relied on group work and the teacher then explaining various poetic devices to the class. **MT26** revealed through his lesson plan the gaps that often exist between policy and practice as the lesson plan submitted by the participant seemed generic and did not elucidate the applications of the approaches listed on the lesson plan, which include an integration of meaning, themes and language in the teaching of the poem entitled "The Songmaker." Additionally, both participants placed an emphasis on teaching the vocabulary of a particular poem with **FT20** expressing in her interview "I make sure that I explain the words that the learners find difficult as well as all the figures of speech. This helps in their understanding of the poem." While the participant holds this method of teaching in high regard a question of whether the meaning of a poem is understood through an analysis of the words used by the poet and their meanings or is meaning understood through an investigation of the figurative elements used in writing poetry, or both, or neither.

These issues were not engaged with and may need further investigation. The participants methods are similar to those found by Young (2016, p.131) in her study where she states, "I've learned that the fall back in poetry pedagogy is to instruct in strictly academic modes, stressing the importance of literary devices, forms, and structure." When further asked on his methodology **MT26** responded by saying that "you cannot teach a poem without going over all the words that learners have not understood because you will end up talking to yourself", again emphasizing discrete external aspects of the poem as being key in understanding meaning.

In the process of analysing the various methods used by the participants in the teaching of poetry to ESL learners, the use of code switching was highlighted as an accompanying method in the classroom for purposes of aiding in the facilitation of meaning given by a particular poem.

Although all the participants vehemently stated that they do not encourage the use the learners' mother tongue, they did however express that in some cases they are left with no other means to help their learners in understanding a poem other than that of using the learner's mother tongue, which in this case is IsiZulu. While the participants' responses were similar in the belief that they feel it is incorrect to code switch, it was noted from **FR12** that she relied on the use of the mother tongue when she found herself in a "tight corner," which she qualified by saying "sometimes you know when your learners are not following. Then you know you need to break it down a bit further and their mother tongue helps me to do that." The participant continued to provide an example of an English figure of speech that the class had not understood but once she explained it in IsiZulu the class exclaimed as they had understood. It is clear that the participant recognized how culture influences language and vice versa, as explained by Vygotsky (1978).

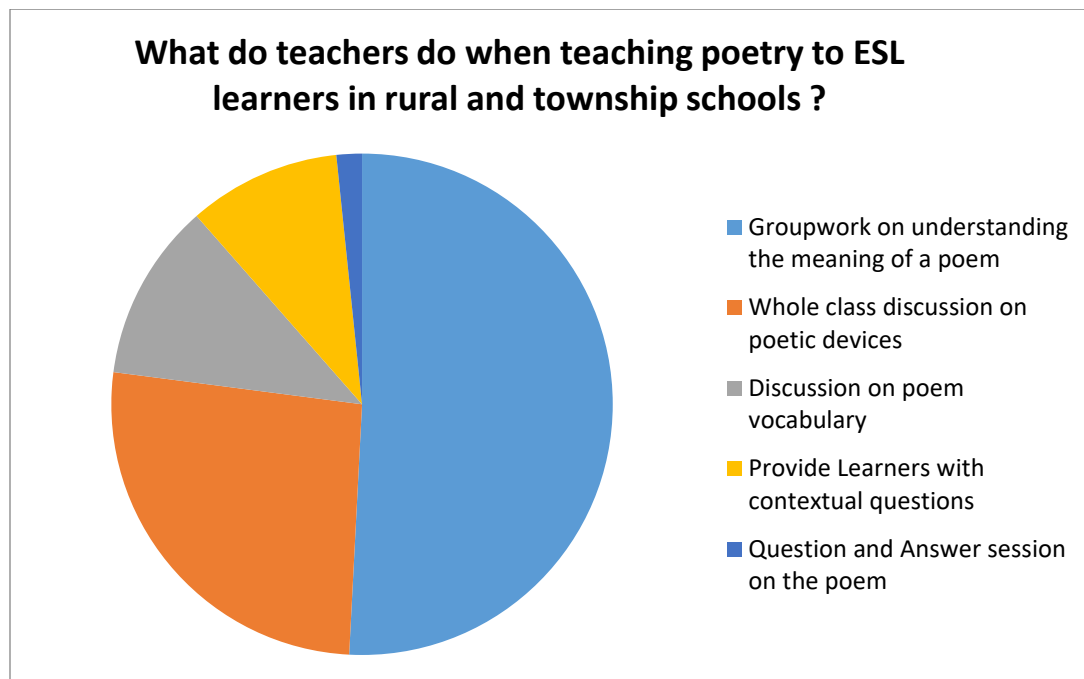
MR26 substantiated his use of code switching as a benefit for the learners to aid them in understanding various conventions that are unique to poetry. He states, "as an ESL user myself, I am in position to understand and explain in the mother tongue, although I do not encourage that, but in some instances, it is necessary as learners end up connecting and understanding better." He includes elements such as an understanding of "satire", which escapes the learner in English but which they grasp better once it has been explained to them in IsiZulu. While **MT26** perceives this method of teaching as beneficial, a contradictory view by Gumede (2003) maintains that sympathetic teachers, who code switch in an attempt to simplify the content, continually deprive learners who are deficient in English of exposure to, and practice of, this medium. This is especially pertinent to poetry as concepts cannot always be simplified, which could often lead to mistranslation and further difficulties in teaching. Additionally, Gumede (2003, p.40) expresses that "opportunities for English language use are seriously lacking in Black schools". This suggests that learners' only exposure to the English language for learners is the language of literature, which is mostly often merely read to them, and explained in another language, a practice which Gumede (2003) suggests is detrimental in ESL classrooms.

The responses given by participants in respect to the use of code switching have revealed a number of possible reasons why the participants, although discouraging it, continue to apply code

switching in their classrooms. One possibility could be that it comes naturally to participants to revert to the mother tongue as, with it, they can be sure that the aspect being taught will be better understood by the learners. Moreover, the use of code switching suggests a possible limitation in terms of the participants' own language proficiency and may be secondary to the way the participants deliver their poetry lessons. What is further interesting to note about the responses provided by the participants about the use of code switching is their omission of it in their questionnaire responses, as they were asked about the practices used in their classrooms while teaching. This reveals a possible knowledge by the participants that the use of the mother tongue in an English Second Language classroom could possibly be perceived negatively. This is probably why they have chosen not to include it in their written responses. The language choices of the participants highlight Vygotsky's (1978) view that culture (of what is understood to be an English classroom) and language are linked.

In analysing the data collected in respect to the methods used by the participants in their English Second Language classrooms when teaching poetry, a number of observations have been made. Firstly, while participants have expressed a love for poetry and have expressed some positive experiences of being taught poetry, the methods selected by **MT26** and **MR5** show that they apply similar methods that were applied by their teachers. The participants' views of the world are based on perceptions they experienced, echoing Husserl's (1965) ideas about phenomenology. Secondly the methods described by the participants in their questionnaires diverged in terms of the methods used by the participants in class. This divergence could possibly reveal a gap that often exists between theory and practice as the lesson plans submitted by the participants displayed a theoretical approach to the set poetry lessons. The findings are summarised in the figure below.

Figure 2 – Summary of teaching methods used by teachers in teaching ESL poetry



4.3 Teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools

In highlighting the issue of teacher confidence prior to expanding on teachers’ experiences, I hoped to understand whether teachers’ confidence in engaging with poetry has any influence on teachers’ experiences, as a lack of confidence could result in participants viewing their experiences as negative. When asked if **MR5** was confident in his ability to teach poetry to ESL learners he responded by stating “I am confident in a sense that I come across learners who have never been exposed to poetry and throughout the course of the year begin to understand the genre better”. While the participant says he is confident, it is interesting to note that his confidence is based on an external factor such as learners’ response to his teaching, rather than it relying on the skills and knowledge that he was equipped with throughout his university days or through other measures.

FR12 was initially guarded in sharing her experiences as a learner and as a teacher. This was evident by many of her responses beginning with “I am not sure.” or “I don’t really know.” This possibly suggested that the participant wanted to provide responses that she felt I was looking for. When responding to how confident she was in teaching poetry she stated, “I think I am confident now because I have gained enough experience to teach poetry”. What was interesting to note was how the participant attributed her confidence to the number of years she had been teaching poetry. This takes prominence because in describing her experiences she highlights factors that she sees as challenges that have been in place for the duration of her teaching but have still not been overcome by the participant in order to improve her experiences. She did however reveal some significant and unique aspects of her teaching.

