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## The Efficacy of Teaching Methods that Grade 10 English First Additional Language Teachers Use, and the Challenges to Teach Poetry

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### Info Article

Received: 15 June 2025

Revised: 13 July 2025

Accepted: 11 August 2025

Online Version: 1 Sept 2025

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### Abstract

Teaching poetry presents significant challenges for many teachers, often leaving learners struggling to grasp its complexities. In some schools, poetry is even phased out due to poor learner performance. This study investigated the effectiveness of methods used by Grade 10 English First Additional Language teachers to teach poetry. A qualitative approach was adopted, with a case study design. Two teachers were purposefully sampled, and data was collected through lesson observations and semi-structured interviews. Observation data was analysed using content analysis, while interview data was examined through thematic analysis. The findings reveal several challenges: learners' lack of interest in poetry, difficulties in explaining figurative language, fear of misinterpretation, limited English vocabulary, inadequate access to diverse poetry texts, overcrowded classrooms, time constraints, and insufficient teacher training and confidence. Teachers mainly used read-aloud and recitation methods to model pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation. These approaches gave learners opportunities to practice speaking English fluently but limited their engagement. Consequently, learner participation remained low, with few opportunities for critical thinking, personal interpretation, or emotional connection. Learners perceived poetry as abstract, irrelevant, and boring, which further reduced their willingness to participate. The study recommends adopting interactive and learner-centred strategies to address these challenges. These include discussion-based learning, dramatization, role-playing, group work, peer teaching, and question-and-answer techniques. Furthermore, integrating ICT tools—such as YouTube performances, recorded recitals, and animated poetry—can enhance learner engagement, comprehension, and confidence. By diversifying teaching approaches, teachers can foster creativity, encourage multiple interpretations, and make poetry more meaningful and accessible to learners.

**Keywords:** Poetry; Method-effectiveness; Scaffolding; Zone of Proximal Development.

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## INTRODUCTION

Poetry plays a very important role in English language learning because it gives learners many opportunities, such as learning how to play with language and exposing learners to different cultures (Diehl, 2021). It allows the integration of the four important language skills, which are writing, reading, speaking, and listening (Syed & Wahas, 2020). This is supported by Godsell (2019), who also believes that poetry can strengthen language skills. Poetry can also be used as a powerful tool for learning and inculcating vocabulary because learning vocabulary helps the learners to comprehend the meaning of sentences, semantic, and linguistics (Mohammed & Ruba, 2022). This suggests that adequate vocabulary helps the learners to focus on the stressed syllables and the meaning the poet intends to convey, and the personal feelings of the poet (Kadhim & Majed, 2021). However, vocabulary should not be taught in isolation because learners will have to memorize the word, and that leads to learners being passive. Teaching poetry in secondary schools is one of the major aspects of English First Additional Language (EFAL) in South Africa, as enshrined in the Department of Basic Education's CAPS (2011) document. Despite its inclusion in the curriculum and advantages, poetry is considered a genre that is well-known for its difficulty across the world, let alone EFAL classrooms in South Africa (Mavhiza, Grace, & Prozesky, 2020). Inculcating poetry in EFAL can be a challenging task, more especially in rural multilingual schools. Poetry makes a great contribution to the subject of English at the secondary level (Diehl, 2021). One of the reasons behind this problem includes a lack of competency and effective teaching methods (Raji, Ajelabi, & Sesan, 2019).

