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DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

Love
That
Poem

Approaches to Teaching Poetry in the English Foreign
Language Classroom

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Content

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

> Literature is an inexpressibly special kind of language.
> To break it down for pupils when teaching is terrible! Rather, students should
> stretch to once reach this elaborate language use.
> (Anonymus)

These harsh words were thrown at me when proposing to highlight connections between a literary text and events in the students' world of experience in order to spark their interest. The topic of my diploma thesis, thus, springs from very personal encounters with literature and especially poetry, which all concluded in the emphasis of the 'sanctity of poetry'. Therefore, my leading principle of this thesis is Henry Widdowson's remark that "to sanctify poetry (and literature in general) is to falsify it" (*Practical* 6). For me, Sharon Creech implemented this maxim by Widdowson into her book *Love That Dog*. Just as Archibald MacLeish tries "to catch the essence of poetry through the medium of poetry" (Benton 269) in his poem "Ars Poetica", Sharon Creech successfully caught the struggle with poetry through poetry.

In my own teaching I want to save students from experiencing poetry in a dreadful way. Poetry is such a beautiful genre; learners should not be denied its pleasures.

> If children leave school disliking poetry, not wanting to read more, not wanting to listen or locate or learn about other poems, we have failed in our mission of either using poetry for appreciation or using poetry as a means of learning. (Booth and Moore 85)

Thus, in my diploma thesis I argue for the implementation of poetry in the English as a Second/Foreign Language classroom and explore engaging ways of teaching it. The novel in verse *Love That Dog* exemplifies realizations of my teaching suggestions to show the potential of one text.

The thesis is divided into two parts which are indicated by cover sheets featuring illustrations that originate from the book *Love That Dog*. The first part addresses poetry and its implementation into the language classroom on a general level. Chapter 2 seeks to define the nature of 'poetry' and 'novels in verse' before exploring their implementation in the language classroom. The adoption of poetry in the language classroom is faced with several prejudices. These are highlighted and subsequently outweighed by the advantages of the use of poetry. After illustrating *what* poetry is and *why* we should teach it, the chapter presents

different approaches on *how* literature can be used in the language classroom. Chapter 3 introduces the author and the content of Sharon Creech's *Love That Dog*. Moreover, I list my reasons for advocating its use in the ESL classroom.

The second part of the thesis illustrates the potential of the book in the context of the Austrian language classroom. Thus, relevant aspects of the Austrian curriculum are discussed. As I suggest using *Love That Dog* in sixth and seventh grade, especially the description of these grades will be looked at in detail. Hereafter, chapters 5 to 8 illustrate how *Love That Dog* is used as a 'springboard' for further poetry explorations to accommodate the aims of the Austrian curriculum. This is demonstrated in three teaching suggestions which show how the use of the book can be individualized according to learner and classroom needs.[1] In my lesson plans I tried to ensure an active engagement of the students. Thus, they were always invited to write their own poems. Due to the language proficiency in English in sixth and seventh grade the poems might be basic, but as Marjorie Boulton points out, "[to] write even the poorest verses is to learn something about the skill needed to write good ones" (Boulton 174). The aim of these activities, then, is to foster students' enjoyment of literature and not to embarrass them. Thus, the students are always offered a pattern they can imitate when composing. Basic language skills should not discourage learners to employ themselves with poetry.

> Some people believe that literary texts cannot be integrated into the classroom until students have reached a level that is advanced enough for them to understand linguistic subtleties and grasp the full meaning. Such an attitude seems restricted and one-sided if we take a broad view of literature and believe that understanding and appreciating literature has to be gradually developed in a long process. (Thaler 27)

Accordingly, my diploma thesis aims at finding engaging ways to include poetry in lower secondary education.

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[1] The corresponding lesson plans as well as the material used are compiled in the appendix.

[2] Terry Eagleton points out that his use of the term "inventive" does not imply any

PART ONE

In General

2. Teaching Literature

The aim of this chapter is to clarify the terms I use in my diploma thesis. Treating literature teaching in an English as a Second/ Foreign Language classroom paying special attention to the novel-in-verse *Love That Dog*, it is justified to ask the meaning of certain terms such as: What exactly is meant by 'poetry'? What is a 'novel-in-verse'? Furthermore, prejudices against and the value of teaching poetry, as well as concepts of possible implementations in the language classroom are explored. The final sub-chapter discusses the critical question of the meaning of a poem.

2.1. What is a poem?

> If that is a poem
> about the red wheelbarrow
> and the white chickens
> then any words
> can be a poem.
> You've just got to
> make
> short
> lines.

(Jack in *Love That Dog* referring to William Carlos Williams' poem "The Red Wheelbarrow", Creech 3)

Jack, the fictional schoolboy in *Love That Dog*, finds clear words defining his impression of poetry. Although his remark at first resembles a simple, childish impression it will become clear through the following analysis that even well-known researchers such as Terry Eagleton, John Williams or Michael Benton and Geoff Fox agree with Jack's definition (see Eagleton 25, Williams 10, Benton and Fox 262). It is hard to define poetry and Samuel Johnson in his *Lives of the Poets* even states that "[to] circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer" (Johnson qtd in Widdowson, *Applied 2* 139). Nevertheless, writers such as Percy Bysshe Shelley or William Wordsworth attempted a try, resulting in very emotive descriptions. Thus, poetry is "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth" (Shelley qtd in Widdowson, *Applied 2* 139) or "the spontaneous [!] overflow of feelings" (Wordsworth 151). Other authors start off from a different angle and examine the formal presentation of

poems. Thus, among other factors, rhyme, meter and rhythm are looked at. In this respect "The Tiger" by William Blake is a classical example of a poem:

> The Tiger
>
> Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
> In the forests of the night,
> What immortal hand or eye
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
>
> In what distant deeps or skies
> Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
> On what wings dare he aspire?
> What the hand dare seize the fire?[…] (Blake 187)

John Williams explains how the reading of Blake's poem invokes the feeling that "this is a poem":

> [It] gives the impression of a carefully managed construction, an orderly arrangement of words. It looks the way poetry is generally expected to look. When we see the whole poem […] our sense of structure and order is confirmed. [We note] very soon a regular rhyming pattern is evident, and that in conjunction with the line structure soon gives us a sense of rhythm. (2)

Nevertheless, "in a century of literary production in which 'nothing is sacred, nothing forbidden'" (Murphy 57), there are compositions which do not resemble Blake's cautiously constructed writing, yet they are referred to as 'poetry'. One of these creations is poetry in free verse, such as William Carlos Williams' famous "The Red Wheelbarrow":

> The Red Wheelbarrow
>
> so much depends
> upon
>
> a red wheel
> barrow
>
> glazed with rain
> water
>
> beside the white
> chickens. (C. Williams 224)

The poem in "unrhymed verse without a traditional metrical form" (Boulton 148) demonstrates that traditional classification markers cannot be assigned to poetry in free verse. This is especially so, since free verse-poems "rarely have a regular consistent appearance" (Williams 3), as John Williams in his book *Reading Poetry. A contextual Introduction* points out. Naturally, poetry in free verse provoked heated discussions. For many critics, poetry in free verse constitutes

the escape from 'real poetry', while others consider it as the unleashing of poetry from traditional restrictions.

> Some people think that free verse is a final insult to poetry and call it 'chopped prose'; others think that it is the final liberation of poetry; some suspect that the writers of free verse use it because of inability to use the conventional forms, just as some people who had never seen the early drawings of Picasso said that he used startling experimental techniques because he could not draw. (Boulton 148)

Murphy, however, explains that the failure to define modern poetry by applying the conventional means is due to an ignorance of the developments within the genre. Critics do not accept that "prescriptive norms" (57) are vanishing. Accordingly, they "rely too frequently on analyzing modern poems by means of historical genre definitions that define poems written in previous centuries but bear little resemblance to currently produced poems"(Murphy 57). Modern poems do not adhere to traditional genre characterizations. Modern poetry explores its boundaries, thus extending them. This is confirmed by the poem "My yellow dog" which, again, does not correspond to traditional genre definitions.