An analysis of **MT26**’s experiences reveal possible aspects of teaching in a township school where the culture of learning is said to be deteriorating in recent years to the extent that the participant attributes most of his negative perceptions of teaching poetry to the “bad attitude” that learners are seen to display. When considering whether **MT26** is confident in his teaching of poetry he revealed “I must say that I am very confident because I love poetry very much but I must say that I am de-motivated and no longer teach in Grade 12 but in Grade 10 and 11 because learners are no longer as exuberant and as exciting and lively as they were years ago.” This response could possibly reveal a number of factors about the participant’s confidence in teaching poetry to ESL learners. This seems to indicate that the participant attributes his lack of confidence when teaching poetry to external factors such as learners’ attitudes. Additionally, the participant equates a love of poetry to confidence which leads to questioning whether the participant fully understands the concept of confidence. Noting how that the school **MT26** teaches at has not included poetry in its grade 12 ESL syllabus, it is probable that teachers have not had encouraging experiences and have therefore chosen to exclude poetry teaching from the grade on which schools’ performances are judged. This idea held by **MT26** is echoed in a study conducted by Newfield and Maungedzo (2006, p.4) in which they found poetry is a defunct genre in many South African English Second Language classrooms. They draw from a case study they conducted in Lamula High School, Soweto, where the teaching of poetry was discontinued in 1996 since it was, according to teachers “too difficult” for learners. Teachers indicated that poetry

was a ‘condensed, dense and sometimes complex genre’ that often loses its position of prominence in English Second Language classrooms. In addition, the study found that the multilingual student body not only found the genre of poetry difficult, but also the language of poetry.

FT20 describes experiences that reveal differences in not only the way she teaches but the perception she subconsciously may have of the learners in her classroom. In responding to whether she is confident in her teaching of poetry **FT20** stated “I do have confidence because I know how to use extra resources like researching through the use of the internet and going to the libraries before I stand in front of the learners.” This statement indicates that the participant attributes her confidence to rigorous planning prior to presenting a lesson to her class. This could also mean that the participant, while thoroughly prepared, may lack the necessary emotive understanding of poetry and thus relies on the use of various sources to provide learners with selected interpretations, themes and literary devices used in poems. **FT20** further states “you need to get information, analyze the poem, understand the message and historical background of the poet before you stand in front of the learners, which gives you more confidence because you know what you are talking about.” This suggests that she aims to be prepared for her poetry lessons. In her account of the methods she uses in her teaching, there is little evidence of accommodating the language barrier she highlighted in her interview as existing within her classroom.

In further describing his experiences, **MR5**, touches on the challenge that he is faced with in teaching English as a Second Language and secondary to that, teaching poetry. He states in his interview that “it becomes very difficult to teach poetry when language itself is a problem in the classroom.” This reveals the possible lack of vocabulary on the part of the learners, which could make the teaching of poetry challenging. **MR5** continues stating that “I have to start teaching them how to decode information, how to extract certain meanings that are hidden in words, which takes a lot of time.” This reveals that as a result of a lack of opportunities to use the language within other areas of their lives, learners lack the ability to grasp the rhetoric used in poetry. The participant contrasts this by expressing that he feels that it could be easier teaching a learner who uses English on a daily basis at home and at school. The participant is reflecting Vygotsky’s (1978)

contention that social interaction influences language learning, and that interactions at home and at school play a role in learning. While it may be easier to teach a learner, who is exposed to English at home and at school, the questions of whether the participant does enough to teach language prior to tackling poetry remains unanswered. While **MR5** expressed the need to begin lessons by dealing with issues of language, no evidence of this was present in the lesson plan presented by the participant. This therefore indicates a possible gap that exists between theory and practice, in the participant's pedagogy.

In providing answers on the questionnaire as to her experiences in teaching poetry, **FR12** stated "most learners struggle with the use of old English especially Shakespearean poems. Their biggest challenge is the language and explaining literary devices once they have identified them." This suggests that the learners have challenges in identifying aspects of poetry such as figures of speech, and the figurative nature of poetry often results in the participant facing difficulty in her poetry teaching. Additionally, **FR12** expressed that many of the learners seemed to enjoy her poetry lessons as she stated, "I think they love poetry, especially if you're doing South African poetry that they can relate to". However, many struggled with the use of English during the lessons. She states, "some classes perform better, like in the physical science classes, the learners there are brighter so you find the discussions there are far better because they can converse and have confidence, whereas in the other classes the barrier is the language." While this reveals a varied interaction between the participant and the learners in her school, the issue of the fundamental aspect of English being a barrier reveals some of the challenges facing both participants in these rural contexts.

In the rural context, responses reveal that learners do not have an opportunity to use English in a number of formal and informal contexts. Moreover, the ability of learners to identify literary devices while not being able to explain them further, raises concerns as to the gap that exists between linguistic knowledge and its application in different contexts. While this was a part of the participants' teaching experience, in evaluating **FR12's** lesson plan it did not reveal any

modifications to accommodate the remediation of learners' low language competencies, as the lesson plan that was submitted by the participant was generic in terms of the processes of teaching poetry through a stylistic-esk approach, which suggests that the participant, while having identified a key barrier to effective teaching, could possibly be without the necessary skills to address the language issue in her poetry lessons. Alternatively, this could reveal a limitation in her own language proficiency which could result in her having difficulty in improving learners' language proficiency. This difficulty in improving learners' language proficiency is echoed in the study by Nel and Müller (2010) which revealed a great deficit in teachers' English competency.

Additionally, **MR5** touches on the lack of resources within the school and which present challenges in his teaching of poetry to Second Language learners within a rural context. He states "I believe that a school should have a functional library where learners can go and find information. Without this the learners will remain weak because many of them do not have the money to travel to places where there are libraries." He adds "these learners come from households where brothers and sisters might not have received that much quality education that could help the learners when they seek assistance with poetry." This reveals a harsh reality of rural communities and the possible impact the lack of resources has on both teachers' experiences but more importantly the way in which learners within this context build their knowledge. This is underpinned by the participant stating that "at times learners cannot even construct a sentence in English. Teaching them these things that they should have learnt in primary school takes a lot of time." This statement indicates that there is a possible lack of connection between primary and secondary schools in rural areas. This could also show that without the necessary support from home, learners are left with the classroom as their only opportunity to use English. While this reveals an apparent lack of parental involvement, Vygotsky's theory explains that in order for learning to be meaningful and whole, there needs to be a collaboration of a child's social and cultural knowledge and the knowledge received in the formal context of the classroom. **MR5** attributes this possible lack of parental involvement to the fact that parents are uneducated and are thus unable to assist learners with homework. He states "many parents of the learners in this community are uneducated and cannot help their children even if they wanted to. Furthermore, the community had not been given

resources to help learners.” This tells of the various social and economic influences that affect the experiences of the participant in his teaching of poetry at this rural high school.

FR12 reinforced **MR5** by expressing some of the challenges that make up her experience of teaching poetry in this rural school. She accounted various social and economic challenges that the learners are faced with and which as a result affect her teaching. **FR12** stated:

“the background of our learners is such that, I don’t think they are getting enough support academically from their families because they are disadvantaged. Some of them come from child-headed households, so you find that the culture of learning still needs a lot of improvement, since the only place they do school related things is at school although the school itself is not as adequate as it should be.”

The above extract reflects **FR12**’s deep understanding of the harsh socio-economic realities that her learners face. The extract also makes clear reference to a school that fails to provide the necessary resources in developing a child’s learning outside of the classroom. **FR12** was quick to attribute the lack of resources to insufficient state funding when she stated, “in terms of allocation we get very little funding which makes it difficult for each learner to have textbooks, especially for literature.” This coupled with a lack of parental involvement could possibly lead to adverse results on the overall performance of learners within this school. As learners need to be provided with continual support in their learning to ensure that they are exposed to the use of language in varying contexts, what these reveals, is that support at home and at school is not present. While Vygotsky (1978) notes how culture, social interaction and language influence each other, a lack of one or more of such factors will therefore result in negative consequences. While **FR12** is reflecting on the rural area in which she works, it is possibly a reflection of other rural areas in South Africa as well.

Recounting further the impact that a lack of resources has on her pedagogy, **FT20** stated “we don’t even have a library, no electricity at times and can’t use audio and video in the classroom. Some learners cannot even go to the library due to financial issues.” This reveals not only the state in which the school is in, but additionally, the socio-economic state of the learners within the participant’s classroom who come from families where funds are scarce, as is often the case in many South African townships. **FT20** further asserts that although the lack of resources has an adverse effect on her teaching, in some instances, the learner behavior within the classroom brings her frustration as she states “sometimes these learners also are the cause of problems within the classroom, especially the boys. They are sometimes disruptive and rude when they have been smoking their things”. This alludes to the use of illegal substances that has increasingly become prevalent in schools (Morojele, Parry, Ziervogel & Robertson, 2001). This echoes Husserl’s (1965) position that a person’s view of the world is based on perceptions that are experienced. The descriptions provided by the participant reveal that while she is often prepared prior to presenting her lessons, there are various external factors that play a role in contributing to the experiences she has within her poetry classrooms. However, of importance to note, was the fact that while the participant expressed the need to be well-versed in the background and intention of a particular poem prior to teaching it, while conducting the interview and analyzing the transcripts along with the participant’s questionnaire and lesson plan, it was clear that there were various grammatical errors in her speaking and grammatical and spelling errors in her questionnaire and lesson plan, which suggests that while the participant has a number of years of teaching experience, her language proficiency is limited, which possibly has a bearing on her teaching and assessment practices within her class. This is similar to the findings of Nel and Müller (2010) who recognised the effects that English Second Language teachers’ language proficiency had on learners, and which affected how they assessed learners’ work.

