Pedagogical Stylistics: Teaching isiXhosa Poetry at Further Education Training Phase Using Text World Theory Approach

Nontembiso Patricia Jaxa[a]

* Corresponding author:
Email: Nontembiso.jaxa@spu.ac.za
a. Humanities and Languages Department; School of Education, Sol Plaatje University, South Africa.

How to cite
Jaxa, N. P. (2024). Pedagogical stylistics: Teaching isiXhosa poetry at further education training phase using text world theory approach. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 7(1), 118-133.
https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2024.8

ABSTRACT

This article explores the integration of pedagogical stylistics, specifically text world theory, into the teaching of isiXhosa poetry in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. IsiXhosa, one of South Africa's official languages, possesses a rich poetic tradition that is deeply rooted in its culture and history. However, the effective transmission of the cultural significance and literary aesthetics of isiXhosa poetry to FET learners is challenging, because of limited availability of culturally relevant pedagogical methodologies. In this paper, we propose a novel approach, by incorporating pedagogical stylistics, a cross-disciplinary field that combines stylistic analysis and education theory into the teaching of isiXhosa poetry. In particular, the text world theory, developed by Werth, was utilised as an analytical framework, and an IsiXhosa poem was used as a model. The study adopted a qualitative-argumentation approach to analyse Chief Markers' Reports for the subject IsiXhosa Home Language regarding the performance of Grade 12 learners in the poetry section of this subject. The reports range from 2019 to 2022 and contain both quantitative and qualitative assessments. According to the reports, learners' scores are low and some fail the poetry section, which makes up 37.5% of the total mark of the literature paper in IsiXhosa Home Language. According to the Chief Markers' Reports, learners struggle to understand word meanings, context and textual meaning and they lack knowledge of literary and poetic devices. The findings of the study indicate that the text world theory approach can be useful to enhance learners' engagement with isiXhosa poetry, by encouraging them to participate actively in constructing meaning through their cultural and linguistic experiences. Moreover, the pedagogical stylistics approach facilitates the appreciation of poetic devices, themes and socio cultural contexts, which leads to a deeper understanding and connection with isiXhosa literary heritage.

KEYWORDS

isiXhosa; pedagogical stylistics; poetry; text world theory.

INTRODUCTION

This article examines the incorporation of pedagogical stylistics, with a focus on text world theory (TWT), to teach isiXhosa poetry during the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. Pedagogical stylistics originated with Widdowson (1975) and is a cross-disciplinary field, that merges stylistic analysis with education theory. It champions a learner-centred approach that emphasises learners' engagement with linguistic aspects of texts and their active role in meaning negotiation. This method underscores the importance of learners' personal and vicarious experiences in meaning enactment.

TWT, a subset of pedagogical stylistics, served as an analytical lens in this study. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to involve learners deeply in text analysis (Gavins, 2007). Pedagogical stylistics advocates for a language and context-sensitive teaching approach, which facilitates an understanding of the operation of a text, rather than merely its content (Giovanelli, 2010). As a branch of stylistics, pedagogical stylistics has value in that it can support the study of texts in contexts and discourse more widely (Hall, 2014). For poetry, this methodology enriches learners' appreciation of linguistic and literary devices, themes and socio-cultural contexts. Understanding these elements is crucial for a comprehensive interpretation of both written and spoken works. Such an approach fosters critical thinking, and empowers learners to question, evaluate and support information effectively.

IsiXhosa, one of South Africa's official languages, boasts a rich poetic tradition that is deeply embedded in its culture and history. Unique to isiXhosa poetry are its proverbial and metaphorical expressions, which distinguish it from other African and global poetic forms. This uniqueness, as Diko (2023) explains, should be viewed not as a comparative discourse, but as an acknowledgment of the exclusive elements of the poetry of the amaXhosa –the isiXhosa-speaking people. In African culture, the value of poetry is manifested in the high esteem accorded to traditional poets, who are seen as custodians of language, history, culture and traditions, particularly in amaXhosa communities. The potential of poetry to foster linguistic mastery, cultural values and traditions is immense, especially compared to other genres, such as novels, dramas and short stories. Through poetry analysis, learners develop a nuanced understanding of their social and personal identities and thereby reinforce the integral role of poetry in education.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of the Department of Basic Education in South Africa (2011) underscores the role of isiXhosa literature in deepening learners' linguistic understanding. It emphasises the meticulous and creative use of language in discussing social, economic, historical and political issues. Accordingly, as outlined by the CAPS, poetry teaching is vital for enhancing learners' linguistic skills, and compelling them to explore underlying meanings.