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                                          head head                   snifsnifsnif
                 bodybodybody      ad              he
        tail tail     low   body       he     EYE       ad
   w       yellow yellow body          y      E                nose
     o         yell        body        d     heAd     nose            snifsnifsnif
       l              body             o       R   head
       l            w    body          b
wag      e         bodybodybody                            slobber
     y            leg              leg
  wag        leg leg          leg leg                      slobber
  wag          leg              leg
               leg              leg                        slobber
               leg              leg
               leg              leg
               paw              paw
```

(Creech 37)

Shape poetry, also called concrete poetry or visual poetry (see Higgins, Berry and chapter 7), clearly transcends the limitations so far applied to poetry. The words are not "arranged in lines which [are] metrical" (Brogan 938) but seem tumbled up at first. Brogan explains that lineation is "central to the traditional […] conception of poetry" (938). Shape poetry, however does not follow this concept of line.

> Instead of the eye being channeled along regular lines of print, themselves justified left and right and framed in predictable margins, it is suddenly invited into a more or less varied activity where the shape of the text on the page assumes a special significance. (Benton 262)

The reader is invited to move within the poem, discover and create meaning through exploring the words and the "space [which] is often part of the reader's response" (Benton and Fox 262). Consequently, "[all] the predictable hallmarks of poetry we found [to define poetry] (verse, structure, rhyme, regular line length and metre) are apparently no sure guide" (Williams 8). Nonetheless, all the different kinds of poetry do have a common feature: their language is specifically arranged to "generate certain effects" (Eagleton 89). John Williams summarizes these effects by stating that the organization of language "[seeks] to enhance and extend the possibilities of the subject matter, establishing in the process a special relationship between writer and reader" (Williams 10). In conclusion, poetry, then, uses language in a "verbally inventive"[2] (Eagleton 25) way, where "the author, rather than the printer or word-processor, […] decides where the lines should end" (25).

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[2] Terry Eagleton points out that his use of the term "inventive" does not imply any evaluative meaning. Rather, it is used in a descriptive, non-judgmental way. Therefore, the term "inventive" does not "rule out the possibility of bad poetry" (Eagleton 46).

2.2.   What is a "novel in verse"?

> Is it a diary? Is it poetry? Is it a novel? Who cares? It's simply the most original
> book I've read for years, and now I see it as my duty to tell the world that the
> book that cannot be pigeonholed has been written....This is a book that reminds
> us all that poetry is about exploring every corner of our language, and that
> storytelling is the first art.
> (Poet Benjamin Zephaniah about *Love That Dog,* Creech *homepage)*

Benjamin Zephaniah puts into words the irritation one encounters after reading *Love That Dog.* The classical distinction between prose and poetry does not apply. On the one hand the reader is sure to be confronted with poetry; on the other hand, the book's resemblance to a novel cannot be denied. The preceding chapter about poetry exemplified how broad the definition of a poem is. Due to the traces of prose, however, *Love That Dog* may not easily be classified as poetry. Charles Hartman addresses the mix of genres appearing in this book.

> To those who sought room for new forms, the old opposition between
> prose and poetry, the latter defined narrowly as metrical verse, began to
> seem too confining. Why not instead take poetry or verse as one end, and
> prose as the other, of a continuous spectrum? (Hartman 45)

Sharon Creech does not restrict herself to one genre but 'explores every corner of our language', playing with the continuum between poetry and prose suggested by Hartman. Nevertheless, she is not the first one freeing herself from literary boundaries (of genre classifications). The roots of this 'unpigeonhole-able' book can be found in the historical long poem. In an essay in 1989 Patrick D. Murphy remarks upon a significant development concerning long poems. Hitherto compost in an elaborate, artificial language, the author perceived the tendency of nineteenth century poets to employ everyday language in their long poems. The imitation of the "rhythms and diction of daily speech" (Murphy 60) in modern long poems was extended to the implementation of parole and free verse. Through these changes, the language of the modern long poem resembles the prose in modern novels and "becomes better able to utilize the narrative possibilities that have been developed in the novel" (60). Thus, the modern long poem moves closer to the modern novel than to historical long poems. Nevertheless, Murphy assures that the novelization of the poetic language does not lead to a complete replacement of the poetic genre through the novel.

> This does not mean that poems stop being poetry by becoming novelized,
> or that one discrete, utterly separate genre or prosody replaces another,
> but that the overarching genre of poetry gains revitalization through prose
> influences which promote the writing of new, developing poetic genres
> […]. In other words, the novelization of modern American long poems

> frees them from the restraints of traditional, historical genre requirements no longer appropriate for the production of long poems. (Murphy 63)

Through the novelization of poetry, long poems are able to include techniques so far linked to the novel. This results in the development of new forms of the long poem. One of these evolvements is the verse-novel. The "plotted narrative" (66) clearly distinguishes it from other modern long poem genres. Nevertheless, the verse-novel and its features are still subject to change.

> The verse novel, like its prose counterpart, is very much alive, changing, and developing. As a result, critical conception of the genre must remain conditional, relative, and developing if it is to have any chance of keeping pace with the creative work it tries to define. (Murphy 69)

This is not only valid in 1989, but also in the twenty-first century, as Joy Alexander proves:

> Definitions of the verse-novel are necessarily elastic, since as a genre it is still evolving. (Alexander 270)

Nevertheless, Alexander, who studies the verse novel in the context of children's literature where it is a fairly new phenomenon, identifies an "emergent typical verse-novel 'house-style'" (270). In the manner of most works within the field of children's literature verse novels are quite short (see Hollindale 13). Typically they are divided into several sections, whereas each section is composed of less than a page. Only in rare cases is the length of a page exceeded (see Alexander 270). Each section usually carries a heading to

> orientate the reader, which may indicate the speaker, or contextualise the content, or point to the core theme. The form lends itself to building each section around a single perspective or thought or voice or incident. (Alexander 270)

The form of the verse-novel supports a "personalised subjective narration and for reading constructed as intimate conversation or even as eavesdropping" (270). Due to free verse this impression of a dialog is fostered. The reader does not simply perceive the story, but is rather a participant (see Murphy 63). This effect is further intensified through "explicit [references] to extratextual utterances within the literary social horizon of author and reader" (Murphy 61).

Love That Dog exemplifies the aspects discussed so far. The book consists of 64 pages which are divided into 46 sections. Calendar dates at the beginning of each section point to journal-keeping, starting with September 13 (the beginning of the school year) and ending with June 6 (end of school year). Moreover, the heading of the first entry provides the reader with further information: "Jack/ Room 105 – Miss Stretchberry" (Creech 1), which suggests a school context. The

sections vary in length. April 20 is composed of 2 lines whereas May 14 consists of 5 pages. The plot is conveyed through a first-person narration by Jack, the fictional boy who keeps the journal. Jack writes entries addressed to his teacher Miss Stretchberry, poems and two letters intended for Walter Dean Myers. Through this reliance "on the intimacy of spoken address" (Alexander 280), the reader finds himself in a constant dialogue with Jack. Furthermore, intertextuality plays an essential role in the book. The boy repeatedly makes references to poems Sharon Creech provides in an appendix.

Alexander emphasizes the "oral dimension" (270) of verse-novels:

> The writer is able to craft the verse as though orchestrating it for reading aloud. She can shape the rhythm, position the line-break so as to add emphasis, vary the pace through the line-length, or borrow and exploit poetic devices such as repetition, caesura and enjambment. Equally, readers are more likely to experience the words as sound as they read. (Alexander 270-271)

Thus, sound is a vital element of verse-novels. The reader is almost forced to read it out loud in order to appreciate the full intensity of the book. Even Jack in *Love That Dog* develops the "ability to read with the ear" (280). The entry of October 24 referring to "The Tiger" by William Blake illustrates the foregrounding of sound:

> I did not really understand
> the tiger tiger burning bright poem
> but at least it sounded good
> in my ears. […]
>
> Some of the tiger sounds
> are still in my ears
> like drums
> beat-beat-beating. (Creech 8–9)

Creech further explores the inclusion of sound in her 2004 verse-novel *heartbeat* where she emphasizes the beating of the heart and the thud of feet touching the ground when running, through the use of italics.

> and *thump-thump, thump-thump*
> down the hill we go
> to the creek
>
> and l-e-a-p over the bank (Creech *heartbeat* 16)

Virginia Euwer Wolff is another author of verse novels consciously exploring the orality of this genre. In order to most closely approximate natural-sounding speech, she carefully constructs line-break-ups. The author recalls the process of

composing her book *Make Lemonade*, struggling to realize the sound of spoken language in her writing.