While participants shared varying experiences and differing reasons as to the nature of their experiences, analysis of the data revealed some of the key challenges that continue to influence teachers’ experiences. While these participants reflected on how a lack of resources and learners’

social backgrounds impacted on their (participants') experiences, **MT26**, like **FT20**, reflects also on the decline in learner behavior and attributes this to his demotivation towards the teaching of poetry. This indicates that the participant has possibly not adapted his teaching style to accommodate the current learners he is teaching in order to address and eventually improve their attitudes towards poetry. This could therefore be the cause for his diminishing motivation towards the teaching of poetry. In further providing descriptions of his experiences, **MT26** provides a comparison of former learners to the learners he currently teaches by stating that "I enjoyed teaching poetry in the olden days (referring to his early years of teaching). Then suddenly the learners were no longer participating. I guess it has something to do with them now being progressed" (a reference to learners being passed after a certain number of attempts). The participant suggests his experience possibly lies largely in the hands of the learner participation, revealing a possible "blind spot" in his teaching as this suggests that in using the same methods to teach poetry to ESL learners that he used twenty-six years ago, learners should exhibit the same behavior.

Additionally, **MT26** reinforces this belief in response to being asked to describe his experiences of teaching poetry. He states in his questionnaire that "In the last fifteen years, this enjoyment of teaching poetry has dwindled precisely because the types of learners we teach are no longer enthusiastic about learning, not only poetry, but education in general". This suggests that the participant is not only de-motivated when teaching poetry but when teaching in general. It is clear that **MT26** locates his experiences of teaching poetry within poor learner participation and perceived bad attitude. **MT26** does not consider his possible role in the poor experience. His teaching methods include question and answer, discussions, and "analysis" which possibly reveals a traditional, and teacher-centered method of teaching. He explained his method as, "I ask questions and expect answers". He additionally alluded to using learners' mother tongue to simplify the poem for the class. Such methods seem to indicate that they do not inspire learners to participate. What was noted by both the interview and questionnaire responses given by the participant is a clear evasion of providing rounded descriptions of his experiences of teaching poetry but rather focus was given to the learners' attitude and behavior, which in summation suggests that the participant's experience focuses solely on his perception of the learners in his

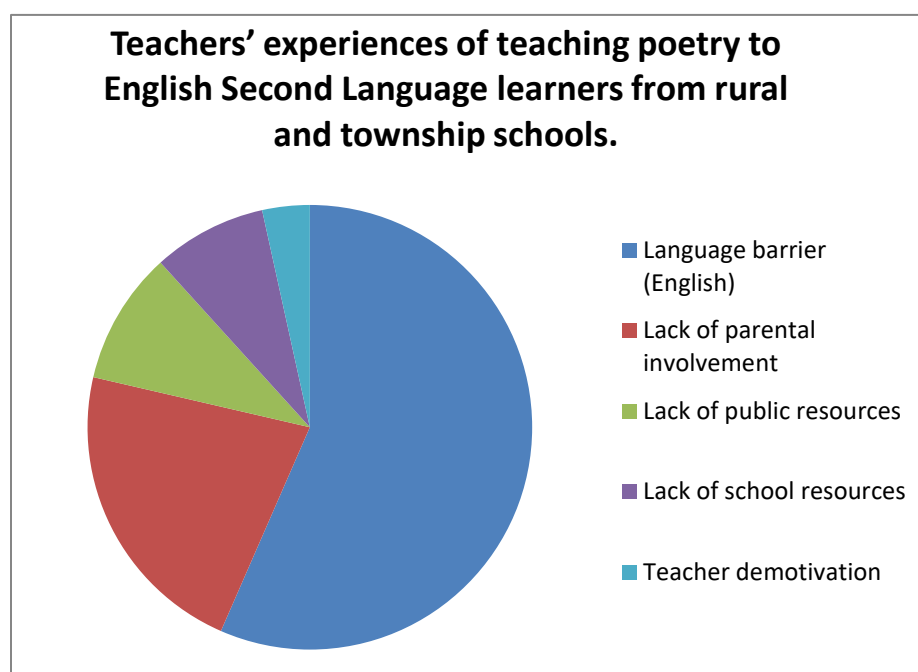
class without a consideration as to the causes of learners' behaviors. These experiences are not unique as is evidenced from the findings of Newfield and Maungedzo (2006, p.72) who highlight that even when lessons have "relevance" for learners, teachers have to deal with learner apathy and resistance, with a breakdown in the culture of learning.

While the experiences of **MT26** of teaching poetry in a township school revealed a possible deterioration of learner behavior which suggests a possible breakdown in the culture of learning within the school, **FT20**, in contrast, provides descriptions of her teaching experience by stating in her questionnaire response that in order to teach poetry you need to understand that "you need a procedure or strategy for analyzing texts." She adds "learners understand better if you do research and understand the poem before empowering them. Visual aids are helpful because some poems talk about things that my learners do not know." This statement suggests that in order for a meaningful interaction between the participant and her learners she has needed to evolve in order to accommodate the kinds of learners that she teaches. This contrasts **MT26**'s descriptions, which were largely based on a despondent attitude as a result of the perception he has of the learners in his class.

While **FT20** continually lauds the use of additional resources in both her interview and questionnaire responses, her lesson plan reveals no use of these methods, as it suggests she uses a process that involves her reading and explaining "the difficult words" to the learners and then providing them with contextual questions to answer. This suggests that there is a gap between what the participant believes contributes to her experiences, to the reality that exists in her classroom. Additionally, this indicates that the participant embarks on the process of researching a poem and understanding it only for her benefit. The participant continues to state that her methods of teaching have changed over the years in order for her teaching to cater to the needs of the classes. She notes "from the time I started, my methods have changed. Through the development of technology, I have also been developed. As a teacher you need to change with the times." While this indicates that the participant keeps a close eye on monitoring learners'

responses to her teaching and modifies it accordingly, she adds “unfortunately the resources are not available and although it is out of the school rules for learners to use cellphones, I ask the few that do have cellphones to use them to research and get information about poems.” This further underpins the attempts made by the participant to not only make her lessons more contemporary, but it suggests that she makes attempts in addressing the lack of resources within her school.

Figure 3 – Summary of participants’ experiences of teaching poetry



While the above representation displays the factors that make up the participants’ experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners , descriptions given by participants revealed that although there were many aspects that challenge both teachers and learners in these schools, the learners continued to display what was perceived by the participants as positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards poetry. **MR5** highlights the following “there is nothing as blissful as having a lively discussion about a poem, with a class that you would have thought would not be able to deal with a poem. This is because most learners are desperate to make their lives better.” This gives insight to the way in which teachers possibly view their learners and how these views are often challenged

and, in some cases, reinforced. **FR12** concurred by revealing that the learners were often willing to participate in the discussion of poetry but are often too shy to do so on their own, which is why she had used group work in her classroom. While she had previously commented on the decline in the culture of learning, her sentiments show a variation of her experiences.

In the case of **MT26**, he expressed that learners display negative attitudes which are leading to his demotivation towards teaching. **FT20** concurred by revealing that although she made great efforts into ensuring that she is well versed on the poems she was teaching but in some instances learner behaviour lead to challenges which influenced their experiences and attitudes towards teaching. The sentiments held by these participants reveal a possible decline in the culture of learning in these schools and there maybe be an array of reasons that have led to this decline. Upon analysing teachers' experiences in teaching poetry in rural and township schools there were key elements that surfaced as being constituents of experiences of participants within a township school or rural school. Furthermore, there were key elements that were seen as being characteristic of teachers' experiences in both contexts. This is not meant to imply that experiences were exclusive but rather the data collected revealed certain elements of teachers' experiences being prominent in one context and not another.

Table 3 - A comparative view of participating teachers' experiences

A comparison of participating teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools		
External experiences		
Rural schools	Similarities	Township schools
Lack of parental involvement	Language barrier	Negative learner attitudes
Lack of public resources	Lack of school resources	Teacher demotivation
Intrinsic experiences		
	Confidence in teaching poetry	
	Love of poetry	
	Understanding the value of teaching poetry	

It is understood, and the table above reinforces, that no two schools are the same and therefore no two teachers can hold the same experiences as there are many factors that play a part in creating experiences. While participants **MR5** and **FR12** expressed that while the learners within their respective schools were resilient in their efforts to engage with poetry, a lack of parental involvement and the rise of child-headed households presented various challenges in the improvement of learner's participation in class, and more broadly, in improvements in using and learning English, whether when studying poetry or any other aspect. Lack of proficiency in English is therefore a barrier for learning to take place. Additionally, the lack of public resources such as libraries further widened the gap between learners and their exposure to English outside of the rural classroom. On the other end of the spectrum, participants **MT26** and **FT20** revealed that in some instances learners display negative attitudes towards learning but more specifically towards the learning of poetry as described by **MR26**, to the extent that the school no longer teaches poetry in the matriculation year. This was underpinned by **FT20** who conceded learner misconduct can overshadow all the preparation and efforts of a teacher. Such conduct, as per **MT26**'s description, has led to him becoming demotivated towards teaching poetry as he describes how learner's negative attitudes shaped his experiences and diminished his love of teaching poetry.