It is crucial that IsiXhosa Home Language learners' poor performance in poetry, especially in Paper 2, is addressed. The Department of Basic Education *Diagnostic Reports* (2019, 2020,

2021, 2022) indicate a consistent struggle in this area. This challenge is significant, because poor performance in poetry can adversely affect learners' overall success in IsiXhosa Home Language examinations, which, in turn, affects their entire academic trajectory.

This article responds to a number of pivotal questions: What factors contribute to IsiXhosa Home Language learners' difficulties in understanding the interplay of meanings and poetic devices in poems? How can the process-driven thinking approach of TWT aid in poem comprehension and interpretation? What strategies can isiXhosa teachers and the Department of Basic Education employ to address these challenges? The objectives of the article are twofold: to identify pedagogical challenges that affect learners' poetry performance in isiXhosa Home Language in the FET phase, and to illustrate the efficacy of the three tiered levels of TWT for improving isiXhosa Home Language learners' poetry comprehension and interpretation skills.

Given these objectives, this article explores the existing scholarly landscape, by acknowledging contributions and identifying gaps in isiXhosa poetry teaching. While scholars abroad and in South African have extensively researched cognitive and emotional benefits of studying poetry, few have focused specifically on isiXhosa poetry teaching. This review reveals the need for more culturally relevant pedagogical methodologies, particularly for conveying the cultural significance and literary aesthetics of isiXhosa poetry to FET phase learners.

To enrich our understanding of its role in the isiXhosa curriculum, this study investigated various scholarly interpretations of poetry by building on the contextual background. Cramer (2001) distinguishes poetry from other literary genres, because of its primacy as the first form of literature, and its oral tradition, which people experience from birth. Ollila and Jantas (2006) describe poetry as a rhythmic verbal or written expression that tells a story or conveys emotions, ideas or states of being. Bennett and Christopher (2011) conceptualise poetry as an art form that uses heightened language to communicate experiences, feelings or modes of consciousness. These definitions collectively highlight the emotional resonance of poetry and its deep-rooted presence in human and social lives, as articulated through language.

Significance of IsiXhosa Poetry in Education

Reflecting on these academic perspectives, it becomes evident that isiXhosa poetry teaching at the FET phase should incorporate learners' background knowledge, experiences, language preferences and the poet's intentions and emotions. This consideration is crucial for a holistic understanding of poetry. Poetry, as understood in this article, is not merely a collection of words, but a vessel for expressing human feelings, experiences, and perceptions of life, and is characterised by a carefully chosen language and structure. It resonates with the human response to the universe and demonstrates the undeniable importance of learning poetry.

CAPS Recommendations and Challenges in Teaching IsiXhosa Poetry

According to the CAPS, effective poetry teaching in IsiXhosa Home Language includes reading poems aloud, producing original poetry, focusing on text creation and manipulation, and

assigning writing activities that demand close textual understanding. These approaches aim to enhance learners' literary appreciation, critical thinking and language awareness.

Despite these guidelines, IsiXhosa Home Language learners continue to underperform in the poetry section of Paper 2, which is a significant concern, as highlighted in the Department of Basic Education's *Diagnostic Reports* (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022). The reports attribute this underperformance to learners finding it difficult to understand word meanings, textual significance and poetic devices. This problem is exacerbated by varying preferences for genres in subsequent sections of the IsiXhosa Home Language Paper 2, which probably affect learners' overall performance.

Research Questions and Objectives

This article seeks to address three critical questions: 1) Why do isiXhosa Home Language learners struggle to interpret meanings and poetic devices in poems? 2) How can the process-driven approach of TWT aid in improving learners' comprehension and interpretation of poetry? 3) What measures can isiXhosa teachers and the Department of Basic Education take to mitigate these challenges?

The objectives are clear: to pinpoint pedagogical obstacles in poetry assessment and demonstrate how TWT can effectively improve comprehension and interpretation skills in isiXhosa Home Language poetry for FET phase learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND GAP ANALYSIS

A thorough literature review reveals varied findings on the role of poetry in cognitive and emotional development (Dymoke, 2012; Wilson, 2013) and its role in decolonising curricula (D'Abdon, 2016; Dutta, 2021; Minor, 2016; Ramazani, 2009). Challenges, such as lack of interest by learners (Hanratty, 2012), curriculum and pedagogy issues (Bouguelmouna & Benzoukh, 2021; Castiglione, 2017; Cooper, 2016; Cooper, 2020; Jacob, et al., 2018; Irmawati, 2012; Ramadhanti & Yanda, 2018) and cultural marginalisation (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002), have been identified. Other studies concerning contextualisation of IsiXhosa poetry (Hatcher, 2001; Mona, 2014) were also consulted. Studies on attitudes towards the teaching and learning of poetry (Nyembe, 2021; Sibisi & Tappe, 2020; Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019), the challenges in understanding poetic concepts and language (Mastura, 2022; Linaberger, 2004; Røddik & Rainsford, 2016) and the effects of teaching methods (Benton, 2000; Gxekwa & Satyo, 2017; Makhenyane, 2024; Sigvardsson, 2019) were identified.