> In the 3 years that I worked on the book, I probably read every line out loud hundreds of times. That was how I decided where to put the line breaks. […] I divided the lines 'aurally', for the ear, as much as I could. And I kept worrying that I'd got the line breaks wrong. I rewrote them a lot and kept reading them aloud. […] Trying to feel the rhythm, and at the same time getting to know the characters and their lives […] (Can you imagine living with me, always hearing this woman muttering to herself? Especially reading her own writing out loud? […]) I just hope it sounds like LaVaughn's [the protagonist's] voice speaking, with the breathing pauses and the hesitations that I believe are part of natural speech. (Webster 12)

Wolff emphasizes this impression of authentic oral language by including vernacular. The author of *CrashBoomLove: A Novel in Verse*, Juan Felipe Herrera, also incorporates colloquial use of language. Depicting a young Mexican's adolescence in a high school in California, the author even switches among languages:

> Things change. – *Todo cambia.*
> She tells me. I clench my teeth,
> look at the lead of her lips. (Herrera 5)

This "oral dimension" (Alexander 270) and 'invitation' to read the poems out loud, of course, is another aspect making the novel in verse vital for the English (as a Second Language) classroom. Moreover, especially the last example by Herrera demonstrates how the verse-novel also addresses cultural issues and provides insight into different cultures.

Finally, as Schneider points out: "The short, poetic lines [in verse-novels] seem friendly and unintimidating, and the immediacy of the narrator's voice speaks directly to the young reader" (60). In the writings of Schneider and Isaacs the classroom use of verse-novels is further explored. Thus, Isaacs gratefully recalls the use of the verse-novel in the classroom:

> Whether the books are read silently or aloud, the format invites reflection and imitation. Last year in my own classroom, my students demonstrated how true that is, one by one quietly asking me during the end-of-the-day journal-writing session if it would be "alright" to write a poem instead of their usual entry. This English teacher's dream question was inspired by my reading aloud Sharon Creech's *Love That Dog*. (Isaacs 10)

2.3.   Poetry in the EFL classroom

I would argue that, in a sense, [the] value [of art] lies in its very uselessness, and
that this is why it is so crucial in education.
(Widdowson, *Practical* 75)

In the following chapter the reader is introduced to the teaching of literature, and
more specifically the teaching of poetry, in an English as a Second/ Foreign
Language classroom. There are problems and prejudices one might encounter
when teaching poetry. These are highlighted in chapter 2.3.1. Nevertheless, the
reasons *for* the use of literature and poetry are prevailing over any opposition, as
will become apparent subsequently. After establishing an argumentative basis for
the use of poetry, chapter 2.3.3. addresses the different approaches of
implementing poetry in the language classroom. The deadly sin of poetry
teaching, according to Marjorie Boulton, is to ask: "What does it mean?" (see 10).
Thus, the concluding sub-chapter is concerned with interpretations and meanings
of poems.

2.3.1.   Prejudices against the use of poetry in the EFL classroom

Brian Parkinson and Helen Reid Thomas as well as Jennifer Hill assembled in
their books a catalog of problems concerning literature-teaching. Parkinson and
Thomas emphasize, however, that this list needs to be considered with certain
reservations: "The very concept of problem is […] itself problematic, ambiguous
and elusive. The main type of ambiguity is perhaps that between perceived and
actual problems" (11). Furthermore, one can distinguish between the perceivers
of the problem: learner, teacher, observer or other authorities. Another point one
needs to pay attention to is the duration of a problem, since there are "short-term
problems ('what does this word mean?'), medium-term ('how am I going to cope
with this novel?') and long-term [ones] ('how am I going to become a good
literature student?')" (11). Moreover, problems can arrive depending on the
knowledge of the problem-perceiver, the mood, attitude of teacher and learner,
the atmosphere in the learner group and so on. These constituting factors should
be born in mind when approaching the following problems.

- *Remoteness*: Poetic texts used in class often descend from previous
  centuries and are therefore not within pupils' horizon of experience.
  References to historical, geographical or social circumstances, for
  example, can render a poem incomprehensible to the perceiver.

- *Difficult/ odd language*: Language structures used in poetic texts can be very complex and therefore difficult to understand for language learners. Furthermore, language in poems is often used in a creative way which alters it to 'odd language'.

- *Lack of functional authenticity*: Because of the 'arranged' language of poems, they often do not mirror everyday language and, thus, do not support a communicative approach, aiming at a mediation of 'real-life events'.

- *Imbalance of the four skills*: A communicative classroom approach puts a special emphasis on listening and speaking (mostly needed in foreign language encounters). Writing and reading play a secondary role. Poetry teaching, however, particularly fosters reading. Thus, the other three skills are neglected.

- *Imbalance of knowledge and power:* Due to vocabulary difficulties, missing historical knowledge and so on, the teacher is often compelled to restrict his activities to informing the learners what they should know about a poem. The students are restricted in their classroom actions (e.g. participation, involving their feelings about a poem, etc.).

- *No sequencing:* Approaching difficult language aspects in a gradual manner is often perceived impossible when it comes to poetry. By confronting students with a poem, they are often 'thrown into the deep end' without essential analytic skills (see Parkinson and Thomas11-13, Hill 9-12).

In addition to this list, Widdowson regards yet another viewpoint essential for many language teachers: the time factor. Poetry lessons occupy time which could be used 'wiser' with more output in the end. The author finds drastic words to address this topic:

> Whatever the value of poetry might be, it cannot be equated with cost-effectiveness. It cannot instruct you in anything which you can turn to material advantage [except you become a poet!], it does not train you to do anything useful, it provides you with no knowledge or skills which you can use to further your own employment prospects or contribute to the national economy. Unlike science it is not serviceable. In this respect poetry is a poor investment: it has no practical pay-off. It is something which, no doubt, it would be nice to have in the best of all possible worlds but which is an indulgence in the competitive world of business and commerce in which w e actually live. (Widdowson, *Practical* 74)

This, of course, should not discourage a teacher to implement poetry right from the beginning; because, as will become clear in the subsequent chapter, poetry offers many advantages for language learners.

2.3.2. Reasons for the use of poetry

One is tempted to equate an activity in the language classroom with its application in everyday communication. However, since poetry is rarely needed in foreign language communication (except if one is a poet), implementing it in language education seems inept. Widdowson, as has just been illustrated when discussing the stereotypes against poetry-use, pointed out that it cannot be considered in terms of "cost-effectiveness" (*Practical* 74). More accurately (and this applies to all teaching contexts), activities in the classroom need to be approached considering their results (see Maley and Duff 14). Bearing this in mind, poetry "is at least as relevant as the more commonly type of input (e.g. contrived dialogues, isolated texts for reading comprehension, simulations, etc.)" (Maley and Duff 7) because it represents a rich source of input. This, however, should not necessarily be understood as a call to employ nothing but poetry in foreign language teaching. Rather, it is my goal to stress its "equal weight" (7).in comparison to other language activities and thus it should not be denied a place in education (see Widdowson *Applied* 153).The following observations, then, illustrate the value of poetry in the English as a Second/ Foreign Language classroom.

Poetry certainly can be considered a *universal* genre since it occurs in every language known. Moreover, topics appear to be similar among different languages as well. Love, death, belief and despair play a central role in all poetry. Therefore, language learners are able to identify with this genre based on their experiences with it in their mother tongue. When encountering a poem in a foreign language the learners, thus, experience some kind of familiarity (see Maley and Duff 8, Ainy 2).

Non-triviality is another valuable feature of poetry. No subject is too big or too trivial to be covered by poetry. Thus, immediate (concrete) concerns like a dripping faucet as well as wider (abstract) themes such as love, pain and death are all within poetry's reach. It is a characteristic of the poetic genre to "heighten our awareness" (Maley and Duff 8) even of topics which might seem commonplace under different circumstances (see Spiro 9, Maley and Duff 8, Duff and Maley 6).

Due to the fact that learners are able to connect poetry to their native language as well as the possibility to personally respond to it, the poetic genre can be considered a great source of *motivation*. Particularly, the openness of poetry to interpretation allows the learner to personalize the meaning of a poem. (This aspect of poetry is further explored in the subsequent chapter.) In this respect each and every student is able to contribute a relevant aspect to the apprehension of poetry (see Maley and Duff 9, Obregón 139).

The validity of several impressions of a poem allows the learner to react in a *personal* way to this genre. Thus, the reader is directly involved in the meaning making process which facilitates language acquisition (see Maley and Duff 10, Ainy 1, Collie and Slater 3-4).

Moreover, the *ambiguity* of a poem and the consequential existence of different interpretations can function as a "ready made information gap" (Duff and Maley 6) between the different impressions and it can thus foster *interaction*. Students need to interact to learn about the impressions of their colleagues (see Maley and Duff 10, Obregón 139, Hill 9).

Poetry, moreover, manages to provoke emotions with a few words. This *economical*, condensed use of language accommodates the limited time frame of the language classroom. Additionally, a poem is not dependant on a context but creates one itself. Poetry is a "self-contained world" (Maley and Duff 12) which presents a topic in a compact way. The brief language input, however, is able to trigger intense engagement with the text. Because of the limited use of words there is a special emphasis on every single element of the poem. This offers a great base for language exploration (see Ainy 2, Maley and Duff 12, Maley and Moulding, Spiro 8).