However, Mastura (2022) found that learners' lack of interest in learning poetry is due to its figurative language that is complex and difficult to interpret (Taufik & Hafilah, 2020). Instilling a sense of value and enjoyment in learners who lack interest in poetry due to poor teaching methods is one of the challenging tasks teachers face (Motlhaka, 2022). Sanoto and Walt (2018) argue that it is the teacher's task to instill interest in poetry by encouraging an extensive habit of reading. In addition, most of the learners facing difficulties with poetry are those without persuasion and encouragement from teachers to enhance independent reading (Kepe & Linake, 2019). According to Habibi, Chandra, Mahyunddin, and Hendri (2018), it is effective teaching methods for poetry capture the interest and participation of the learners. The study by Samson, Ezeokoli, and Ogunmola (2022) found teachers using the traditional method of teaching poetry, such as read-aloud, recitation, and paraphrasing. This prevents the learners' expression of views and personal understanding. This method also prevents learners' involvement (Khatib, 2011). This means that teachers practice a teacher-centred approach whereby a lesson centres on the teacher and learners are deprived of an opportunity to prove themselves. Hasan and Hasan (2019) argue that it is difficult to tell if teacher-centered or learner-centered is an appropriate method to teach literature. This means that the teaching methods depend on the type of learners and their needs. Several studies found that the use of traditional methods did not become effective nor promote participation (Jameel, 2014; Olalere, Peter, & Azeez, 2019). This shows that the teaching methods are the reason for all these challenges encountered by the learners. They found that some of the teachers do not promote engagement in their classroom because they resort to traditional methods. Arjunina (2022) asserts that reading aloud is important for language learners because reading aloud allows the learners to find meaning quickly as they read phrases as opposed to reading word by word. Suresh (2017) also argues that the effective way to introduce a poem is to read it aloud to the learners. Learners get to learn the language used in poems, and they can acquire skills on how to compose their own poems through reading aloud (Mehmet & Mustafa, 2022). Most English teachers use reading methods or strategies that are based on decoding words with emphasis on proficient reading and correct vocabulary definitions. After such a long, monotonous process, there are still some questions that need to be answered by the learners and approved by the teachers.

In many classrooms around the world, poetry appears to be seen as lacking intellectual and cultural relevance, contributing to its declining status. In South Africa, research suggests that teachers hesitate to teach poetry in English Second Language (ESL) classrooms because teachers view poetry as a sophisticated and intricate genre in the English curriculum (Ngidi, 2020; Syed & Wahas, 2020; Hlabisa,

2020; Motlhaka, 2022). Therefore, some teachers exclude poetry from their curricula or teach poetry mechanistically by providing the poem's meaning and urging learners to identify figures of speech and poetic devices (D'Abdon et al., 2020; Cooper, 2020). This approach fails to equip learners with the skills needed to analyse poetry in relation to an understanding of a poem's significance. However, it treats poetry as something to be memorised and regurgitated rather than comprehended and appreciated, thus exacerbating learners' anxieties in relation to poetry.

On the other hand, Hennessy et al. (2021) found that teachers exhibit low confidence in teaching poetry and that this leads to high levels of anxiety about their subject knowledge and, in turn, to ineffective teaching practices. This fear of teaching poetry contributes to learners' reluctance to engage with the genre, and this results in poor performance. This suggests that teachers who allow their negative personal experiences to shape their poetry teaching tend to favour teacher-centered, reductionist approaches focused on delivering prescribed content, and potentially neglecting the diverse learning needs of their learners. To address learners' and teachers' anxieties, studies suggest that teachers should discuss poetry teaching in community settings based on societal expectations, learners' social needs, and the skills necessary to address societal demands as a way of sharing their share their viewpoints in receiving encouragement and validation from peers, learners, mentors, and instructors (Mpungose & Khoza, 2022; Ngubane-Mokiwa & Khoza, 2021; Kohn Rådberg et al., 2020; Mbambo & Hlabisa, 2024). On the other hand, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) and Newfield and Manguendo (2006) suggested that the use of multimodal pedagogies addresses challenges encountered during the teaching of poetry. This may result in teachers teaching poetry with confidence because they are supported by societal consensus and are equipped with skills tailored to societal requirements through collaborative interactions.

This study is grounded in the social constructivism theory. The fundamental aspects within this theory, which served as a guide to this study, are the Zone of Proximal Development as proposed by Vygotsky and scaffolding by Jerome Bruner (Karim, Mohamad, & Saman, 2010). Vygotsky (1978), as cited by Zurek, Torquati, and Acar (2014), states that scaffolding is effective when applied in the ZPD, or the knowledge that is beyond what the child already has. Scaffolding relies on Vygotsky's conceptualization of the Zone of Proximal Development (Wilson & Devereux, 2014). In this study, this theory explains how teachers use their methods or approaches to provide support to learners to close the knowledge gap in learning poetry as they interact in the classroom. In applying the ZPD and scaffolding, it means that when the learners gain knowledge, the teachers gradually withdraw the support until the learners can work independently (Raslan, 2024). The social constructivism was used as a lens to explore the effectiveness of the methods used by the EFAL teachers to teach poetry. The study aimed to answer the following questions: "How effective do Grade 10 EFAL teachers use the teaching methods to teach poetry? What challenges do Grade 10 EFAL teachers encounter in their teaching of poetry?"