This literature review highlights multiple gaps concerning poetry learning and teaching, though the interest of this research is specifically the teaching of IsiXhosa poetry at the FET phase. That gap is evident, and it is what the study reported in this article seeks to address, by emphasising the need for culturally relevant pedagogical approaches, particularly for conveying the cultural significance and literary aesthetics of isiXhosa poetry to learners in the FET phase. The potential of TWT as a teaching approach and its alignment with the CAPS framework will be

explored in depth, with the intention to offer a fresh perspective on enhancing isiXhosa poetry education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A detailed overview of the TWT and its application in poetry analysis forms an important part of addressing the research questions and objectives stated in this article. To align the TWT framework with the research focus, it is important to contextualise how TWT can be used effectively for teaching isiXhosa poetry at the FET phase, particularly in light of the challenges identified in the isiXhosa Home Language *Diagnostic Reports*.

Aligning Research Questions and Objectives

Understanding Learners' Struggles: The first research question explores why learners struggle to interpret meanings and poetic devices in isiXhosa poetry. TWT, with its multilayered approach (discourse world, text world, and subworld), offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how learners engage with poetry. It provides a structured way to analyse the interaction between the learner (reader) and the poem, by considering their background knowledge, linguistic skills and cultural understanding.

Efficacy of TWT in Teaching: The second question relates to how TWT can assist learners with comprehension and interpretation. The detailed description of each layer of TWT demonstrates how this theory can be applied in a classroom setting. For example, teachers can use the 'discourse world' to connect the content of the poem with learners' experiences and background knowledge, thereby making the poetry more relatable and understandable.

Addressing Pedagogical Challenges: The objectives of the study include identifying pedagogical challenges and demonstrating how TWT can improve comprehension and interpretation skills. The detailed scholarly description of TWT provides a foundation for developing teaching strategies that address these challenges. By applying TWT, teachers can break down the analysis of a poem into manageable parts, thereby helping learners to navigate complex poetic forms and themes more effectively.

Application of TWT in Framing Results

The poem 'Usana' by Z. S. Qangule will be utilised as a teaching apparatus to demonstrate the application of TWT for teaching isiXhosa poetry. This practical application serves as a case study for framing the results of the research.

Discourse World Analysis: In analysing 'Usana', the study explored how the context of the poem and the learners' background (including their cultural and linguistic knowledge) influence learners' understanding. This analysis will reveal the extent to which contextual factors affect poetry comprehension in the isiXhosa Home Language curriculum.

Text World Analysis: This layer involves a detailed examination of the language, structure and world the poem creates. The study will analyse how learners engage with these elements of the poem and the challenges they face in interpreting its content.

Subworld/World Switches Analysis: The research explored the deeper meanings, attitudes and perspectives presented in the poem. This analysis will focus on how learners navigate these subworlds and their ability to understand and interpret the more nuanced aspects of the poem.

The detailed overview of TWT provides a robust theoretical framework that aligns with the research questions and objectives. The application of TWT to analyse 'Usana' serves as a practical example of how this theory can be employed in the classroom to enhance the teaching and learning of isiXhosa poetry.

Analytical Framework

Integrating TWT into the teaching of isiXhosa poetry offers a promising approach to address the pedagogical challenges identified by the isiXhosa Home Language *Diagnostic Reports*. By applying TWT, teachers can support learners in their engagement with poetry, in a way that leverages their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and promotes a deeper understanding of literary aesthetics and cultural significance.

Pre-reading Activities: The pre-reading stage is instrumental for setting the stage for learners' engagement with 'Usana'. It is during this phase that teachers can activate learners' schematic knowledge to prepare them for the thematic and emotional depth of the poem. By asking probing questions that resonate with learners' experiences, teachers can bridge the gap between the learners' world and the world of the poem, thereby laying a solid foundation for meaningful interaction with the text.