Poetry invites the language learner to become active and to play with the language so far acquired. Often, grammaticality is ignored, and words can be used in unusual ways, placed in uncommon positions. The student is welcome to stretch and test the boundaries of the foreign language when composing poems. This *hands-on* approach reduces the fear to use words or grammatical structures incorrectly (see Maley and Duff 9).

In fact, learner strategies resemble the ones poets implement as well. Students are unfamiliar with the new language and perceive it the way poets try to encounter it.

- learners take a language 'rule' and apply it in new places, to create an 'invented' word which expresses their meaning.[…]
- learners search for a vocabulary item they need, and if they do not know it, replace it with a synonym or a newly constructed word. […]
- learners transfer the sounds, rhythms, and patterns of their mother tongue into the foreign language. In doing so, they create 'new' words and patterns which belong half in one, and half in another culture. In the same way, poets treat language as if they are meeting it for the first time, as if it is strange, unfamiliar and new. This strangeness is part of what learners experience all the time – they can look at language with the same distance and freshness as the poet aims to do. (Spiro 9)

Therefore, learners are actually in a situation a poet wishes to be. The language teacher should make use of this potential.

Experiences which have been enjoyed are more likely to be remembered (see Strong 7). This principle is also applicable in the classroom. Because of their colorful and expressive language, poems are easily *memorized*. Although whole poems are not necessarily applicable in everyday communication, expressions, phrases or grammatical structures, however, can be internalized this way and recalled in actual language use. Poetry, thus, is a resource students can get back to in case they cannot remember a certain phrase or building structure (see Caissie 4-5, Maley and Duff 10, Holmes and Moulton 1). Often memorization is facilitated by the *rhythm* or *pattern* of poetry (see Maley and Duff 11, Spiro 8).

Repetition is another feature closely related to poetry. Often individual words or phrases are used several times also aiding retention. Repetition is very prominent in song lyrics which are often considered poems as well and generally easily memorized by learners (see Spiro 7).

Like song texts poetry is apt to be *performed*. Chapter 8.2. introduces the technique of choral reading which invites groups of learners to recite a poem together. Reading poetry this way especially encourages weak and shy speakers to train their pronunciation as it "masks imperfections" (Maley and Duff 12). Moreover, Maley and Duff point out that reading poetry out loud supports aspects of fluent speech "such as clarity of diction, phrasing, stress and rhythm, control and variation of pace" (12) are naturally practiced thereby.

Especially the communicative classroom demands the use of *authentic* material. Nevertheless, texts written by native speakers for native speakers often are too complex especially for learners at a beginner level. Simplified texts, on the other

hand, usually appear rather dull. Thus, poetry offers profitable classroom material to accompany textbooks (see Ainy 1, Collie and Slater 3-4).

Poetry very often includes *cultural information* valuable for the language learner. The language teacher needs to be aware that his students might not be able to visit a country with English as its official first language. Thus, the instructor should employ different ways of introducing the learners to cultural specific aspects. Poetry, in this case, is a great way to complement non-literary material as it introduces a personal point of view (see Collie and Slater 4).

Summarizing the valuable aspects of poetry in the language classroom, Jane Spiro arrives at an interesting conclusion. She states that in fact poetry occupies the same features as "controlled language practice [:] repetition, pattern and length" (Spiro 7). Thus, poetry serves as an adequate substitute for traditional language exercises.

The last aspect of poetry mentioned here needs special consideration. The difficult language of poetry has already been listed among the stereotypes *against* the use of poetry. Yet, it also advocates its place concerning reasons *for* the use of poetry. The following argumentation considers literary language.

2.3.3. Literary Language

Chapter 2.3.1. lists the difficult and odd language of literature among prejudices against the use of poetry in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. This chapter takes a closer look at the 'oddness' of literary language.

Over the years the language of literature has received much attention. Literature is generally considered to be something special. This, one may conclude, is primarily so because of the peculiarity of the language used in literature. Thus, different schools tried to pinpoint the unique features of literary language. The following paragraphs outline the different attempts to define a unique literary language. The presentations are accompanied by remarks by Geoff Hall who confutes the different arguments.

Formalists drew a distinction between 'poetic' and 'practical' language and therefore concluded that poetic language is deviant language. This deviance is realized through 'foregrounding'. The term signifies the features which make literary language deviant. Therefore, poetic language achieves the "maximum of

foregrounding" (Mukarovský qtd. in Carter *Literary* 2247), meaning "the aesthetically intentional distortion of linguistic components" (ibid) as Mukarovský explains. Ronald Carter, however, invalidates this theory. He argues that formalists defined deviant language in comparison to 'normal' language, which, on the other hand, cannot be characterized. Furthermore, he adds that "to equate deviation with literariness is to suggest that literary language cannot result from adherence to norms" (Carter *Literary* 2248). Also, the approach does not consider the reading context. Language identified as deviant years ago might nowadays belong to common language usage. Finally, what formalists consider 'normal' or 'practical' language implicates deviant traces as well, as is evident in newspaper headlines, advertising or jokes (see Carter *Literary*, Carter and Nash, Hall *Literature*).

Another approach to the 'unique language of literature' was denoting speech acts. According to the Speech Act Theory common language usually implies an illocutionary force that demands some kind of 'action' from the recipient. Language in literature, however, does not require the perceiver to react and thus belongs to a different speech act than usual language use. Ronald Carter, again, refutes the theory. He explains that distinction between the literary and the non-literary in the Speech Act Theory does not take fantasizing or jokes into consideration (see Carter *Literary*, Carter and Nash, Hall *Literature*).

Henry Widdowson, then, refined the formalist approach and explained that despite the fact that deviant language may occur in literary texts it is not necessarily a characteristic of literary language. "What does seem crucial to the character of literature is that the language of a literary work should be fashioned into patterns over and above those required by the actual language system" (*Stylistics* 47). Thus, he shifts the concept of deviance from language to discourse stating that "although literature need not be deviant as text it must of its nature be deviant as discourse" (47). The deviant discourse of literature, then, according to Widdowson, enables students to acquire language skills through applying "interpretative procedures" (*Applied* 151). Poetry therefore encourages the acquisition of a foreign language. Widdowson demonstrates his argument by reference to rather dull school book texts and illustrates how poetry exploits the possibilities of creativity which are offered by a poem not dependent on a context. He emphasizes the importance of creativity in the language process. Language learners need to be able to negotiate meaning. This is a crucial element in everyday communication. Nevertheless, many texts in school books are based

on strict control of the language. Thus they keep the students from producing creative expressions and prevent them from learning interpretative strategies (see Applied 2 ch.12). Nevertheless,

> [for] someone to correctly interpret discourse he needs to be able to recognize relevant conditions in situations he has never encountered before […]. Linguistic ability must be essentially creative. The acquisition of communicative competence involves the learning of interpretative procedures […]. (Widdowson *Applied* 156)

Therefore, the aim of a language class is to provide the students with appropriate techniques to understand linguistic elements in unusual discourse (see *Applied* 156). Poetry aids the development of these skills because

> [...] we interpret poetry in the same way as we interpret other kinds of discourse […]. The difference between the interpretation of poetic and other kinds of discourse is not that we use different procedures, but that in the case of poetic discourse we are more conscious of them. Interpretation is more problematic and so we are inevitably more aware of the process involved. (*Applied* 159)

Geoff Hall approaches literary language from yet another angle. He believes that there is no distinction between the language of poetry and everyday language. "Literature is made of, from and with ordinary language, which is itself already surprisingly literary" (Hall *Literature* 10). He bases his argument on Carter and Nash who propose "degrees of literariness" (18):

> [Features] of language use normally associated with literary contexts are found in what are conventionally thought of as non-literary contexts. It is for this reason that the term *literariness* is preferred to any term which suggests an absolute division between literary and non-literary. It is […] more accurate to speak of degrees of literariness in language use. (Carter and Nash 18)

Thus, Hall sums up that there is no clear boundary between literary and non-literary language use. As Carter already addressed in his arguments against the formalist definition of poetic language, discourse which could be classified as non-literary often uses language in a very creative way (see Maley Forword 3). Hall therefore emphasizes the theory of different levels of literariness in language which emphasizes that literariness can even occur in everyday speech (see Carter *Both Ways* 8). The occurrence of a high degree of creativity in conversations was further proven by the data of the CANDOE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English). Hall's implication for the language classroom then is a focus on creative language use with the help of literature (see Delanoy *Literaturunterricht* 171, Hall *Literature* ch. 1).