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the methods that Grade 10 EFAL teachers use to teach poetry. The study adopted the qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach focuses on the participants' behaviours and experiences (Gill & Baillie, 2018). This approach was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researchers to investigate the effectiveness of the teaching methods used by two Grade 10 EFAL teachers to teach poetry by providing rich and contextualized insights into teachers' experiences and methods.

### *Research Target/Subject*

The study focused on two EFAL teachers at two selected secondary schools in Mokopane Circuit, Mkgalakwena District, Limpopo province, South Africa. The two selected schools are situated in a rural area in which Sepedi Home Language is a dominant language spoken by both learners and teachers.

### *Instruments and Data Collection Techniques*

To collect data, the researchers used two instruments: classroom observations and semi-structured interviews.

1. Observations were conducted to determine the effectiveness of the methods used by teachers in teaching poetry. Through this process, the researchers were able to directly examine how the teaching methods were applied and how students responded to these methods during poetry lessons.
2. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers to gain deeper insight into their experiences in teaching poetry, including their reasons for choosing to teach poetry and the challenges they encountered.

These instruments allowed the researchers to gather both descriptive and in-depth qualitative data that supported the exploration of teaching methods and teacher experiences.

### ***Data analysis technique***

Two types of analysis were employed in this study: content analysis for observational data and thematic analysis for interview data.

#### ***Observation Data Analysis***

Content analysis was used to examine the data obtained through classroom observations. This method involved coding and categorizing the interactions between teachers and students during poetry lessons, allowing the researchers to identify patterns and classify the types of teaching practices observed in the classroom setting.

#### ***Interview Data Analysis***

Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the data collected from semi-structured interviews. Following transcription, the researchers repeatedly reviewed the interview data to become familiar with the responses. Themes were identified by attentively reading the transcripts and inductively producing preliminary codes that represented significant statements, experiences, and concepts shared by the participants (Saraswati, 2020). These codes were then grouped into broader categories that reflected common perspectives and challenges. The thematic analysis aimed to identify key themes addressing the research problem and to interpret the underlying meanings behind teachers' methods and the challenges they faced.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study investigated the effectiveness of the methods that two Grade 10 EFAL teachers use to teach poetry. The results of the observations presented below provide insights into different methods used by the teachers and their effectiveness in teaching poetry to Grade 10 EFAL learners. The observations were conducted at two selected schools. The duration of the lesson was one hour, and the observations were done during poetry lessons. Four lessons were observed in this study. The following criteria were used to establish the effectiveness: teaching methods/approaches, teaching strategies and activities, teachers' evidence of poetry knowledge, learning patterns learners show, level of learners' participation, challenges teachers face in teaching, learners' challenges, and overall impression of teaching and learning (is there effective teaching and learning?). The findings from the observation are organised according to the lessons presented. The results from the lesson observations provide an insight into the methods used by the teachers and their effectiveness in teaching poetry.

### ***School A -lesson 1 presentation***

The shared-reading aloud was used as a cooperative strategy to present the lesson on the poem "No Man Is an Island" by John Donne. The reading aloud was used as a teacher-learner-centered approach. The teacher distributed the copies of the poem to the learners, read the background information about the author, and explained the meaning of the basic features of the poem, style, diction, tone, mood, point of view, rhythm, rhyme, and different figures of speech. The teacher chose one learner randomly to read the poem. The learner refused to participate. She shook her head, and she kept quiet. The teacher picked another learner to read the poem aloud. The learner committed errors throughout as she could not read well some of the words like promontory, clod, diminishes, and thine. She did not reflect any confidence in reading.