While-Reading Activities: As learners engage with the poem, the TWT framework becomes important for guiding their interpretation. Each stanza of 'Usana' presents an opportunity for learners to navigate the discourse world of the poem – the social and cultural context from which the poem emerges – and the text world – the poem's narrative space. The teacher's role here is to clarify the linguistic structures and the cultural nuances that shape the meaning of the poem, and to draw attention to specific word choices, images and metaphors that encapsulate the poet's message.

Discourse World: In addressing the discourse world of 'Usana', the teacher encourages learners to draw on their own experiences and cultural knowledge to interpret the title and content of the poem. This level of analysis emphasises the interaction between the poet's intentions and the learners' interpretations, and highlights the relevance of the themes of the poem to the learners' lives. The questions raised in this stage prompt learners to consider their own emotions and experiences in relation to the arrival of a new life, which fosters empathy and a personal connection to the poem.

Text World: At the text world level, the focus shifts to the language of the poem itself. The learners are guided to explore the enactors, settings, and events described in the poem by using linguistic cues to build a mental representation of the world of the poem. Teachers can encourage learners to visualise the scenes described in the poem, and perhaps even ask them

to create sketches of their interpretations. This visual approach can deepen comprehension and help them to remember the themes and emotions of the poem.

World Switches/Subworld: The world switches, or subworlds, in 'Usana' represent shifts in time, place or perspective in the poem. Teachers guide learners to identify and analyse these shifts, which often signal changes in tone, mood or thematic focus. Recognising these shifts is essential for understanding the progression of the narrative and the evolution of the emotional landscape of the poem.

Post-Reading Activities: After engaging with the poem, post-reading activities provide learners with opportunities to synthesise and evaluate the poem as a whole. Teachers can design questions that encourage learners to form interpretations, draw conclusions and articulate their own responses to the themes and messages of the poem.

Assessment in isiXhosa Poetry: The assessment of isiXhosa poetry should reflect the pedagogical goals of fostering deep comprehension and interpretive skills. Based on the CAPS guidelines, teachers are encouraged to assess learners on a variety of poetic elements. TWT-informed assessment tasks can be designed to evaluate learners' ability to analyse textual details and literary effects, and enhance their preparedness for the unseen-poetry questions in exams.

The integration of TWT into isiXhosa poetry teaching aligns with the objectives of enhancing learners' comprehension and interpretive skills. By applying the TWT framework systematically, teachers can offer learners a structured yet flexible approach to analysing poetry. This approach not only addresses the challenges identified in the *Diagnostic Reports*, but also empowers learners to connect with the isiXhosa poetic tradition in a meaningful and culturally resonant way.

The application of TWT in the teaching of 'Usana' serves as a practical illustration of the potential of the theory. Through TWT, teachers can elucidate the social, functional and cognitive aspects of language, to highlight how a poem conveys meaning and how learners interpret it. This detailed exploration of TWT demonstrates its efficacy in fostering a learner-centred, context-rich learning environment that honours the isiXhosa literary heritage and supports the academic development of FET phase learners.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study was qualitative and exploratory, and focused on understanding the nuances and complexities of isiXhosa poetry teaching. The primary data source of this study is the isiXhosa Home Language Diagnostic Reports for 2019 to 2022. The focus on the Reports is on isiXhosa Home Language Paper 2 in the poetry section; on the performance of the Grade 12 IsiXhosa Home Language learners in the November/ December examination. The qualitative exploratory approach allows for a deep, qualitative examination of existing data, to understand the challenges Grade 12 learners face in isiXhosa poetry assessment. Since this was a qualitative

exploratory research study, a non-probability method was used to select the participants: six Grade 12 IsiXhosa Home Language learners from two senior secondary schools in the Chris Hani District of the Eastern Cape were sampled and taught the poem 'Usana' using the TWT approach. They had to respond to the questions based on the three tiers of the TWT, provided by the researcher, consistent with the three-steps reading process stipulated in the CAPS.

Document Analysis

Selection and Examination of Documents: The core of this study involved a detailed analysis of the isiXhosa Home Language *Diagnostic Reports* over four consecutive years. These documents were chosen for their relevance and the rich insights they offer into learners' performance, specifically in the poetry section.

Data Extraction: Key information, including performance metrics, challenges identified and observations and recommendations made by markers were extracted from these reports. This process involved carefully reading and cataloguing relevant data that pertain directly to the research questions.

Coding and Thematic Identification: The extracted data were subjected to a coding process. This involved identifying and categorising themes and patterns that emerged from the reports, for instance, common areas of difficulty for learners, frequently mentioned pedagogical challenges or recurring recommendations by markers.