Carter quite rightly concludes that "the most defining characteristic of literary language is the impossibility of defining it in any simple way" (*Literary* 2247). Nevertheless, this analysis clearly demonstrated the value of poetry in the language classroom. Both Hall and Widdowson, although basing their argumentation on different theories, suggest the implementation of poetry in order to properly acquaint students with the creative aspect of language.

2.3.4. Approaches to poetry teaching

Gillian Lazar distinguishes between three different approaches to teaching literature in the foreign language classroom. Thus, literature can be approached focusing on the language of a text, on the content or on students' personal gain. My categorization corresponds with Lazar's. Moreover, language-based approaches are further explored by looking at stylistics, a "method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*" (Simpson 2).

Language-based approach

The language-based approaches are based on examining the language of the text and thus integrating language and literature (see Lazar, *Literature* ch. 2). The aim of the language-based approaches is to "improve […] knowledge of, and proficiency in, English" (Lazar, *Literature* 27). The material chosen, hence, highlights specific stylistic aspects. Alan Duff and Alan Maley are proponents of the language-based approach, stating in *Literature* that their "primary aim is […] to use literary texts as a resource" (Duff and Maley 5).They describe their goals in more detail as "engaging the students interactively with the text [and thereby generating] language". (5) "[Enhanced] understanding or literary insight" (5) is a welcome sight-effect for the authors. Their guidelines further explain the language-based approach:

- The main focus is on the text. Comments on the background of the writing are not of interest.
- Instead of passively encountering the text, the learner is actively involved in the process.
- The task always includes the personal experience of the learners.
- The literary text does not necessarily constitute the only component of an activity (see Duff and Maley 5,6).

Moreover, Duff and Maley emphasize that .the presentation of the literary material can be diverse. Accordingly, Ronald Carter as well as Carter and Long, list several activities belonging to the language-based approach to illustrate how wide spread classroom tasks can be: "re-writing [;] prediction exercises; close exercises; ranking tasks; active comprehension techniques; producing and acting out the text" (Carter, *Both ways* 3), jigsaw reading, matching and gap-filling activities (see Carter and Long ch. 4). The language-based approach fosters understanding of a text through a close examination of linguistic aspects in the text. Furthermore, the students acquire skills which support them in interpreting a text and they learn how to apply their knowledge of English in order to conceive the meaning of literary writing. Thus, "linguistic and literary competence [are seen] as indivisible, both necessary conditions of a meaningful encounter" (Hall, *Bakhtin*, 38). Nevertheless, one needs to be careful when applying this approach. The focus on the language itself might be too much so that the personal interpretation is diminished. This way, the language-based approach would become rather "mechanical" (Lazar, *Literature* 25) and therefore discouraging. Also, the approach does not consider the "text's historical, social or political background which often provides students with the valuable cultural knowledge to interpret what they read" (25).

Stylistics

The disadvantages of language-based approaches listed above are also applicable to stylistics (see Carter *Both Ways* 4). Stylistics aids with understanding and interpreting a literary text. This is achieved through a "close analysis of […] linguistic features" (Verdonk 55) with special regard to their creative appliance (see Simpson 3). Especially when dealing with poetry, stylistic analysis supports preconceived impressions and assists revaluation. Furthermore, interpretations of poetry can be reinforced and explained using the analytical vocabulary. Thus, interpretative skills and "reading between the lines" (Carter *Both Ways* 5) is furthered which consolidates the learners' confidence in their own abilities of perception. To sum up, analyzing language more closely based on stylistics assists learners to arrive at reasonable interpretations. Also, it increases learners' appreciation and knowledge of the foreign language (see Carter *Both Ways*, Short *Upside* and Introduction, Lazar *Literature*, Verdonk).

Valuable aspects of stylistics thus can be summarized in the following way:

- It furnishes the students with a "method of scrutinising texts" (Carter *Both Ways* 5) which is very detailed and thus opens up new interpretations to a text.
- Students are equipped with a tool to advocate their own interpretations of a text. Thus, their confidence in approaching texts is encouraged.
- It reaffirms the centrality of language as the aesthetic medium of literature" (Carter Both Ways 6).
- Foreign language learners usually approach the new language in an analytic way, thus, their systematic knowledge of the language is deepened.

Nevertheless, this method also contains limitations.

- Peter Verdonk hints at the restriction to the analysis of short literary texts such as poetry and short stories. Otherwise the technique proved to be too "time-consuming to be applied to the whole text of a novel but can only be applied to extracts" (Verdonk 56).
- This might lead to an "exclusion of other genres" (Carter *Both Ways* 6) in the language classroom.
- Moreover stylistics is "relatively abstract and theory-laden" (Carter *Directions* 17) and might therefore better comply with the teaching of more advanced learners.
- Also, stylistics creates an "over-determination of the text" (Carter *Both Ways* 6), suggesting the idea that the learner needs to look as careful as possible to arrive at the one and only meaning of the literary text.
- The method tends to focus too exclusively on linguistic features, obstructing the implementation of "the concerns of literary critics [such as] questions of point of view, author/reader relations and historical and cultural knowledge" (6).

This list of disadvantages of the stylistics implies the sole focus on finding determining factors, which guides interpretation within the linguistic features of the text. Students are thus required to use special vocabulary. Accordingly, the teacher needs to contemplate the usage of metalanguage. Should distinct linguistic vocabulary be introduced and used in the language classroom? Gillian Lazar explains that by using concrete terms their occurrence in literary writing can be appreciated more fully. Moreover, it offers the students the possibility to express themselves more precisely. The learners might already be familiar with

these terms in their mother tongue. Thus, similarities can be spotted and discouragement prevented when the students try to express their knowledge through the foreign language. Lazar, however, also points out arguments against the use of metalanguage. Finding occurrences of linguistic features might become a mere mechanical exercise without reflection. Instead of being liberating, the use of distinct vocabulary might fatigue the learners. Finally, Lazar addresses a crucial point concerning classroom management. When focusing on the teaching of the linguistic terminology, less time is spent on the student-centered activities (see Lazar *Literature* 42, 196).

Content-based approach

The content based approach is also called "subject-centered method" (Showalter 64), "literature as topic' or 'literature as resource' approach" (Parkinson 1). It describes the most traditional approach to literature teaching and is mostly used in tertiary education. The literary text is the source of classroom activities and is further explored, for example, in terms of its historical background and defining features in the text that display the characteristics of the time. Moreover constituting factors such as social and political conditions are considered. Within the text rhetorical devices can be distinguished. The focus is on the text. Thus, students acquire English by interacting with it (e.g. reading and discussion of passages). The text usually belongs to the literary canon (see Lazar *Lower* 24).

This approach allows the students to encounter authentic texts that are considered important in literary education. Through exploring the text the students acquire an understanding of historical and social developments (see Lazar, *Lower* 25). Besides, as Werner Delanoy points out, the text might offer a model of language use. More importantly, though, it attracts discussion and thus provides speaking opportunities (see Delanoy *FU* 141).

The content-based approach is usually used with advanced learners because the material is often linguistically challenging. Furthermore, the approach is teacher-centered, relying "on the teacher to paraphrase, clarify and explain" (Lazar Lower 25). Finally, in disadvantageous cases, this approach is carried out in the mother tongue and the foreign language is neglected (see Lazar Lower 25).

Literature for personal enrichment

When listing the advantages of poetry use in the foreign language classroom, the personal aspect was emphasized. The texts trigger personal reactions and the students are invited to express their sentiments. This notion, then, conforms to the literature-for-personal-enrichment approach. Literature, in this case, provides the opportunity to implement the learners' experiences, emotions and beliefs into the language classroom. This enables students to "become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English" (Lazar *Lower* 24) and therefore fosters language acquisition. The approach especially encourages group work. The material is often chosen with consideration to the learners' interests in order to provide an appropriate stimulus for participation. Moreover, literary texts usually thematically suit school book topics (see Lazar *Lower* 24).

This approach is known to be highly motivating because it personally involves the students in language learning. Moreover, through using literature alongside the textbook a diversified mix of language input is provided. Nevertheless, students are supposed to react to literary writing without "providing sufficient guidance in coping with the linguistic intricacies of the text" (Lazar *Lower* 25). Additionally, students might not be able to respond to the text because of its remoteness from the learners' experience. The teacher also needs to be sensitive to the likes and dislikes of a specific learner group since some students may prefer not to expose their feelings and reactions (see Lazar *Lower* 25).