However, the teacher requested other learners to correct the learner's pronunciation and explain the meaning of those words. No learner raised a hand to give the answers. Other learners whispered at the back that they did not have dictionaries. The teacher pronounced the words and provided the meaning of each word. A few learners sitting in the front row were busy jotting down some notes. Other learners frequently made noise whilst the teacher stopped the lesson to call them to order.

After the poem was read, the teacher asked the learners to identify and explain the figures of speech and the main themes of the poem. Five learners kept on engaging with the teacher with confidence, but provided wrong answers. Here are the examples of the answers provided by the learners, "theme is isolation, sir, "there is a use of personification in the line", and "any man's death diminishes me". The rest of the learners were all passive. The level of participation was very low. Learners did not show any interest. Some learners responded by saying that they do not know the answers without trying to respond. The teacher explained the figures, speech, and the main theme of the poem by reading from the study guide. The reading aloud reflected ineffective teaching and learning of poetry due to the learners being passive in the classroom.

### ***School A- Lesson 2 Presentation***

The teacher presented the lesson on the poem 'Cattle in the rain' by Maseamura Zimunya. The teacher used the interactive discussion teaching method through think-small group-share. The learners were grouped into 8 groups of 5, then connected the projector and displayed the poem on the whiteboard. The teacher introduced the poem by reading the background information about the author and the summary of the poem. This was done to give learners an insight into the poem before reading it. The poem, "Cattle in the rain" reveals the struggles of a young shepherd in rural Zimbabwe. The poem reveals the physical and emotional struggles experienced by the boy who is now an adult but looks back on his childhood experiences. Whilst the teacher presented, learners were too focused as the poem resonated with them. The teacher also explained the basic concepts in poetry, just like he did in the first lesson, pertaining to style, diction, tone, mood, point of view, rhythm, and figures of speech. The majority of the learners were focused, and some were busy copying the notes displayed on the whiteboard.

The other learner from another group volunteered to read the poem. The teacher frequently interrupted the learner to explain the vocabulary used in the poem line by line and to correct the pronunciation of the words. Examples of the words mispronounced by the learner are skelter, stampede, and penetrating. The teacher then assigned an activity to all groups to discuss the themes, figures of speech, tone, and point of view for ten minutes, and then presented their findings in front of the class. Other learners called the teacher frequently, asking for clarity on the meaning of some words, and indicated that they found it difficult to explain the meaning of other words, as they did not have a dictionary. Six groups presented their findings, and other groups asked follow-up questions, which were responded to by other groups, except for two groups that did not write the activity.

The teacher used different teaching strategies in both lesson presentations. In lesson 1, the teacher used reading aloud, and in lesson 2, he used interactive discussions through think-group share with the assistance of the projector (visual aid). However, the level of participation of the learners in lesson 1 was very low. The use of interactive discussion, along with the integration of projectors, enhanced the engagement and participation of learners. This method was more effective compared to the use of read-aloud in lesson one. The challenge observed in both lesson 1 and lesson 2 is that learners who read the poem struggle with the pronunciation of some words. This shows that some learners lack proficiency in the English language. This is supported by the study conducted in Nigeria by Ugwu and Eze (2023), who found that teachers complained about a lack of English language proficiency in reading.

Moreover, in both lessons, learners kept on mentioning a lack of a dictionary as one of the reasons for failing to explain the meaning of words from the poems. There are vast words in poetry. Therefore, more synonyms for a single word can be found, which is a way of developing vocabulary (Baki & Behbood, 2012). This means that learners are struggling with the vocabulary used in poetry. The results are also supported by Hasan and Hasan (2019), who argue that the language used in poetry is exceedingly difficult to understand, as the English language is foreign to many learners because of its extensive vocabulary. In

both lessons, the teacher showed his knowledge of poetry as he provided the answers when learners failed to respond to the questions. He provided relevant answers while giving examples. Although the majority of learners were constructive and active, the teacher struggled to maintain the focus of some of the learners in the classroom. This shows a lack of interest and a negative attitude towards poetry. However, Ardeshir and Servat (2015) assert that learners' attitude to poetry has a negative impact on any language skill that seeks to use poetry as a teaching material.