Analysis Using the TWT Framework: The TWT, a key component of pedagogical stylistics, served as the analytical lens. Each aspect of the data were examined in terms of how TWT could address the challenges that had been identified, for example, understanding how the different layers of TWT – discourse world, text world and subworld – can provide insights into the difficulties learners face, and suggest potential solutions.

Synthesis and Interpretation: The final stage involved synthesising the coded data and interpreting it in the context of TWT. This synthesis aims to construct a cohesive narrative that connects the challenges of teaching and learning isiXhosa poetry with the potential efficacy of TWT. This interpretive process also critically evaluated the feasibility and applicability of TWT in the FET phase isiXhosa curriculum.

Expected Outcomes

Through this methodical document analysis, the research aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the current state of isiXhosa poetry teaching at the Grade 12 level. The study offers insights into how TWT can be strategically integrated into teaching practices to enhance comprehension, interpretation and appreciation of isiXhosa poetry by learners. This research will contribute to the broader discourse on effective pedagogical strategies in the context of South African language education, with a specific focus on IsiXhosa Home Language.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the context of a TWT-infused classroom, learners' responses to questions about the poem 'Usana' reflect their engagement with the discourse world, the text world and the subworlds of the poem. The data in Table 1 explore learners' responses that emerged from using TWT as the guiding framework.

Integrating TWT into the teaching of isiXhosa poetry is an innovative approach to addressing the interpretive challenges faced by learners in the FET phase. The responses of the six learners to the poem 'Usana' demonstrate the effectiveness of TWT in fostering a deeper comprehension and appreciation of isiXhosa poetry, as evidenced by their varied and insightful interpretations.

Engaging with Personal and Cultural Associations

The learners' responses to the initial question about the elements they would include in a poem about a baby reveal a rich tapestry of personal and cultural associations. These responses align with literature that emphasises the importance of engaging learners in poetry through personal experiences and emotions (Benton, 2000; Sigvardsson, 2019). The TWT framework encourages learners to tap into their schema and to connecting the poem's themes to their own lives, which is crucial for fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of the text.

Activating Background Knowledge and Experiences

The learners' reflections on their feelings when a new baby arrived in their family showcase the activation of background knowledge and experiences. This activation is a key aspect of TWT, as it encourages learners to draw upon their own experiences to interpret the text (Werth, 1999). The incorporation of personal emotions into the analysis of poetry echoes Giovanelli's (2010) emphasis on the importance of context-sensitive teaching approaches in literature.

Setting Expectations and Engaging with Potential Themes

The learners' anticipation of themes to be addressed in the poem highlights their engagement with the potential themes and the figurative language characteristic of poetry. This engagement echoes the literature that underscores the importance of thematic exploration in poetry (Linaberger, 2004; Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019). TWT assists learners to set expectations for the poem and prepares them for a deeper thematic exploration.

Narrative Voice and Point of View

The identification of the narrative voice and point of view in 'Usana' by the learners illustrates the emphasis of the TWT framework on these aspects. As noted by scholars such as Ollila and Jantas (2006), understanding the speaker's perspective and the rhetorical devices used in poetry is fundamental for a comprehensive interpretation. TWT aids in this understanding by guiding learners to identify the voice behind the poem.

Constructing the Setting and Contextualising the Narrative

Learners' responses regarding the setting of 'Usana' demonstrate their ability to construct the setting and contextualise the narrative – an essential skill in poetry analysis. This skill aligns with

Cramer's (2001) distinction of poetry from other literary genres through its ability to create vivid imagery and a sense of place. TWT enhances this skill by encouraging learners to visualise and contextualise the world of the poem.

Synthesising Thematic Understanding and Emotional Resonance

The learners' responses to the final question, about the message conveyed by the poet in 'Usana', illustrate their ability to synthesise thematic understanding and emotional resonance. This ability is crucial if they are to do a comprehensive interpretation of the poem's message and its literary significance, as explained by Bennett and Christopher (2011). TWT facilitates this synthesis by guiding learners through a structured yet flexible approach to analysing poetry.

In conclusion, the application of TWT in the teaching of isiXhosa poetry at the FET phase enriches learners' interpretive skills and enhances their appreciation of the poetic form. The learners' varied responses to 'Usana' demonstrate the effectiveness of TWT in promoting a learner-centred, context-rich learning environment. By fostering a deep engagement with the text through personal and cultural contexts, TWT offers a powerful tool for teachers to unlock the full potential of isiXhosa poetry in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The integration of TWT into the teaching of isiXhosa poetry at the FET phase represents a significant advancement in pedagogical approaches. Analysis of learner responses to the isiXhosa poem 'Usana' demonstrates the efficacy of TWT in enhancing learners' comprehension, interpretive skills and engagement with the text. TWT facilitates a deeper exploration of poetry by encouraging learners to draw on their personal and cultural experiences, engage with thematic and figurative elements, and understand the narrative structure and emotional resonance of the poem.