There are some similarities that surfaced in the experiences of the participants in the teaching of poetry within these two contexts. In understanding teacher experiences, a common factor that surfaced initially was that all the participants expressed a love for teaching poetry. This love for poetry resulted from their positive experiences when they were taught poetry as learners. Additionally, the participants noted that they were confident in their teaching of poetry to English Second Language learners, with **MR5** attributing this confidence to the years of training received at tertiary level, **FT12** attributing her confidence in teaching poetry to the number of years she has been teaching, **FR20** noting that her confidence comes from being prepared and knowing what she will be teaching her class, and **MT26** highlighting that his confidence comes from his great love and passion for poetry. While these factors may be common and may pre-empt a positive teaching experience, other factors that shape participants' experiences counter this in both contexts. These include, among others, a lack of resources, English as a barrier to learning, and

learner responses. However, it was clear that there are varying extents to which participants' experiences of teaching poetry are perceived either positively or negatively.

4.4 Teachers' perceptions of their experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language (ESL) learners from rural and township schools

While experience remains subjective and unique to the individual going through a particular moment in time (Husserl, 1965), in analysing experiences and gauging whether they are positive or negative depends largely on the descriptions given by the participant as perceptions may be formulated by a number of varying factors. In considering whether participants perceived their experiences of teaching poetry positively or negatively, an analysis of the collective descriptions given by participants was considered. Perception constantly changes, and the data gleaned from the participants held both negative and positive perceptions of teaching, as determined by the many factors that are characteristic of rural and township schools.

In reviewing the data collected from the participants it was clear that while **MR5**, **FR12** and **FT20** perceived their overall experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners as positive, **MT26** had a definitive contrast in describing whether he perceived his experience of teaching poetry to ESL learners as positive or negative. He stated that his experience was "very negative" as he asserted that "the learners we teach are no longer enthusiastic about learning poetry" which suggests that the participant's perception of the teaching of poetry has changed over the years, from a positive perception to a negative one. Alternatively, **FT20** states that her experiences of teaching poetry have been positive as she states that "you are constantly developing and engaging in research and understanding poetry." These varying perceptions reveal that **MT26** bases his perceptions on the response to the learners in his class while **FT20** formulates her perception on her own pedagogy and removes it from the reception of her lessons by the learners in her class. While **MT26** suggests that his perception has changed over time as a result of the learners in his class, **MR5** and **FR12** both have, like **MT26**, based their perception of their experiences on the learners' responses to their lessons. **FR12** stated "my experiences have been positive, as learners in my class constantly

work their weaknesses to become their areas of strength.” This suggests that while there may be various challenges that the participant is faced with and which possibly contribute to negative perceptions of teaching poetry, she has not allowed them to be a determining factor of her teaching.

In explaining his response **MR5** stated “my learners are intrigued by poetry and I have opened doors to a new level of understanding poetry.” He underpins this statement by stating that “their responses to poetry in tests is proof of this, as they happen to explore poems in ways that I never did myself.” This, the participant states, had improved and, in some cases, validated his love for teaching poetry. The responses given by **MR5** and **FR12** underpin the descriptions given by the participants in describing their experiences of teaching poetry in these rural communities. With both participants, while they reveal that there are various challenges they are faced with, the learners in their classes continued to display, what the participants perceive and understand to be, positive attitudes and resilience, despite the challenges that they are faced with within the school and in their communities.

While the perceptions held by participants indicate an overall outlook of their experiences, there are various elements that have surfaced to indicate that within these broader positive perceptions of teaching poetry as in the cases of **MR5**, **FR12** and **FT20** and negative perceptions as in the case of **MT26** there exists attributes as to why specific parts of their teaching are perceived as negative and positive. The table below summarises the kind of perceptions held by participants toward the teaching of poetry and the reasons thereof. While discussing the extent to which their perceptions of teaching poetry are negative or positive, participants also reflected on aspects related to poetry that they would want changed as these elements would improve the way they conduct their poetry lessons and possibly improve learner performance and provide the participants with alternate experiences of teaching poetry.

MR5 described some aspects that he understands as posing difficulties in the teaching of poetry within a second language curriculum. He identifies the types of poems selected to be taught to English Second Language learners. He states, “the poems have to suit the cognitive acquisitions of learners and their ability to decode meaning.” He explains that “some poems are very difficult

for second language speakers and it disadvantages them as English is still a barrier to most of the learners.” While the statement alludes to what the participant has experienced in his classroom, the descriptions could suggest that the participant is passing judgement on the kinds of poems described. His statement focuses on the poems, not on the efforts or lack of efforts made to improve learners’ language acquisition.

FR10 reinforces **MR5**’s suggestions as she also noted that the “selection of poems” should be reviewed for ESL learners as she suggests that “there should be a balance in the selection of poems that is, African, American and English poems.” This response indicates that **FR10** would like a change in the contexts from where the poems emerge. She seems to recognize that there is not a fair contextual distribution. It is possible that she knows that some contexts are under-represented. She continues to express, in her interview responses, that learners in her classroom have difficulty in understanding some of the language used in poems, which again suggests that English is a barrier within her classroom. The participant further highlighted that “time allocation” for poetry needed to be reviewed as the “time allocated to poetry needs to be increased.” The participant continues to express that “more time needs to be spent on poetry because it takes a lot of time to teach a single poem because our learners have difficulty understanding some poems.” This notion was supported again by **FT20** who stated, “the department should choose different poems.” She continued to add that “our learners still do not understand poetic devices such as imagery and sound because most of the figurative nature of poetry teaching becomes difficult.” This raises the question of why learners do not understand poetic devices. It is not clear if the problem lies with the choice of poems, the time allocated to teaching poems, the language barrier, the shortcomings of the teacher to teach the poems, or a combination of some or all of the factors. What was clear was that the **FT20**, **FR10** and **MR5** understood what they wanted to change regarding the teaching of poetry.

MT26 had different ideas to those of the other three participants. **MT26** cited learner attitudes as an area that needed to be changed in order change the way poetry is taught. He stated “learners don’t like poetry because they think that it is difficult. They don’t even try to participate during

poetry lessons.” This view suggests that learners have a negative attitude towards poetry. It is clear that circumstances resulted in learners identifying poetry as difficult. Additionally, there must be reasons for learners not wanting to participate. Many questions could be asked about the situation including issues of language, poetry suitability, teachers’ competence to teach the poem, teachers’ own experiences with poetry, among others. These, and other experiences of teachers will shape their experiences being either positive or negative.

Table 4 - Analysis of teachers’ perceptions of teaching poetry to ESL learners

To what extent are teachers’ experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools perceived positively or negatively?	
Reasons for positive perceptions	Reasons for negative perceptions
Learner resilience despite challenges	Lack of resources; poor poetry choices
Teachers’ love of poetry	Language barrier (English)
Learners’ assessment performance	Teaching context i.e. rural and township community
	Learner attitude towards poetry

The table indicates that, while participants hold broad perceptions of their teaching experiences, these broad perceptions are formed despite of the fundamental negative or positive elements that they are exposed to within their classrooms. As reasons for positive experiences are largely shaped by the interaction between teachers and learners in their classrooms, it becomes clear that the relationship that exists between teachers and learners is integral in shaping teachers’ experiences of their teaching. As learners continue to display resilience despite English as a language being a barrier and as their results on poetry assessment indicate that they are taking strides towards an improved understanding of poetry, a part of teachers’ perceptions remains positive. Negative perceptions of their experiences are largely formed by factors outside the classroom with a lack of resources being key as participants constantly highlighted how a lack of resources led to decreased opportunities for learners to be exposed to English. Additionally, learners cannot go about the

process of independent learning as they are left to rely on the teacher's own knowledge about poetry and the poems learnt in class. Parental involvement remains low and the rural and township contexts make it difficult for learners to travel to places where they can improve their knowledge as the financial situation of many learners' parents is strained. These factors continue to impact on teachers' experiences which in turn give rise to negative behaviour from learners which further leads to diminished views of participants' experiences towards teaching poetry within the rural and township schools.

4.5 Contributing attributes to teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools

While experience may be understood to be a subjective account of one's lived interaction with one's environment, it is made up of various factors that continue to influence one's experiences and perceptions (Husserl, 1965). Participants' perceptions have been discussed above along with the reasons thereof, which now brings to the fore the need to understand to what participants attribute their complete or broader teaching experiences, this being coupled with their perceptions, as one informs the other. While participants expressed that positive perceptions of their experience are shaped by their interaction with the learners in the classroom, their actual experiences are built not only on their perceptions but on various other factors and attributes.