### ***School B- Lesson 1 presentation***

The teacher presented the poem 'How do I love thee?' by Elizabeth B. Brown. The teacher used the teacher-centred approach. The learners were provided with copies of the poem. Throughout the lesson, the teacher used read-aloud as a teaching method to teach poetry. The teacher never introduced and explained the basic features of poetry, such as figures of speech, rhyming schemes, stanzas, lines, and imagery, before presenting the poem to the learners. The teacher read the poem without explaining, followed by questions and answers. Learners were just passive, some looking outside the window, and were bored. Two learners out of fifty-six learners participated in responding to the questions. The teachers dismissed their answers as she relied on the answers from the study guide. Some learners asked the teacher to explain the poem in simple language. However, she read the summary, themes, figures of speech, and the meaning of some vocabulary used in the poem from the study guide, but did not explain how the meaning is conveyed. The learners kept on saying they did not understand the poem.

### ***School B – Lesson 2 Presentation***

The teacher presented the poem "Cattle in the rain" by Maseamura Zimunya. The teacher read the analysis of the poem from the study guide to the learners without explaining in depth. The figurative language and vocabulary were not clarified. The teacher posed the question to the learners from the study guide. Most learners were not active in responding to the questions. Learners kept emphasizing that they do not understand the poem at all. Although a few learners were active participants, they did not give correct answers. The teachers' frustration was obvious during the lesson presentation. The teacher wrote the notes on the board.

Learners in lessons 1 and 2 were too passive. Few learners who participated, their views were dismissed, as only the answers from the study guide were considered. Syed and Wahas (2020) also found that teachers offer ready-made analysis or explanation of the poem and often reject the learners' views. These findings are supported by the study conducted in South Africa by Cooper (2020) in two schools around Gauteng province, which shows that teachers depend on memorandums and study guides to teach poetry due to anxiety and lack of experience. This is also supported by Raji, Ajelabi, and Sesan (2019) in Nigeria, where teachers were also found to depend on revision textbooks. The teacher's teaching method and strategy reflected a lack of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in poetry of which contributes to the learning and teaching challenges of poetry. Olalere, Peter, and Azeez (2019) recommend that qualified teachers with great expertise should be recruited to secondary schools so that they can deliver the content on literature. This is because a lack of subject knowledge leads to poor use of teaching methods.

### ***Data Presentation Of Semi-Structured Interviews***

Two teachers from two selected schools were interviewed individually at different times. The data was captured through hard copies as both teachers refused to be audio recorded. The real identities of the teachers were omitted and identified as Teacher A and B. The schools were identified as school A and school B. The teachers were asked to comment on why they chose to teach poetry among other genres. The interview sought to identify the challenges they encounter when teaching EFAL poetry in Grade 10. The findings are organized according to the following questions:

#### ***What Challenges Do You Encounter When Teaching EFL Poetry In This Grade?***

The question above sought to explain the challenges encountered by the teachers when teaching poetry. The responses of the teachers were as follows:

*Teacher A: Lack of interest is the first thing that I face a challenge with; not all learners are interested in poetry. The complexity of language in some of the poems makes it difficult for me to teach poetry effectively to the learners. I must spend time searching for the meaning of some words before delivering the content. The Internet helps me a lot when it comes to searching for simplified notes. Time is also a problem; there is not enough time to cover all the poems.*

*Teacher B: The language used in poems is difficult to understand. It is full of figures of speech which most of which are confusing and difficult to explain without using a study guide. The worst thing is that there is a lack of reading books; learners rely on handouts. Another is overcrowding overcrowding classroom. I find it difficult to give all learners attention due to overcrowding because of a lack of time.*