Through TWT, learners can participate actively in the construction of meaning and bridging their world with the world of the text. This approach aligns with the emphasis in the literature on the importance of context-sensitive teaching methods and the critical role of personal experiences in literature education. The findings of this analysis resonate with the challenges identified in the IsiXhosa Home Language *Diagnostic Reports*, which highlight the need for innovative strategies to address learners' struggles with poetry comprehension and interpretation.

In conclusion, the application of TWT in isiXhosa poetry teaching offers a transformative approach to enhancing learners' literary skills. By aligning teaching methods with learners' personal and cultural experiences, TWT provides a comprehensive and engaging framework for understanding and appreciating isiXhosa poetry. The recommendations outlined above aim to support teachers, learners and policymakers to effectively integrate this approach with the isiXhosa curriculum, thereby enriching the educational experience and fostering a deeper connection with isiXhosa literary heritage.

Recommendations

The curriculum section of the Department of Basic Education can include the TWT as supplementary to the approaches that are stipulated in the CAPS. The provincial subject planners of the provinces that offer IsiXhosa Home Language must consider training workshops for both the subject education specialists and FET phase IsiXhosa Home Language teachers, specifically on how to teach poetry and the TWT be introduced, as it has been found to be a useful tool for teaching IsiXhosa Home Language poetry. IsiXhosa FET learners need to be familiarised and encouraged to use the TWT approach, even on their own, as it will assist them to find and generate the interplaying meanings of a poem.

Limitations

This research was subject to limitations. One of them is that of using a relatively small number of participants, that is, only six learners. Also, the learners were in Grade 12, and might have had relatively advanced poetry analysis skills, compared to learners in lower FET phase grades.

REFERENCES

Bennett, K., & Christopher, L. (2011). *What is poetry?* https//www.palmbeachstate.edu. Studocu.

Benton, P. (2000). The conveyor belt curriculum? Poetry teaching in secondary school: Part h. *Oxford Review of Education, 26*(1), 81–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/030549800/03872

Bouguelmouna, A., & Benzoukh, H. (2021). The effectiveness of the text world theory approach in analyzing literary texts in the EFL classroom. *Al-Athar, Special Issue,* 298–304.

Castiglione, D. (2017). Difficulty poetry processing: Reading times and the narrativity hypothesis. *Language and Literature: International Journal of Stylistics, 26*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/009182960102900406

Cooper, A. (2016). *Dialogue in places of learning: Youth amplified in South Africa*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315638775

Cooper, A. (2020). 'That's schoolified'. How curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment shape the educational potential of poetry in subject English for Black high school learners. *Education as Change*, *24*. https://dx.doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/7600

Cramer, S. (2001). Singer. *Poetry, 179*(2), 66. https://www.jstor.org/stable/i20605465.

Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum and assessment policy statement, Grade 10–12: English Home Language*. DBE, South Africa.

Department of Basic Education. (2019). *Diagnostic reports. Part 2 Languages.* Senior Certificate. DBE, South Africa.

Department of Basic Education. (2020). *Diagnostic reports. Part 2 Languages.* Senior Certificate. DBE, South Africa.

Department of Basic Education. (2021). *Diagnostic reports. Part 2 Languages.* Senior Certificate. DBE, South Africa.

Department of Basic Education. (2022). *Diagnostic reports. Part 2 Languages.* Senior Certificate. DBE, South Africa.

D'Abdon, R. (2016). Teaching spoken word poetry as a tool for decolonizing and Africanizing the South African curricula and implementing 'literocracy'. *Scrutiny 2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa, 21*(2), 44–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/18125441.2016.1192676

Diko, M. (2023). Education and drug abuse in two selected poems produced by Anelisa Thengimfene: A literary critique of content. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science, 12*(2), 588–597. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v12i2.2070

Dutta, U. (2021). The politics and poetics of 'field notes': Decolonizing ethnographic knowing. *Qualitative Inquiry, 27*(5), 598–607. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420935919

Dymoke, S. (2012). Opportunities or constraints? Where is the space for culturally responsive poetry teaching within high stakes testing regimes at 16+ in Aotearoa New Zealand and England? *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 11*(4), 19–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684x.2012.736741

Gavins, J. (2007). *Text world theory: An introduction*. Blackwell.