Attributes are characteristics or features that make up a part of something or someone. In relation to this study, attributes refer to the features that participants recognise as contributing to their broader experience of teaching poetry within the contexts in which they teach. The data presented began by presenting participants experiences as English Second Languages learners, which was tied together with what they do when teaching poetry as well as their experiences thereof within the rural and township contexts, this was followed by a presentation on participant's perceptions of the of the experiences that they had described and what were the reasons for these perceptions. A presentation of what participants attribute their experiences to, brings this exploration of their experiences of teaching poetry to a critical juncture as it will provide insight into how all the other

findings discussed previously come together in forming participants' experiences and additionally it will possibly provide insight into participants' awareness of the factors that have shaped them into the teachers they are today.

Participants described the characteristics that have influenced their teaching. The four participants began by referring to the way they were taught poetry as being a key attribute to their teaching experiences. **MR5** stated in his questionnaire response "I had the privilege to be taught by home language speakers of poetry even though my school was in a semi-rural area. This compelled me to study a lot in order to keep up, which in turn has influenced me to compel my learners to work hard, although it is such a hard experience for them." This underpins the participant's description of what he does while teaching in class. While this may be perceived by the participant as a positive influence, it could possibly have various implications on the learners in his class as they may not be able to keep up with his method of teaching. He has already stated that English remains a barrier in his classroom and that the types of poems selected for ESL learners should take cognizance of the language level of learners in ESL classrooms.

FR12 adds that the biggest attribute to her experience of teaching poetry was the way in which she was taught at high school and at tertiary level. She states "having studied a variety of poetry at high school and university from African to English and American poems, I have developed a love and understanding on how these types of poems can be taught. This has also grown my personal liking of poetry." This suggests possibly that the participant applies the same methods with which she was taught within her classroom. While the participant views this methodology as ideal, it is possible that the learners in her classroom may need to be scaffolded into the methodology to which she was exposed in order to reap the full benefits of her lessons as they may have not received the same exposure prior to being in her class. The participant's description in her interview alludes to some of the reforms she would make in the selection of poetry as she previously suggested that the types of poems selected for learners should vary in terms of their origin as learners in her class struggle with the use of language within poems.

As **MT26** presented experiences that told of a perceived decline in the culture of learning and negative learner attitudes toward poetry in the school in which he works, what he attributes as a contributing factor to his experiences opposes the repeated descriptions of the perceptions he holds of teaching poetry as well as the experiences he has in teaching poetry. The participant expresses that “I was taught by a teacher who instilled this undying love of poetry which I have carried and used with me till today.” This suggests that although the participant attributes his experiences of teaching poetry to the way he was taught, he has not been able to impart that same attitude onto his learners. He has explained in his interview that the negative attitude of the learners in his class have demotivated him and have begun to diminish the love he once had for the teaching of poetry. Furthermore, he notes that learner attitudes and their responses to poetry have changed negatively over the years he has been teaching poetry. This suggests the need for him to understand the kind of learners he teaches in order to possibly customise his teaching to suit their needs.

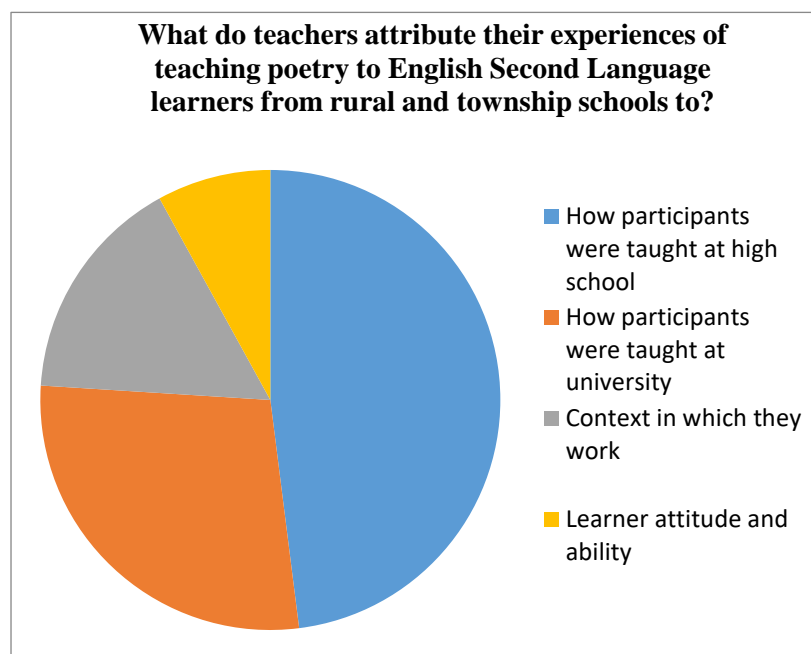
While it is evident that participants **MR5**, **FR12** and **MT26** all attribute their experiences to the way they were taught poetry as learners, **FT20**, while attributing her experiences of teaching poetry to the way she was taught, explains how she has gone about ensuring that she does the opposite of such as she describes the way in which she was taught poetry in the following:

As a learner, poems were memorised with no understanding, we were never given an opportunity to construct meaning of the poem on our own, but I don't want my teaching to be that way. I research and prepare the poem and involve the learners in building knowledge as to what the poem is about. I don't want to be like my teachers. I want to be better.

This suggests that although the way in which the participant was taught is a key attribute to her experiences, it is an attribute that has seen her creating an experience within her classroom that she perceives as better than that of her teachers, while she further highlights the challenges that exist within her process of teaching poetry despite this way of teaching. Of importance to note was her determination to do and be better than her own teachers.

As participants described to what they attribute their experiences of teaching poetry, it became clear that participants continued to rely on the way they were taught poetry as a key point of reference in influencing the experiences they have within their classroom despite the various negative and positive perceptions that surfaced from understanding their experiences. This suggests that participants continue to characterise their experiences of teaching by relating it to features of how they were taught poetry as learners at high school level and as learners at university, with the possible intention of replicating what their teachers and university lectures did in the cases of **MR5**, **FT12** and **MT26**, and preventing the same, in the case of **FR20**. While teaching role-models may serve the participants as points of reference it could possibly hinder them from creating new experiences and strategies which are shaped more by elements within their current contexts than past events. This is due to the fact that while participants explicitly stated to what they attribute their experiences, in describing these attributes, participants made clear reference to current elements that they recognised as factors that contribute to their experiences. These factors include the context in which the participants work as the data has revealed that it has great bearing not only on teachers' pedagogy but the way in which participants perceive their experiences. Additionally, participants alluded to the role that learners' abilities and attitudes play in forming their experiences as **MR5**, **FR12** and **MT26** all connected their experiences as learners to the way learners in their classrooms grapple with poetry. The factors that participants have identified as key attributes of their experiences bring to the fore a further fundamental component that their experiences comprise, this being the way in which participants base their experiences on a largely comparative perception of their experiences as learners of poetry and their experiences of teachers of the same. This suggests that participants, while stating that their experiences of learning poetry were largely positive, model their teaching on their own learning experiences and believe that learners should have the same perceptions of poetry that they had as learners. This could possibly explain why some learners do not display the same behaviours and attitudes that the participants possessed as learners. This again could prevent participants from having new experiences which are devoid of possible preconceptions of what a teaching experience in a rural and township school should be. The findings on what teachers attribute their teaching experiences to, are summarised in the figure below:

Figure 4 – Summary of attributes described by teachers on their experiences of teaching poetry



4.6 Teachers' valuation of poetry

Through interaction with the data collected from the participants, a pertinent theme surfaced. As participants responded to the questions presented in the semi-structured interviews, it became apparent that while each of them teaches poetry within their classroom, each participant held varying notions on the value that poetry holds in ESL classrooms. This became clear when speaking to **MR5** when he expressed the value and importance that he attributes to poetry when he stated, “poetry not only teaches the skill of language use to learners, but it teaches learners to become critical thinkers when making meaning out of challenging poems.” This reveals the added benefits that the participants believe are offered by poetry. The above was contrary to the expressions provided by **MT26** who, while continuing to teach poetry, expressed affliction as to the negative responses of learners to poetry lessons which has in turn diminished the love and appreciation he had for the genre. The participant states “these learners no longer care about poetry. It is difficult to even get them to read a poem because they just rush through it. If I had it my way, I wouldn’t teach poetry anymore.” This is indicative of the decline of the participant’s valuation

of poetry. This could possibly be a result of the number of years that the participant has spent in the profession and how this period has possibly taken its toll on the participant. What was noted from the **FT12** and **FR20** was that their responses expressed a mixed notion of value that is placed on poetry as each expressed various successes and challenges experienced throughout their teaching career. The value that participants, and in a broader sense, teachers in ESL classrooms, have towards the teaching of poetry plays a key role in shaping their experiences. If the value that teachers place on poetry teaching changes over the course of their career, this means their pedagogy will change as well as their experiences.