The responses show that teachers are struggling to engage the learners in the lesson, as they do not show any interest in poetry. This makes the lesson difficult to teach. If learners are found not interested in the lesson taught, it becomes difficult for the teacher to teach effectively, and this also affects the learners' understanding of the topic. Lahmer (2015) argues that the teacher has the obligation to make learners like reading poetry. The difficulty in engaging learners in the lesson is also highlighted in the study conducted in Yemen by Syed and Wahas (2020), in which they argue that the most challenging task in teaching English poetry is developing a sense of value and enjoyment for learners who do not show any interest in learning poetry. Ogbonnaya (2022) claims that learners' performance is determined by their perceptions, and a positive perception motivates learners to do better in their subjects. This shows that the interest of the learners is embedded in the teaching methods and strategies used by the teacher. It is important to start the lesson with warm-up activities or a game that will rejuvenate them to stimulate their interest in the lesson. The teachers indicated that they have difficulty with figurative language used in the poems. This means that the teaching process becomes difficult as the teachers need to prepare before the lesson by relying on the internet and study guides. This proves that it is not only learners who are experiencing figurative language challenges, but also the teachers who are expected to help learners. This is supported by Eman and Malini (2022), who found that poetry is characterized by figurative language that surpasses the readers' interpretation and comprehension. The study by Cooper (2020) also concurs that poetry language is difficult, as revealed that even native speakers find the poetry language not easy to understand. This means that it is not easy for most learners doing EFAL to comprehend and enjoy learning because of the language barrier (Fitri, 2019). This is because of the figurative language used, difficult grammar, and complicated structures (Syed & Wahas, 2020).

Teacher B indicated that the lack of learners' poetry textbooks makes it difficult for the teacher to teach poetry. In this case, the learners rely on the handouts provided by the teacher. The researchers agree that the lack of teaching material plays a major role in the process of effective teaching and learning poetry, because the learners need to see what is being read for better recognition and interpretation of the language used in poetry. The shortage of learning materials is mostly due to overcrowded classrooms. The South African study by Liziwe and Mncube (2021) also found that overcrowded classrooms and a lack of resources are prevalent in South African schools, particularly in rural areas, in which large classrooms hinder the process of effective learning and teaching. This suggests that learners are not provided with individual attention to address their learning barriers because of overcrowding in the classroom.

### ***Which Teaching Methods/Approaches Do You Consider Your Best Options In Your Teaching Of Poetry In This Grade?***

This question sought to provide the methods or approaches that teachers use to teach poetry in Grade 10 English FAL. The following are the responses of the teachers:

*Teacher A: I prefer to use interactive discussion through think-small group-share and read-aloud.*

*Teacher B: To teach poetry, I use read-aloud and recitation. These are the methods that I prefer to use when teaching poetry.*

The responses above show that teachers use think-small group-share, read-aloud, and recitation to teach poetry. It shows that the teachers use various methods to teach poetry, as they are not stipulated in the CAPS document. This is supported by the study conducted in Nigeria by Alonge, Francis, and Ogunmola (2022), who found that teaching methods for poetry are not stipulated in the curriculum document for teachers to adopt. Therefore, this could be a contributing factor to the difficulty of teaching poetry. However, there is no single method that can be considered the best in every teaching situation (Nwakaego & Agwu, 2023). The findings show that reading aloud is used by teacher A and teacher B. However, the study by Suresh (2017) disagrees with the findings as it highlights that the effective strategy to teach poetry is to read it aloud, and it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to guide the learners through language acquisition by stimulating interest, engagement, and meaning of difficult words to enrich vocabulary and pronunciation. In addition, Bishnu (2020) argues that in using read aloud, teachers should ask the learners to read the poem for auditory effect, because the combination of syllables (stressed and unstressed) adds to the musical verse, and consequently, creates acoustic effects.

***In Your View, Why Do You Find These Methods/Approaches Most Suitable For The Teaching Of Poetry To Your Learners In This Grade?***

This question sought to explain how effective the Grade 10 EFAL teachers use the teaching methods/approaches to teach poetry.