Giovanelli, M. (2010). Pedagogical stylistics: A text world theory approach to teaching poetry. *English in Education, 44*(3).

Gonzalez, N., & Mall, L. C. (2002). Cruzando el puente: Building bridges to funds of knowledge. *Educational Policy, 16*(4), 623–641. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904802016004009

Gxekwa, N., & Satyo, N. (2017). The use of isiXhosa children's poetry as a tool to integrate literacy, mathematics, and life skills in the foundation phase: Grade R–3. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 7*(1), a530. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v7i1.530

Hall, G. (2014). *Pedagogical stylistics*. University of Nottingham.

Hanratty, T. (2012). Knowledge elicitation to prototype the value of information. In *Proceedings of the 23 Midwest Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science Conference (MAICS 2012)*. Academia.edu.

Hatcher, M.J. (2001). Poetry, singing and contextualization. *Missiology: An International Review, 29*(4), 475–487. https://doi.org/10.1177/00918296

Irmawati, N.D. (2012). Communicative Approach: An Alternative Method Used in Improving Students' Academic Reading Achievement. English Language Teaching (5)7. DOI: 10.5539/elt.v5n7p90

Jacob, F., et al. (2018). *Poetry across the curriculum: New methods of writing intensive pedagogy for US community college and undergraduate education.* Brill. https://amazon.com

Linaberger, M. (2004). Poetry top 10: A foolproof formula for poetry. *Read, Teach, 58*(4), 366–372.

Makhenyane, L.E. (2024). The use of augmented reality in the teaching and learning of isiXhosa poetry. *Journal of the Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa, 5*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.55492/dhasa.v5i1.5023

Mastura, M. (2022). An analysis of the students' difficulties in understanding poetry. *Jurnal Serambi Mekkah.* https://doi.org/10.32672/claste.v312.4738

Minor, M. (2016). *Decolonizing thorough poetry in the indigenous prairie context* (Doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba). http://hdl.handle.net/1993/31733

Mona, G. V. (2014). *A century of isiXhosa written poetry and the ideological contest in South Africa* (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, Rhodes University).

Nyembe, M. W. (2021) *Challenges faced by Grade 11 learners when studying English first additional language poetry* (Unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Pretoria).

Ollila, B., & Jantaz, J. (2006, December 15). *The definition of poetry.* https://joejantas.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/the-definition-of-poetry1.pdf

Ramadhanti, D., & Yanda, D. P. (2018). Understanding poetry through the use of cooperative model. *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan*. https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v83i320675

Ramazani, J. (2009). *Poetry and decolonization. Companion to postwar British and Irish poetry.* Blackwell Publishing.

Røddik, J. K., & Rainsford, D. (2016, April 13). The difficulties of poetry. An analysis of the 'Emperor of Ice-Cream'. Adjusting to Poetry: From Easy to Difficult. https://www.academia.edu/25013156/The_Difficulties_of_Poetry_An_Analysis_of_The_Emperor_of_Ice_Cream

Sibisi, M., & Tappe, H. (2020). Tertiary students' attitudes towards contemporary poetry in isiZulu as a tool to enhance access to academic content. *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 29*(1). https://doi.org/10.53228/njas.v29i1.491

Sigvardsson, A. (2019). Don't fear poetry! Secondary teachers' key strategies for engaging with poetic texts. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 64*(6), 953–966. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2019.1650823

Timothy, A. E., & Obiekezie, E. O. (2019). Fear of poetry among preservice teachers in Nigeria. *Heliyon, 5*(12), e03010. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e03010

Werth, P. (1999). *Text worlds: Representing conceptual space in discourse*. London.

Widdowson, H. G. (1975). *Stylistics and the teaching of literature*. Longman.

Wilson, A. 2013. A joyous lifeline in a target-driven job: Teachers' metaphors of teaching poetry writing. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 43*(1), 69–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2012.749217

Table 1.