4.7. Conclusion

The purpose of the chapter was to analyse the data collected on the various experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to English Second Language learners within the rural and township contexts of Kwa-Zulu Natal. By so doing, the data presented and analysed above has provided a platform from which to answer the research questions related to teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools. The chapter took an initial look at teachers' experiences as ESL learners of poetry and then unpacked what do they now when teaching poetry to ESL learners from rural and township schools, and their experiences within these two contexts. Furthermore, an exploration was undertaken to consider the extent to which teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools was perceived positively or negatively. This was followed by analysing the attributes that teachers connect to their experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners from rural and township schools.

The data analysed in the chapter revealed various elements of teachers' experiences and the determiners thereof through the description provided by teachers on their experiences. It became clear that there are various implications that are a result of the kind of education and training teachers have received and how this affects the experiences of teachers within their classrooms. Furthermore, descriptions given by teachers reveal that the methodology and teaching styles they

apply in teaching poetry can influence not only teachers' experiences but the perceptions that they develop of the learners in their classes. Additionally, the value that teachers assign to poetry teaching was also revealed to have a bearing on their experiences.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

A key purpose of this study was to propose answers to the key research questions stated in chapter 1. This chapter therefore presents and discusses the findings according to the themes that emerged on the experiences of teachers in teaching poetry to ESL learners. The findings will be discussed in relation to the literature reviewed. A methodological reflection and personal and professional reflections will additionally be presented. Recommendations for further research and a conclusion will then complete the chapter.

5.2 Discussion of main findings

The objectives of this study set out to explore teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools. Additionally, the present study was set to understand how teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners from rural and township schools are perceived. Lastly the study was designed to understand the role played by context in the teaching of poetry.

5.2.1. Teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools

The key findings that emerged to the main question in this research study was that teachers indeed experience teaching poetry to ESL learners in ways that are similar and different in many respects. The data collected revealed broad experiences of poetry teaching with the most prominent being participants stating that in their teaching and interaction with learners they have experienced the following:

- Language barrier
- Lack of parental involvement
- Lack of public and school resources

- Negative learner attitudes
- Teacher demotivation

While the above are all part of teachers' experiences, the key encounters that participants had was the language barrier that learners were hindered by when being taught poetry in the ESL classroom. Many learners are unable to communicate in basic terms in English as a Second Language which made it difficult for participants to teach poetry to them. This meant that time that should have been used for poetry teaching was often diverted to teaching fundamental language structures and conventions by the participant. Therefore, the limited language proficiency of ESL learners along with negative learner attitudes formed a dominating part of what some participants recounted as their experiences in the ESL classroom. This was prevalent in a study conducted by Newfield and Maungedzo (2006) where it was revealed that teachers at the school had to deal with student apathy or resistance, with a breakdown in the culture of learning. This experience also involved teachers being forced to lead the discussion in a poetry classroom and speaks to the value or rather the lack of value that is placed on poetry in the South African classroom. This lack of a culture of learning amongst the learners perpetuates the various perceptions held by teachers and scholars on the teaching of poetry, as affirmed by Fox and Merrick (1987) and Sugandi and Husnaini (2015) who noted that poetry was rarely popular with learners in schools.

5.2.2 The extent to which teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools are perceived positively or negatively

The participants in the study expressed an agreement that poetry can be a valuable educational form, but their degrees of agreement varied. They inscribed their personal love for the genre being rooted in poetry's particular ability to express human emotions, as shown in the work of Certo et al. (2012) and Hanratty (2008). While the literature espouses the myriad ways in which poetry is valuable to culture, including its historical importance in social movements (Ciardiello, 2010; Stovall, 2006), its ongoing political power (Meydani & Tsur, 2014; O'Brien, 2004; True, 1993), as well as its current cultural forms such as its prevalence on the web, in hip-hop music, and in

advertising (Dymoke & Hughes, 2009), none of the teachers in this study mentioned those aspects of the genre. However, they expressed a general belief that poetry was worth teaching in high school English Second Language classes. The value of poetry as a pedagogical tool was affirmed, though the extent to which the teachers fully adhered to this belief, differed. In line with many previous studies in the literature, including Dymoke (2012), Benton (2000), and Ray (1999), the participants in this study for the most part seemed to hold a general optimism for poetry and espoused the belief that poetry should be taught. Poetry can certainly be viewed as a valuable tool for teachers wishing to hone learners' English-class skills. The teachers in this study affirmed a belief that poetry study can help learners in their academic endeavours. They explained poetry's ability to enhance reading, writing, and language skills. The belief that poetry contributes to scholarly ventures has been supported countless times in the literature, including through the work of Weaven and Clark (2011), Keil (2005), and Wade and Sidaway (1990). Drawing closer to the major positive perceptions findings of teachers' experiences were as a result of:

- Learner resilience despite challenges
- Teachers' love of poetry
- Learners' assessment performance

The reasons allotted to teachers' negative experiences were

- Lack of resources
- Language barrier (English)
- Teaching context i.e. rural and township community
- Learner attitude towards poetry

These emerging factors are derived from three participants who perceived their overall experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners as positive, and one participant who had a negative experience of teaching poetry to ESL learners. However, his negative experience was a recent perception brought on by learners' negativity to poetry. His views were in line with the findings of Newfield and Maungedzo (2006) who found similar negative perceptions from teachers based on their negative experiences. These varying perceptions reveal that one participant bases his perceptions

on the responses of the learners in his class, while another participant formulates her perceptions on her own pedagogy with apparently little influence from her learners. Yet, two other participants note their positive perceptions and cite their learners' responses as responsible for their experiences. This suggests that while there may be various challenges that participants face in these contexts, the challenges do not shape the perceptions and experiences of teaching poetry.

5.2.3 Teachers' attributes of their experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools.

Experiences can often be attributed to many factors that are at time extrinsic and intrinsic. Participants expressed that the key factors that shape their teaching experiences include

- How participants were taught in high school
- How participants were taught at university
- The context in which they work i.e. rural and township communities
- Learner attitudes and ability

The findings, as indicated above, indicate that the key factors were how participants were taught in high school and how they were prepared to teach at university. The context in which participants teach was also highlighted as a key attribute of the experiences of teachers. This is underpinned by Hanratty (2008) who found that participants felt that learners from more affluent, middle- class backgrounds where, it might be assumed, there already existed a culture of books and reading were more sympathetic to the idea of poetry than learners from less privileged homes. This was supported by Mgqwashu (2009, 296) who points out that: "Learners from disadvantaged educational backgrounds are faced with the dilemma of 'swimming against the tide', and, unfortunately, most of them sink."

Additionally, Gumede (2003) found that the morale of the learners in rural schools is generally low. There is a high-level of absenteeism, late coming, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy, which threaten the future of the learners in rural communities. Gumede (2003) highlights the following,

‘The lack of or poor facilities in our rural schools is a problem. The absence of libraries and resource centers deprives the rural child of a chance to read and explore on his/her own.’ The above statement reveals the core of the problems facing schools in the rural areas as expressed in the summary of contributing factors to teachers’ experiences. Similar challenges face township schools. While the apartheid systems and structures are no longer in place, townships in present day South Africa remain the domain of people of colour and are still riddled with many socio-economic ills that were present more than two decades ago. These problems continue to filter into the classrooms across the country, as is seen in participants who told of teaching learners from child headed households who had no parental support or involvement in their education.

5.2.4. Teaching methods used by teachers when teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools

In exploring teachers’ experiences, it became critical to understand the methodology employed by teachers so as to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that shape teachers’ experiences. The emerging methods were:

- Groupwork on understanding the meaning of poetry
- Whole class discussion on poetic devices
- Discussion on poem vocabulary
- Contextual Questions

Groupwork and whole class discussions were identified by the participants as being their methods of choice. Having learners work in groups to share and discuss poetry was championed by two participants. Similar findings are found in the work of Haugh et al. (2002). One participant recounted his experiences with having learners critique poetry in groups and discuss poetry in the frame of appreciation as among his most successful pedagogical practices. Since he did not enforce the knowledge or understanding of a dictated message onto his learners, the participant additionally felt that having the learners share poetry in this way allowed for them to value the genre beyond its strictly academic purposes, as shown, similarly, in the work of Hanratty (2011).

The participant felt that his methodology was successful in the sense that he believed he had instilled his love of poetry onto many of his learners, despite the language and contextual factors.

Similarly, Fauziah and Jamaluddin (2006) found that teachers used more learner-centered approaches, which include groupwork in class, as compared to teacher-centered strategies, which created a better learning atmosphere and improved learners' perception and motivation towards poetry. However, Daija (2001) found the methods used by teachers in literature classes are mostly teacher centered. Participants agreed that their classes were usually divided into three stages which started with explanation by the teachers, followed by discussions in groups or with the whole class and concluded with contextual questions. An additional key strategy stated by Panavelil (2011) that a teacher can adopt in the class is an integrated approach where the learners are involved fully. In this method, language skills will not be taught in isolation but in an integrated way, incorporating a set of text-based, student centered activities, which as Collie & Slater (1987) suggest "add fresh momentum into the teaching of literature by stimulating learners' desire to read and encouraging their responses" (p.8). An integrated approach was evidenced in the strategies adopted by two of the participants in the present study. This was in contrast to the one participant who relied on stylistics as a method of teaching which Ahmad (2014) suggests is concerned with analysing the language of a poem. This was the way the participant was taught which speaks to the experiences of participants as learners of English as a Second Language and the implications thereof.