*Teacher A: I think the application of interactive discussion through think-pair share and read aloud is the most effective because learners respond well to these methods. Participation in the classroom is great, and I do not have any doubt about these methods. This shows that they enjoy working and sharing ideas among themselves. Another thing is that these methods are suitable and effective with the small group that I have. It is easy to pair them and share ideas.*

*Teacher B: My choice in using read-aloud and recitation is that they are easy to apply, and they save time, especially when working with an overcrowded classroom like the one I teach. Most of my learners struggle to read, so most of the time I read them while explaining the poem to them, or I pick a learner who is fluent in reading. To determine whether they are effective or not is difficult because I also struggle as a teacher to understand poetry, so I do not expect a lot from my learners.*

The responses above show that teacher A has confidence in the effectiveness of read-aloud and interactive discussions through think-small group-share. In contrast, teacher B prefers using read-aloud and recitation for learners who cannot read fluently. However, the study by Marius (2011) argues that recitation of poems is ineffective in teaching poetry. The reading problem faced by learners is supported by Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016), who found that learners have reading challenges, as reading skill is not enforced all the time, and this is due to time constraints. The teacher plays a vital role in the learning process, and the methods they apply play an essential role in the quality of education (Syed & Wahas, 2020). It means that poor teaching affects the quality of education provided. It implies that teachers need to work on their teaching methods to deliver quality education. This explains the poor-quality results in English FAL. In addition, most teachers do not take the language subjects serious as they consider them as “must pass subjects” whilst learners are continuing to struggle in mastering the language. This Perception results in teachers being lazy and not putting in effort in preparing for the lessons. Khatib (2011) highlights that one of the problems that exacerbates learners’ difficulties in understanding poetry is the wrong selection of the text. This means that teachers select the poems that are difficult and that learners cannot relate to in terms of culture and their experiences. Proper selection of poetry text can result in enjoyment and exploration of the meaning of the text (Taufik & Hafilah, 2020).



## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of the teaching methods that Grade 10 teachers use to teach poetry. The findings revealed that the think-small-group share was found effective as most learners were actively participating in the teaching and learning, as compared to the read-aloud and recitation methods applied by the teachers to teach poetry. The findings also reveal that teachers often use read-aloud and recitation methods to model pronunciation, rhythm and intonation as well as to give learners the opportunity to practice speaking English fluently and confidently despite being ineffective methods to teach poetry because they lead to limited learner participation and reduce opportunities for critical thinking, personal interpretation and emotional connection with the poem hence learners find poetry to be abstract, boring, or irrelevant, leading to reluctant to participate. The study further found that teachers were underprepared to teach poetry due to insufficient training in poetic analysis and pedagogy; hence, there is a reliance on outdated, examination-focused approaches such as rote memorization of themes and devices, as well as read-aloud and recitation methods. This leads to the pressure to prepare learners for examinations and encourages surface-level teaching (e.g., identifying devices without understanding meaning), reducing the depth of engagement despite knowing that learners often struggle with poetic language—metaphors, symbolism, and archaic expressions, which hinders comprehension. The findings of this study are supported by the study conducted in Saudi Arabia by Jameel (2014), which found that the use of traditional teaching methods, such as teacher-centred as well as read-aloud and recitation methods, is ineffective and does not promote participation in the classroom.

The use of traditional methods by teachers is not only a concern in South African schools, but also in other countries, as revealed in the study conducted in Nigeria by Alonge, Francis, and Ogunmola (2022), which found that teachers are using traditional teacher-centred methods, which make learners passive because they lack expertise in teaching poetry. The study recommends that language policy makers should review the curriculum for English First Additional Language to ensure more flexible learner-responsive curricula to meet the needs and interests of the learners. The study recommends the integration of ICT tools such as YouTube performances, recorded recitals, and animated poetry to enhance learner engagement and comprehension and help learners explore multiple interpretations and build confidence in responding to poetry. The recommendations for integration of ICT in teaching poetry is supported by several studies which found that teachers' integration of ICT in teaching English literature demonstrates that the visual and audio aids provided enhanced the students' motivation to learn English literature since they contributed to making the students interested in reading the poem and understanding the abstract ideas in the poem (Aituganova, Sarekenova, Aubakir, Seiputanova, Karipbayev & Aimukhambet, 2023; Umar1& Maria, 2021; Abdullahi and Iyere, 2021; Ereke, Egba, & Agwu, 2022; Aituganova et al., 2023; Iroh, 2024).

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