2.3.5. The role of the teacher

Despite the approaches mentioned above illustrating how literature can be approached in a foreign language classroom, the teacher's role needs to be considered as well. Tricia Hedge, referring to a framework put forward by Harmer in 1991, summarizes the possible functions a teacher performs in the classroom. Thus, the teacher may act as *instructor, counselor*, *controller*, *assessor, corrector*, *organizer, prompter* and *resource* (see Hedge 26, 29). The teacher elicits "nationality words" (Hedge 26) as controller. As assessor he or she guarantees accuracy of words. In the role of a corrector the educator makes sure that students pronounce words correctly. When acting as an organizer, the teacher provides the learners with guidelines for group work, initiates and oversees it and provides for feedback. As prompter the students are supported

during their activities, and functioning as a resource the teacher assists the pupils in vocabulary and grammatical issues.

The following two approaches to classroom management incorporate these different teacher roles. Depending on the position the teacher adopts, the classroom happenings either revolve around the learner or the teacher; thus, being learner- or teacher-centered.

Learner-centered approach

Learner- or student-centered approaches encompass activities which focus on the pupil. Especially in the context of the communicative language classroom implementing this approach is generally favored. The term 'learner-centered approach', however, has been characterized in various ways and therefore combines different concepts (see Hedge 34, O'Neill and McMohan 28).

One concept of learner-centered approach suggests student-participation in defining "the overall design of the course" (Hedge 34). Accordingly, the learners are invited to choose the topics that should be addressed and select learning procedures that should be employed. Thus, the learners are offered a choice (see O'Neill and McMohan 28). Hedge, however, emphasizes that this kind of learner-centered approach is usually applied in adult language training (see Hedge 34).

The most common concept depicts the learner-centered approach concerning the actions of the learners (see Hedge 35). The students are actively engaged in the learning process instead of being exposed to teacher talk throughout the whole language course. Definitions and explanations, for example, are arrived at together. Characterizing the approach from this perspective, it constitutes a shift from passive to active learning (see O'Neill and McMohan 29).

Further concepts of the learner-centered approach emphasize a shift of power from the teacher to the student (see O'Neill and McMohan 28, 29) and the fostering of self-directed learning outside the classroom (see Hedge 35).

Generally, certain characteristics of a learner-centered classroom were put forward. These try to encompass the concepts mentioned above. Student-centered approaches, thus, are based on:

- an active involvement and participation of the learner in the learning process,

- an "increased sense of autonomy" (Lea et al. qtd in O'Neill and McMohan 28) in the students,

- the teacher functioning as "facilitator" (Brandes and Ginnis qtd in O'Neill and McMohan 28) and resource,

- an increased responsibility on the students' part (see Lea et al. qtd in O'Neill and McMohan 28),

- "mutual respect within the learner teacher relationship" (Lea et al. qtd in O'Neill and McMohan 28).

When teaching poetry, then, the learners are invited to "develop their own responses and sensitivities" (Carter and Long 24). The teacher is prompted to leave his or her 'pedestal' and allow the personal experiences of the learner to enter the classroom (see Carter and Long 7). The educator, thus, functions as 'enabler', channeling experiences in the proper lanes and supporting students with valuable advice (see Weimer xviii).

Critique points out that by focusing on the individual student the peer-concept of the learner group might suffer when taken to its extremes. By catering for the individual needs of different learners, the needs of the class as a whole might be neglected (see O'Neill and McMohan 33). Moreover, Donna J. Kain summarizes critical issues concerning learner-centered approaches addressed by Gregory as well as Hansen and Stephens. They explain that

> society's emphasis on success, instant gratification, the retail/consumer model of education, and, paradoxically, student-centered approaches to learning lead students to look for easy answers and to count on high grades, to avoid difficult work, and to develop inflated perceptions of their abilities.(Kain 105)

Teacher-centered approach

In a teacher-centered approach knowledge is transmitted by the person teaching. "[Judgments] about appropriate areas and methods of inquiry, legitimacy of information, and what constitutes knowledge rest with the teacher" (Kain 104). Lecture, questioning and demonstration are the most common teacher-centered methods. Disadvantages mentioned concerning these methods are the passivity of students, lack of motivation (lecture) and anxiety caused among students (questioning). Norman and Spohrer, however, point out that teacher-centered
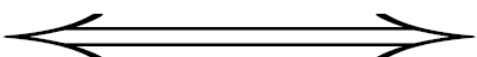
classroom activities such as rote learning and drills are an important resource to turn "understanding into automated [skills], making the information and procedures available without conscious effect" (Norman and Spohrer 26).

Nowadays, especially due to the influences of the communicative classroom, the focus on the teacher has been lessened. Carter and Long define teacher-centered approaches in the context of literature teaching as "too little opportunity [for learners] to formulate their own feelings about literary text and […] too much formulation [coming] from the teacher who does also do most of the talking" (24). Although the "infectious enthusiasm of a teacher [is] crucial" (23), literary teaching tries to emphasize the engagement of the learners.

In most cases, these two approaches to classroom management are not treated separately in different periods. Within one lesson, in fact, the emphasis on the learner or the teacher may switch several times. O'Neill and McMahon suggest viewing teacher- and student-centered learning as "either end of a continuum" (O'Neill and McMahon 29). They illustrate this idea in the table below.

Tab. 1: Student–centred and teacher–centred continuum

Teacher–centred Learning	Student–centred Learning
Low level of student choice	High level of student choice
Student passive	Student active
Power is primarily with teacher	Power primarily with the student

(O'Neill and McMahon 29)

Kain even suggests abandoning the idea of a 'centered' classroom.

> Our classroom practices are often constrained by practical considerations, such as students' expectations and experiences, and by institutional realities, such as class size, required grading criteria, and instructor training. Add in theoretical implications, and teachers—particularly new ones—can find it quite a challenge to align classroom issues, theories of composition, and teaching strategies. The merger of practical realities and theoretical complexities tends to collapse the binary of teacher-centered/student-centered classrooms, in truth the very idea of a "centered" classroom. (104)

Furthermore, the author explains that the distinction between teacher- and student-centered teaching styles is helpful to categorize classroom activities. Nonetheless, when it comes to teaching, she points out that "[balancing] our responsibilities, expectations, and goals with our students' seems preferable to centering the classroom on either ourselves or them" (Kain 108)

2.3.6. Interpretation and meaning of a poem

> People sometimes talk about digging out the ideas 'behind' the poem's language,
> but this spatial metaphor is misleading. For it is not as though the language is a
> kind of disposable cellophane in which the ideas come ready-wrapped.
> (Eagleton, 2)

In the introduction I explained how poetry often made me feel stupid when I went to school. In class my teacher would make us read a poem, already eagerly waiting to see if we understood 'the' meaning of the poem. I was able to understand the words of the poem and they certainly created a mental picture in my mind. Nevertheless, this picture usually did not correspond with the one suggested by the teacher. He would thereupon explain how he arrived at his interpretation and then it would make sense to me. Our own reactions, however, were never considered in class, which created the impression that they were wrong. This resulted in the belief that there was only one possible meaning to a poem. Benton and Fox address this popular misconception in their book *Teaching literature: nine to fourteen*:

> The problem of much current methodology is that far too often we imply
> that poems are riddles with single solutions which […] the teachers […]
> happen to know rather than objects crafted in the medium of riddling
> word-play, yielding a range of meaning. (Benton and Fox 262)

Like in word-plays, readers may come up with several solutions. There is no universally true interpretation because "[the] point of poetry (indeed the point of all art) is […] that it denies authority" (Widdowson *Practical* 60). This, of course, does not mean that poetry is a "verbal free-for-all" (Eagleton 32), meaning whatever one wants it to mean. Rather, it can mean "anything we can plausibly interpret it to mean" (32). The meaning one makes of a poem has to be reasonable and convincing.

Henry Widdowson depicts three different possibilities of meaning-making. The first is to consider the writer's intention. By exploring the background of the poem the meaning intended by the author of the poem should become apparent. The second possibility is to base meaning on textual evidence. The text, thus, creates its own "intrinsic meaning" (*Practical* viii). The intention of the author is not relevant in this case. In the third possibility, the reader is the meaning-making entity. Despite the meaning created by the text or the author's intention, meaning is based on the subjective impression of the perceiver (see *Practical* viii). In the last possibility mentioned, meaning is formed by the reader's reaction to "sound, rhythm and formal ordering of the language [as well as to] its line of thought,