5.3 Policy implications

The study conducted was in essence an evaluation of policy in practice through the investigation of teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners in rural and township schools. In conducting this research, it emerged that while the English Additional Language policy in South Africa highlights the need for poetry as a genre to be taught to ESL learners, there is a possible disparity that exists between policy and implementation. The first disparity involves the need for a clearer outline of how poetry should be administered for meaningful pedagogy. This does not only include the teaching of figures of speech and techniques but the formulation of direct ways of

teaching ESL learner's poetry could possibly be explored. Secondly, the data collected revealed that the poems selected for teaching to ESL learners were selected based on different poetry types with the aim of providing learners with exposure to a variety of poems. If administrators are more aware of the importance of the genre, as well as of English Second Language teachers' personal and professional experiences and in turn their needs in its instruction, they may be more willing to help teachers and schools revise their curricula, missions, and programmes. As Hatch and Honig (2003) advocate, schools wishing to be progressive on matters of pedagogy must establish and revisit their mission statements and create structures that support professional development. School administrators may wish to rethink allocation of funds to stress the importance of critical pedagogy that encourages the study of poetry beyond standardized examination requirements. This underpins the importance of the present study as it sheds light on teachers' experiences within rural and township contexts.

5.4 Methodological implications

The intention of this study was to explore and understand teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners in the context of rural and township schools. I assumed a methodology which was underpinned by a qualitative approach to understand and interpret a phenomenon, as advocated by Merriam (2002). The choice of an interpretive paradigm enabled me to understand and interpret teachers' experiences. This was an appropriate paradigm to understand the views and lived realities of teachers in the above-mentioned contexts.

Through the use of a case study research design, I was able to create a dialogue between me and the participants using semi structured interviews as one of the data collection methods. The dialogue enabled checking of interpretations, re-interpretations and negotiations of responses and the source of knowledge was through conversation.

The methodology was underpinned by Phenomenology which notes that the world is the creation of the mind and that the world is interpreted through lived experiences. Therefore, reality is

constructed through the eyes of the researcher and the participants. Using phenomenology, the case focused on teachers' experiences of their poetry pedagogy. This design and underpinning theory allowed me to select an example with which I am familiar, to which I had access, and was within my research scope. Similarly, the sample chosen was both purposive and convenient, enabling access to me as a researcher.

While the small sample size of the participants may be viewed as a methodological limitation to the study, the decision to use a small sample size helped to reduce expenses and time and assisted in focusing on a few participants for thorough exploration. However, I would recommend studying this research topic further by increasing the research population to gain a deeper understanding of many more teachers and in other rural and township contexts. Overall, despite the many challenges posed by research, this was a rewarding experience for me, as I got the chance to explore other teachers' experiences.

5.5 Implications for my academic journey

The initial and somewhat shallow motivation and rationale for undertaking this study was primarily to obtain a Master's degree. At the beginning of this research journey I was excited to explore a topic that had both personal and professional meaning to me. The experiences of teachers when it came to the teaching of poetry to ESL learners interested me as I was grappling with various challenges within my poetry pedagogy in a rural context. The personal motivation for this study was due to the passion I have had for English pedagogy.

However, after being promoted to a Departmental Head, I struggled with striking a work-academic life balance that derailed my progress. This led to a disillusion in my abilities and put this study on hold. I then re-applied for ethical clearance to complete the study and approached my supervisor Prof Ansurie Pillay to further assist me with its completion. I am grateful for her assistance in bringing it to completion. The journey of this research study has nurtured my professional growth as an academic scholar and has assisted me with my research and writing

skills. The overall process of this study has allowed me to gain a deeper insight into teachers' experiences and into my own capabilities, skills and motivations.

5.6. Areas for future research

Attempting to understand experiences is a complex endeavour as they are not quantifiable but, invaluable, provide a depth of insight into teacher pedagogy. In light of that, the following areas for future research are proposed:

- Research into the scope and practice of universities in preparing teachers to teach poetry to English Second language learners. This could address some of the negative experiences that teachers may have had as learners of English in their formative years.
- The scope of the study can be broadened to include other contexts where English is taught as a Second Language which are outside of rural and townships areas. This could provide a comparative view of how other English Second Language teachers experience poetry pedagogy in socio-economic contexts that are different.
- The number of participants could be increased in order to cover more ground in terms of the research and learners could also be included to bring the exploration of teachers' experiences full circle where they recount their perceptions of the poetry lessons presented by the participants.
- The study could be expanded to include classroom lesson observations to add a further dimension to the pedagogy and experiences that teachers may have omitted from the interview responses due to various reasons.

While a number of studies may emerge from the research conducted in this study, I should not overlook the attempt I made as a voice has been given to teachers, albeit a small sample, in rural and township contexts on their pedagogy and the experiences that have emerged as a result thereof.

5.7 Recommendations

The main recommendation from this study is that teacher education institutions must consider the specific training of English teachers to teach ESL learners, not only to improve teacher pedagogy but to also address the negative experiences and traits that many teachers bring with them to university from high school. Addressing and confronting negative experiences and traits from preservice teachers' schools will enable the prospective teachers from perpetuating any negative practices to which they might have been exposed.

Secondly a change in the selection of prescribed poems for ESL learners should be revised in order to suit the language proficiency and competency of learners without losing the essence and value of poetry teaching with a possible foundational curriculum in poetry that ensures the integration of poetry not only in the form of nursery rhymes and songs. The use of poems that represent the learners' identities and realities will also make poetry relatable to learners.

Lastly, a recommendation is that administrators need to collectively recognize the importance of poetry, and perhaps all literature. ESL teachers should be continuously supported, and capacity building training programmes that assist teachers in closing the language gaps that exist in ESL classrooms should be implemented so as to ensure that teachers do not feel isolated in their pedagogy. By so doing, teachers will have improved confidence in the teaching of poetry to ESL learners.

5.8. Conclusion

This study focused on understanding teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to ESL learners in rural and township schools. Being an English Second language teacher myself, I have been faced with various challenges as a novice and semi-novice teacher in teaching poetry in a rural school in Kwa-Zulu Natal. My concerns and fears made me want to explore and understand what other teachers in similar contexts experienced and what these experiences were a result of. While I was inclined to believe that teachers in contexts similar to mine were faced with the same reality, I

wanted to systematically research the phenomenon so I could understand the experiences of other teachers.

I realized that part of the challenge of teaching poetry in current high school ESL classrooms is that secondary school pedagogy is increasingly focused on teaching to the goal of standardized examination success, which disempowers teachers who have to teach within the confines of an assessment driven system.

This study has shown me that teachers need to teach poetry in cultural and critical ways. There needs to be an awareness of not necessarily teaching as we were taught which in most cases was through the use of strictly academic styles, stressing the importance of literary devices, forms, and structure. Teachers need to implore creative, relevant, and visual ways if their experiences of teaching poetry in ESL classrooms are to improve. Scholarly knowledge is important and should not be discarded, but appreciation for the language art form and its critical purposes allows learners to see poetry as something more appealing and meaningful, just like music, which is in essence poetry, that they listen to at home.

I ultimately advocate for the need for more research into the heart of poetry pedagogy, especially concerning how it can be effective and meaningful in the 21st-century South African educational landscape. The limited scope of my research study surely does not encompass all that practicing teachers may have to say about the phenomenon. Further study could perhaps present the best practices in the digital age and the ways in which training and professional development could be improved to expand these ideals.

This research study was meant to make noticeable the voices of currently practicing teachers, those who stand up in high school English Second Language classrooms every day, trying to engage learners with poetry. I am one of them and I possess an understanding of how difficult it can be to teach the despondent, confused faces of learners as they are informed of the poetry to be learnt.

These are the same learners who arrive in the classroom with a variety of socio-economic challenges. This difficult task of actively engaging while recognizing realities of learners' lives is not one that should be avoided or negated, but it is one that should be interrogated and shaped into a beneficial experience for both the teachers and learners.

I am reminded that many high school English Second Language teachers continue to value poetry and believe in its benefits to learners, but I also know that there are still considerable barriers to effective and meaningful poetry pedagogy. I believe that overcoming such barriers will result in positive experiences by teachers and, by extension, their learners.

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Addendum A: Letter of Ethical Clearance from the University of KwaZulu Natal



23 May 2019

Ms Andile Bongekile Ngidi (208523532)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Ngidi,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1205/015M

Project Title: Teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second Language learners: A case study of four high school teachers in KwaZulu-Natal

Approval Notification – Recertification Application

Your request for Recertification dated 28 March 2019 was received.

This letter confirms that you have been granted Recertification Approval for a period of one year from the date of this letter. This approval is based strictly on the research protocol submitted and approved in 2015.