Responses from six learners (A–F) to various questions about the poem 'Usana'

Question	Response of Learner A	Response of Learner B	Response of Learner C	Response of Learner D	Response of Learner E	Response of Learner F	TWT interpretation
What are five things you'd mention in a poem about a baby?	Innocence, hope, family dynamics, love, challenges.	Smiles, cries, growth, curiosity, family love.	Laughter, innocence, new beginnings, family joy, sleepless nights.	Playfulness, dependence, new hope, family bonds, sleeplessness.	Cuteness, vulnerability, new life, family warmth, challenges.	Joy, new responsibilities, family changes, love, sleeplessness.	Engaging with personal and cultural associations, reflecting on the poetic representation of universal themes such as innocence and familial bonds.
Your feelings when a new baby arrived in your family?	Excitement, a bit of jealousy, happiness and change.	Wonder, curiosity, increased family bonding.	Surprise, happiness, responsibility and a sense of maturity.	Love, anxiety, responsibility and a sense of protection.	A mix of joy and worry, sense of responsibility and love.	Mixed feelings of excitement and nervousness, sense of growth.	Activating personal experiences and emotions, linking to the emotional depth and narrative power of poetry in depicting life transitions.
Two questions you anticipate being answered in the poem.	Effect of a baby on parents? Societal expectations for a newborn?	How does a baby change a family? Baby's perspective on the world?	How does a baby's arrival impact family relationships? What are the challenges faced?	What joys does a baby bring? What worries accompany a new baby?	How does the baby perceive the world? What does the baby symbolise?	How does a baby affect the family dynamic? What is the baby's view of the world?	Setting expectations and engaging with potential themes, preparing learners for thematic exploration and the figurative language that characterises poetry.
What does the title 'Usana' suggest to you?	'Usana' means 'baby', so about a baby's life or societal role.	A focus on a baby's experiences and feelings.	Possibly about a baby's innocence and the purity of new life.	The poem might focus on the baby's world and experiences.	Insights into a baby's life and its significance.	It could be about the experiences and feelings of a newborn.	Connecting title to anticipated content and themes, fostering an understanding of symbolism and metaphor as used in poetic expression.
What do you think this poem is about?	Contrast between baby's peace and world's chaos.	Baby's perspective and its impact on	The baby's role in the family and its effect on the household.	Reflections on a baby's life and its meaning in the family.	The juxtaposition of a baby's innocence and	The significance of a baby in the family and its wider impact.	Forming initial interpretations of theme and tone, crucial for appreciating the mood, imagery and narrative style of the poem.

Question	Response of Learner A	Response of Learner B	Response of Learner C	Response of Learner D	Response of Learner E	Response of Learner F	TWT interpretation
		family and society.			the complexities of life.		
Can you make connections with what you read about 'Usana'?	Babies as symbols of innocence and joy amidst life's troubles.	Connection to innocence and purity in a complex world.	It reflects the simplicity and beauty of life through a baby's eyes.	Babies remind us of the beginning of life and the joy it brings.	The baby as a metaphor for new beginnings and innocence.	Babies symbolise new beginnings and the purity of life.	Relating the poem to personal and cultural contexts, drawing parallels between the text and learners' experiences, a key aspect of interpretive reading in literature.
Who is the voice in this poem?	An observer, maybe a parent or family member.	A family member reflecting on the baby's impact.	A reflective narrator, possibly a close family member.	A reflective voice, contemplating the baby and life.	A contemplative voice, perhaps a family member or poet.	A reflective and observant narrator, close to the baby's life.	Identifying narrative voice and point of view, crucial for understanding the speaker's perspective and the rhetorical devices used in poetry.
Where do the events in the poem take place?	At home, discussing warmth and challenges.	Primarily in a family setting, with emotional depth.	Seems like it's in a home, symbolising comfort and challenges.	In the family home, representing safety and life's challenges.	Mostly in the home, symbolising a safe haven with underlying challenges.	Takes place in a home, capturing the warmth and complexities of family life.	Constructing the setting and contextualising the narrative, appreciating how poets create vivid imagery and a sense of place within a poem.
Are there any shifts in the poem that you noticed?	Shift from baby's state to what the baby represents.	From describing the baby to its symbolic meaning.	Transition from the external environment to the baby's impact.	Change from describing surroundings to focusing on the baby.	Shift from general observations to the deeper meaning of the baby's presence.	Shift from external descriptions to the internal impact of the baby.	Recognising narrative shifts and thematic evolution, essential for understanding the dynamic nature of poetry and the poet's craft in structuring a narrative.
What message is the poet conveying	Baby as a symbol of life's complexity,	Exploring the duality of joy and fear in new life.	The paradox of life's joy and struggles	Life's journey from innocence to complexity,	The essence of life's beauty and challenges	A representation of life's beauty and the	Synthesising thematic understanding and emotional resonance, crucial for a comprehensive interpretation

Question	Response of Learner A	Response of Learner B	Response of Learner C	Response of Learner D	Response of Learner E	Response of Learner F	TWT interpretation
through 'Usana'?	innocence and hope.		represented by a baby.	seen through a baby.	embodied in a baby.	challenges it brings.	of the poem's message and its literary significance.