syntax and lexical definition" (Benton and Fox 268). Consequently, the meaning is created through a combination of "what the poem offers and what the reader brings" (268). Therefore, meanings vary depending on the reader. The reader's response to a text is a unique experience (see Rosenblatt), as the same words trigger different memories and emotions. "[Different] readers […] bring their own preconceptions and values to bear on their reading of [the words] and […] associate the poem with their own experience of reality, thus in effect creating their own connotations" (Widdowson, *Stylistics* 123). Louise Rosenblatt further explores this notion of the transaction between the text and its reader in her book *The reader, the Text, the Poem: A Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*.

Moreover, the impression one gets of a poem can also be affected by intertextual references. Widdowson, pragmatically, explains that, in fact, every text vibrates with references to other texts solely because they are composed in the same language. The challenge for the reader is to decide which ones are significant (see *Practical* 203). The author furthermore brings up the question of "how far […] the significance of a poem [can] depend on intertextual recognition" (*Practical* 59). The writer of a poem might have intended references to other texts, the reader, however, might not notice them. "People with different linguistic and literary experience will read different meaning into a text. If we do not identify an expression as a literary citation or allusion, then we cannot, obviously, interpret it as such" (59). Thus, "there can be no criteria for what counts as a valid reading" (59).

To sum up, a poem does not have 'the one and only' interpretation but is open to different readings. Especially in the (language) classroom, this concept needs to be stressed. The teacher needs to foster the role of a coach, helping and encouraging the learners to arrive at their own interpretations (following the principle of a learner-centered approach), instead of creating the picture of the 'person with all the solutions' (see Rosenblatt). Rather than asking for the meaning of a poem, the teacher should inquire: "What does it mean to you?"

3. Love That Dog

3.1.   Sharon Creech[3]

Sharon Creech is an American author of children's books as well as novels for teenagers and adults. She was born in 1945 in South Euclid, Ohio, where she grew up among four siblings. In such a big family, only the most exciting story would be listened to, thus, the author quickly learned to aggrandize and dramatize her narrations. As a result, her talent for story-telling soon became apparent. Growing up, Sharon Creech continually wrote poems and short stories. While teaching in England and Switzerland (high school English and writing) she wrote her first two novels for adults: *The Recital* and *Nickel Malley*. *Absolutely Normal Chaos*

Sharon Creech (right) with her editor/publisher Joanna Cotler.

was her first novel for children, which woke her passion for children's literature. Since then her main audience has been young people. For her book *Walk Two Moons* she received the Newberry Medal (an American award for young adult's books). Other books of hers that followed include *Chasing Redbird*, *Pleasing the Ghost*, *Bloomability*, *The Wanderer*, and *Fishing in the Air*. *Love That Dog* was her first novel in verse. Since then, she has written further poem-novels: a

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[3] Biographical facts were taken from the following homepages:

Hendershot, Judy and Jackie Peck. "An interview with Sharon Creech, 1995 Newberry Medal winner". *The Reading Teacher*. 49/4 (February 1996): 380-382.

Creech, Sharon. Home page. Harper Collins Children's. 22 May 2011. <http://www.sharoncreech.com/>

Creech, Sharon. Home page. Bloomsbury. 22 May 2011. <http://sharoncreech.co.uk/>

Neela Sakaria. *Sharon Creech, Newberry Medal Winner and author of Love That Dog*. Meet the Author. BookWire. 18 November 2009. <http://www.bookwire.com/MeetTheAuthor/Interview_Sharon_Creech.htm>

sequel called *Hate That Cat* as well as *Heartbeat*. Sharon Creech is married to Lyle Rigg and has two children. The author is no longer teaching and spends most of her time writing.

Sharon Creech enables her young readers to identify and feel with the protagonists, who "bumble along in some area and feel at times less than capable, and yet they have a certain sort of stubborn determination, and the way they tell about these failings is often humorous" (Creech qtd. in Geye 6). The main characters often struggle with everyday problems which the author conveys in a sensitive, clear and unique style. The majority of her stories mostly center on relationships and their struggles, family life, love and loss. The author explains that she always draws from her own experiences, from places she has been and from people she has met. In the case of *Love That Dog* Creech confesses that she "really, really, really did not get the wheelbarrow poem" (Creech qtd. in Geye 6). When asked about her inspiration for writing this first novel in verse, she relates:

> Walter Dean Myers' poem, "Love That Boy", has been hanging on my bulletin board for the past three or four years. It's at eye level, so I probably glance at it a dozen times a day. I love that poem--there is so much warmth and exuberance in it. […] One day as I glanced at this poem, I started thinking about the much-loved boy in Myers' poem. I wondered what that boy might love. Maybe a pet? A dog? Maybe also a teacher? And whoosh--out jumped Jack's voice. (Creech, Homepage Harper Collin's)

Not only Walter Dean Myer is a real person appearing in the book. The teacher's name – Miss Stretchberry – originates from a magazine editor that interviewed the author when she wrote her book. Another curiosity concerns the intertextual references. Sharon Creech wanted to include the poems Jack mentions in an appendix, but could not find a poem looking like an apple. Thus, she created it herself under the pseudonym S. C. Rigg.

3.2.   Summary of the book

Jack is about ten years old and attends Miss Stretchberry's class. They study poems, but Jack is not a big fan of poetry. This he tells his teacher – in the form of many little poems.

> September 13
>
> I don't want to
> because boys
> don't write poetry.
>
> Girls do. (Creech, *LTD* 1)

> September 21
>
> I tried.
> Can't do it.
> Brain's empty. (Creech, *LTD* 2)

Over the course of a school year Jack responds to, criticizes and imitates the poems Miss Stretchberry shows her students in class. The story unfolds through Jack's journal keeping. The boy is not aware that the thoughts he writes in his poetry journal are already poems.

> DECEMBER 4
>
> Why do you want
> to type up what I wrote
> about reading
> the small poems?
>
> It's not a poem.
> Is it?
> […] (Creech, *LTD* 17)

But by typing up Jack's writing Miss Stretchberry shows him that his brain is not empty and that he is a poet as well.

DECEMBER 13

I guess is does
look like a poem
when you see it
typed up
like that.
[…] (Creech, *LTD* 18)

Miss Stretchberry introduces the class to many different kinds of poems. Rhyming poems, free verse, and shape poems are presented to Jack. Among others, "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams, "The Tiger" by William Blake and "Street Music" by Arnold Adoff are mentioned. At first Jack is very skeptical towards the poems but over the course of time Jack's appreciation for poetry grows. This genre even allows him to talk about his dog's death. One poem really inspires him. It is "Love That Boy" by Walter Dean Myers. Jack is so fascinated by the poem that he writes a letter to the poet asking him to visit

[his] school
which is a clean place
with mostly nice
people in it
[…] (Creech, *LTD* 57)

Walter Dean Myers answers Jacks letter and visits his school. The boy is delighted by the author's visit. He writes him a letter to thank him and encloses the name-giving poem, which is inspired by Walter Dean Myers.[4]

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[4] Further insightful reviews of the book can be found on the following web-sites:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/fairs/currconnection/poetrytwist.htm

http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-love.html; 18.Nov. 2009

http://www.sharoncreech.com/novels/01.asp; Feb 4, 2010

LOVE THAT DOG
(INSPIRED BY WALTER DEAN MYERS)
BY JACK

Love that dog,
like a bird loves to fly
I said I love that dog
like a bird loves to fly
Love to call him in the morning
love to call him
"Hey there, Sky!" (Creech, *LTD* 86)

3.3. My reasons for teaching this book

Below I list reasons for teaching *Love That Dog*. I am first stating my personal motives before stressing theory-based reasons and making reference to counter-arguments mentioned in chapter 2.3.1.

Love That Dog has fascinated from the first poem onwards, thus I want as many pupils as possible to know it as well. It comprises many interesting aspects (a wide range of different poems, intertextuality), and a student should not be denied discovering its resources. The book's versatile demonstration of poetry makes it a great source for classroom activities. The second part of this diploma thesis explores teaching the book *Love That Dog* in an English as a Second or Foreign Language classroom. Particularly chapters 5 to 8 provide valuable teaching suggestions.

A reason why I would suggest using the book in the foreign language classroom is the book's length. Students in sixth and seventh grade might be afraid of being unable to read an authentic American novel. The book, however, already diminishes this worry by its size. The story is told within 86 pages which hold mostly short poems in large type font letters.

Sharon Creech encountered a "built-in dread of poetry" (Sakaria) among her students. Similarly, I have the feeling many students have not encountered poetry often in their lives. Therefore, the poetry activities in class should provide students with a pleasurable experience when they read and leave them with a positive attitude towards poetry.

In the story Sharon Creech mirrors the struggle with poetry she has experienced among her students. Poetry in the book – even reference to famous (canonical) poems - is not glorified but critically looked at by Jack. At first the boy is skeptical of this literary genre because he feels unable to understand it. The book depicts the encounter with poetry as a slow and careful approach - a struggle. Jack needs time and input to arrive at a liking for poems. Sharon Creech describes the confrontation with poetry in a realistic way which, I think, encourages students to allow poetry to enter their lives as well.

Parkinson and Thomas argue that teaching literature often omits sequencing because "there are no staging posts [which] introduce the complexities gradually"

(Parkinson and Thomas 12-13). The book *Love That Dog* itself, however, realizes these staging posts. Accompanying Jack on his slow but gradual encounter with poetry leads the reader gradually to an understanding of the poems as well. I personally perceive *Love That Dog* as a 'springboard' that carefully introduces the reader to poetry.