Any alteration s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Ansurie Pillay
Cc Dean & Head of School: Professor Thabo Msibi
Cc School Administrator: Ms Sheryl Jeenaarain

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

Addendum B-Letter of informed consent: Principals

45 Mahai Drive

Waterfall

3652

21 May 2015

Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Andile Ngidi, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, enrolled for a Master of Education Degree request permission to conduct research at the school. In conducting the research, I will request to speak to the learners who were part of the literacy winter school intervention program at UKZN. The research will involve me asking English Second language teachers questions on their experiences in teaching poetry.

The topic for this study is. **What are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools?** The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of teachers within the South African context and more closely KwaZulu-Natal rural and township schools. The fundamental objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate teacher's experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools.
2. To understand how teachers experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools are perceived?
3. To investigate the role played by context in the teaching of poetry.

Furthermore, I wish to bring to your attention that:

- The identity of the teachers will be protected in the report writing and research findings
- Teacher participation will be voluntary

- Your institution will not be mentioned by its name, pseudonyms will be used for all schools and participation
- Interviews will be voice recorded to assist in the accurate capturing of data collected.
- There is no financial benefit towards the participants as a result of their participation in this study.

Should you have any concerns or queries about this study please feel free to contact my supervisor whose details are as follows:

Dr. Ansurie Pillay

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood Campus

Tel no. 031 260 3138

I hope my request will be considered.

Yours Sincerely

AB Ngidi

Cell No. 0792615064

e-mail: abngidi@gmail.com

Addendum C

Gate Keeper Permission

Gatekeeper permission: Principals

I ZAMANI JALI have read and understood the request from Andile Ngidi, who is doing her Master's in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I understand the scope and course of the research that is being conducted. I have been made aware of the following:

- The identity of the school and teacher participants will be protected by the use of different names.
- The teachers are not obligated to take part in this study and can withdraw at any time.
- The information that teachers give will be recorded so as to ensure accuracy.
- Participating teachers will receive a copy of the transcription of their interviews in order to check its accuracy

I hereby provide consent to the teacher in my school participating in the research.

P.J.L.
Principal's signature

25/06/2015
Date

If you have any concerns, please contact the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Ms Phumelele Ximba at:

Telephone number: 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za.

KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
KHAKHASSA	HIGH SCHOOL
25-06-2015	
P/BA	202, HILLCREST 3650
SIGN:	<u>P.J.L.</u>


Gatekeeper permission: Principals

I CHRISTOPHER LUNG-ELO ALAMINI have read and understood the request from Andile Ngidi, who is doing her Master's in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I understand the scope and course of the research that is being conducted. I have been made aware of the following:

- The identity of the school and teacher participants will be protected by the use of different names.
- The teachers are not obligated to take part in this study and can withdraw at any time.
- The information that teachers give will be recorded so as to ensure accuracy.
- Participating teachers will receive a copy of the transcription of their interviews in order to check its accuracy

I hereby provide consent to the teacher in my school participating in the research.


Principal's signature

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG X1009 HILLCREST, 3650
PRINCIPAL'S SIGN: <u></u>
DATE: <u>25/06/2015</u>
INGQUNQULU HIGH SCHOOL

If you have any concerns, please contact the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Ms Phumelele Ximba at:

Telephone number: 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za.

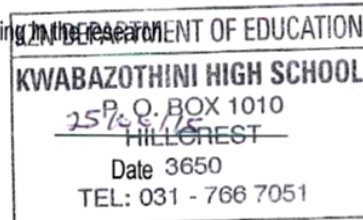
Gatekeeper permission: Principals

I WISMAN ANGIKOSI MABASU have read and understood the request from Andile Ngidi, who is doing her Master's in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I understand the scope and course of the research that is being conducted. I have been made aware of the following:

- The identity of the school and teacher participants will be protected by the use of different names.
- The teachers are not obligated to take part in this study and can withdraw at any time.
- The information that teachers give will be recorded so as to ensure accuracy.
- Participating teachers will receive a copy of the transcription of their interviews in order to check its accuracy

I hereby provide consent to the teacher in my school participating in the research


Principal's signature



If you have any concerns, please contact the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Ms Phumelele Ximba at:

Telephone number: 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za.

Gatekeeper permission: Principals

I SR Bhengu have read and understood the request from Andile Ngidi, who is doing her Master's in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I understand the scope and course of the research that is being conducted. I have been made aware of the following:

- The identity of the school and teacher participants will be protected by the use of different names.
- The teachers are not obligated to take part in this study and can withdraw at any time.
- The information that teachers give will be recorded so as to ensure accuracy.
- Participating teachers will receive a copy of the transcription of their interviews in order to check its accuracy

I hereby provide consent to the teacher in my school participating in the research.


Principal's signature

30/07/2015
Date

If you have any concerns, please contact the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Ms Phumelele Ximba at:

Telephone number: 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za.

**HLAHLINDLELA
HIGH SCHOOL**
P.O. BOX 1230, HILLCREST 3650
TEL: 7660263

Addendum D

Letter of informed consent: Teachers

45 Mahai Drive

Waterfall

3652

21 May 2015

Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Andile Ngidi, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, enrolled for a Master of Education Degree request permission to conduct research at the school. In conducting the research, I will request to speak to the learners who were part of the literacy winter school intervention program at UKZN. The research will involve me asking English Second language teachers questions on their experiences in teaching poetry.

The topic for this study is. **What are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools?** The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of teachers within the South African context and more closely KwaZulu-Natal rural and township schools. The fundamental objectives of this study are:

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3. To investigate the role played by context in the teaching of poetry

Furthermore, I wish to bring to your attention that:

- Your identity will be protected in the report writing and research findings,
- Your participation will be voluntary.

- The institution that you work for will not be mentioned by its name, pseudonyms will be used for all schools and participation.
- Interviews will be voice recorded to assist in the accurate capturing of data collected.
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Should you have any concerns or queries about this study please feel free to contact my supervisor whose details are as follows:

Dr Ansurie Pillay

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Campus

Tel no. 031 260 3138

I hope my request will be considered.

Yours Sincerely

AB Ngidi

Cell No. 0792615064

E-mail: abngidi@gmail.com

Addendum E

Informed consent form –Participants

I _____ have read and understood the request from Andile Ngidi, who is doing her Master's in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I understand the scope and course of the research that is being conducted. I have been made aware of the following:

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

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion

YES NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion

YES NO

Signature

Date:

Addendum F

Questionnaire Template

In this questionnaire you will be asked for your experiences in teaching poetry to Second language learners. Please complete as accurately and honestly as possible.

Thank you for your co-operation.

AGE: _____

GENDER: _____

TEACHING EXPERIENCE: _____

No. OF YEARS TEACHING ENGLISH: _____

QUALIFICATIONS: _____

GRADE/S BEING TAUGHT: _____

DISTRICT IN WHICH SCHOOL IS LOCATED: _____

Rural School	
Township School	

(Please tick)

Question1: Rate the activities in the blocks below using the scale provided.

Activity	Yes	No	Sometimes
1. Do you enjoy reading poetry?			
2. Do you enjoy teaching poetry?			
3. Are you confident in teaching poetry?			
4. Do your learners enjoy your poetry lessons?			
5. Are you learners' eager to participate during poetry lessons?			
6. Do you think poetry is important in the EFAL curriculum?			

Question 2: If you had to describe your poetry teaching methods to a colleague how you would describe it to them, using two words and provide an explanation for each word.

Word	Explanation
1	
2	

Question 3: If you could change three things in the teaching of poetry what would they be what would they be and why?

'thing'	reason
1.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Question 4: Please describe, in as much detail as possible, what your experiences are of teaching poetry to English Second language learners at your school?

Question 5: Would you say your experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners are positive or negative? _____

Please explain your answer.

Question 6: To what would you attribute your experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners? What has shaped your experiences of teaching poetry?

Question 7: Please describe exactly what you do when teaching poetry to English Second language learners.

Addendum G

Interview Schedule- English Second language Teachers

Critical Question 1

1. What are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools?

- Did you study poetry at secondary school level?
- Did you attend a rural or township Secondary school?
- Did you enjoy poetry lessons as a learner?
- Do you enjoy teaching poetry?
- Would you say that you are confident in teaching poetry?
- Do you think poetry has a place in the EFAL curriculum?

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent are teachers' experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools perceived positively or negatively?

- Do learners actively participate during poetry lessons?
- Are there lively discussions during poetry lesson?
- Do you allow learners to read poetry out loud?

2. To what do teachers attribute their experiences of teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools?

- Does the school promote the use of English as a language of instruction?

- How do you think this affects your poetry lessons?
- What are your experiences of being taught poetry at school or university?

3. What do teachers do when teaching poetry to English Second language learners from rural and township schools?

- Which methods do you use in teaching poetry to your learners?
- Why have you chosen to use these methods?
- What response do learners give to this method of teaching?

Addendum H- Document Review Template

Document Review Schedule–Poetry Lesson Plans				
Grade	Duration of poetry lesson	Resources	Teacher and learner activities	Assessment

Addendum I

Turnitin Originality Report

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MED By Andile Ngidi

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