Jack is not easily convinced by the poems his teacher Miss Stretchberry presents to him. He examines and only reluctantly opens himself to them. This way he shows the reader that one does not necessarily have to love all poetry just because it belongs to that genre. Rather, he demonstrates that even 'poetry-beginners' are allowed to be selective in their poetry likings.

> [Students should learn] that they do not have to be polite or neutral. If their reaction is that a poem is bad, or boring, or disgusting, or upsetting, they should feel that it is quite acceptable to say so. (Parkinson, 78)

Jennifer Hill addresses the level of language difficulty in literary texts used in the classroom and thus concludes that students will not enjoy reading the text when the vocabulary and the sentence structure are too complex (see Hill 19). I, however, consider the language of the book as adequate for learners with the proficiency level of A2 to B1. (A definition of the proficiency levels can be found in chapter 4) Jack is presumably ten years old and attends elementary school. The sentence structures as well as his vocabulary cover the basics which the students will by then have already encountered in their own school books. Although the book may include words the students have not learned so far, their meaning will become clear within the context of the other poems.

Furthermore, *Love That Dog* is written in the 21st century and does not contain 'old', uncommon words or 'deviant' language[5]. There is no distinction between the language of the poems and the language used in everyday life. Jack writes his journal entries with the words he is familiar with. Thus the students encounter an authentic use of language and can actually use the vocabulary newly acquired through the poems.

Chapter 2.2.1. addresses the problem of remoteness of literature. As Strong points out: "the poetry of other times is best approached via our own, not the other way about" (16). *Love That Dog* is a collection of (content-vise connected)

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[5] Brian Parkinson and Helen Reid Thomas refer in their book *Teaching Literature in a Second Language* to the language of poems: "Deviant language, also called deviance or deviation, is language which differs from what is considered normal. Sometimes it can be what a lay person would call 'wrong', as in [poems] by e.e. cummings […]" (Parkinson, 67).

modern poems published in 2001, thus it can be addressed as "poetry of our time".

Although the book is written in modern language, it also includes poetic examples from the 'classical canon'. Thus the students are introduced to the so-called 'high literature' in a critical, yet humorous, way. Consequently they do not feel overwhelmed, but can also appreciate those poems.

Intertextuality – references to other literary works, in this book pointing out other poems – is clearly articulated and does not leave the students at loss for what is happening. Jack explicitly mentions the poems he is referring to. In addition, Sharon Creech provides the reader with an appendix which contains the poems Miss Stretchberry shows the class. These references allow the teacher to point out works beyond this novel. By including the poems from the appendix in the classroom activities, further poems from the classical canon can be used and easily dealt with in the context of the book.

Jennifer Hill explains that "students' understanding of a text can […] be hampered by their lack of background knowledge of the English or American way of life" (Hill 26). Although the author of the book is American, the students are not required to have an American background to understand the story of the poems. Nevertheless, they allow the students to peak into another culture and provide them with some ideas about other ways of living and going about things.

Strong and Ainy point out that learners are most likely to enjoy poetry that addresses issues which concern them personally (see Strong 10, Ainy 5). Jack is a school boy, as is the intended audience. He faces the same problems as the reader, thus the reader is offered a chance to relate to the main character and to the poems. Furthermore, Jack encounters poetry (apart from nursery rhymes, of course) for the first time, as are many students. The book, thus, depicts a situation, within the students' world of experience.

Parkinson and Thomas point out that literature teaching mainly focuses on reading. Thus, it creates an imbalance of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing, ordered based on the emphases of communicative classroom teaching). *Love That Dog*, however, has already been recorded, for example by Sharon Creech herself. Thus, the book can also be approached towards an emphasis on listening. Moreover, since the book addresses subjects concerning the students themselves, *Love That Dog* constitutes a valuable

source for discussions. Furthermore, choral speaking, closely examined in chapter 8, fosters pronunciation and encourages even reluctant speakers of the new language to try. Poetry in specific offers a high potential of motivating imitation. The texts usually are very short and thus quickly provide the students with a sense of achievement.

Moreover, the imbalance of knowledge and power is also often addressed regarding the teaching of poetry. Teaching in general is built upon the belief that the teacher knows more than the students. Thus, the teachers' task is to mediate his or her wisdom. The approach the teacher chooses to adopt, thus, nearly entirely depends on the individual (considering resources, time, etc.). In this regard poetry makes no difference. Difficult vocabulary used in a poem can beforehand be addressed through various activities, e.g. vocabulary collections, pictures (see chapter 6). Another possibility, considering a limited time frame, is to provide the students with a vocabulary list (see chapter 8). Moreover, Parkinson and Reid Thomas emphasize that literature teaching "conflicts with one of the first principles of communicative methodology […] that learners should talk about themselves and what they think" (Parkinson and Thomas 12). *Love That Dog*, however, offering short poems and addressing issues the students personally are concerned with, offers, as already pointed out before, a great deal of material for learners to talk about personal impressions and their own take on things.

Love That Dog introduces the reader to a multitude of different kinds of poems. The pupils encounter free verse, rhyming poems, and shape poetry. The book combines all of those and confronts the students with a pleasure read. This great assortment of different poems allows to reader to be selective. The pupils learn to understand the great variety of poetry and might find a style that inspires them. If a student does not like one type of poem he or she will find other poems in the book he or she appreciates.

Poetry fosters language development. Shape poems, for example, provide an immediate feeling of success even for students with a limited range of vocabulary. Furthermore, they provide visual input and encourage the learner to "interact with the target vocabulary" (Finch 30), as Andrew Finch points out in his essay about "Using poems to teach English":

> Because of [the absence of a grammatical structure in shape poems], students can experience immediate success in terms of expressing themselves in English (improved self-esteem), and stress or anxiety can

be reduced (reduction of affective filters). These poems thus encourage students to interact and experiment with the target language in a non-threatening learning environment, and can be displayed on the classroom walls, providing continuous validation of the students' efforts and abilities. (Finch 32)

This aspect is just one of many that I will explore further in the following chapters.

PART TWO

In Particular

4. *Love That Dog* in the EFL classroom

4.1. Austrian Curriculum

In the Austrian curriculum English is most often considered the first foreign language the students learn. Thus, it is labeled 'erste lebende Fremdsprache' (see bmukk). According to the Austrian curriculum, the teaching of a foreign language pursues certain aims. These are:

- Kommunikative Fremdsprachenkompetenz
- Sozialkompetenz und interkulturelle Kompetenz
- Erwerb von Lernstrategien (my translation; see bmukk)

Furthermore, more detailed objectives are mentioned which include the understanding of language spoken at average rate, the autonomous exploitation of authentic texts with the help of reading strategies, using learned phrases in oral and written communication, as well as implementing modern information technologies (word processor, internet, emails) (see bmukk). In order to reach these goals the Austrian curriculum for foreign languages suggests the following didactic principles:

- Communicative Competence
- Balance of competences
- Contextualizing vocabulary and grammar
- Convergence to target language in consideration of (the) learners' native language (L1)
- Differentiation of/ Variety in teaching
- Appreciating individual progress
- Priority of target language
- Reflective comparison of languages
- Knowing how to use teaching material and learning aids
- Integral creative learning
- Offering various communicative situations and thematic fields
- Embedding the study of the country and its culture
- Fostering authentic encounters
- Interdisciplinary activities (my translation; see bmukk)

In my thesis I want to illustrate how – with the help of the book *Love That Dog* – most of the didactic principles can be adhered to and a selection of the aims can easily be reached by teaching poetry.

4.1.1. Common European Frame of Reference

The Common European Frame of Reference for Languages (CEFR)[6] is a descriptor of language competences advised by the Council of Europe to simplify comparisons of learner levels among different countries.

> The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop. (Council *Frame* 1)

Therefore, the Council of Europe has defined six levels of language competence in order to facilitate comparison. The competence descriptors start with A1 and A2 depicting beginners' proficiency. B1 and B2 characterize the intermediate language skills, defining the speakers as being capable of independent language use. Advanced language performances are labeled C1 and C2, approximating the competence of a native speaker (see Council *Scales*).

The Austrian curriculum draws upon these descriptors to define teaching and learning objectives. The expected communicative expertise of students between the fifth and eight grade of the Austrian school system is divided into the CEFR competence levels A1, A2 and partially B1. In order to depict these levels in more detail they have been divided into partial aspects according to the CEFR. The segmentation illustrates the following language skills: listening, reading, participation in conversations, coherent speaking and writing (see bmukk and Council *Frame*).

Due to the fact that the Austrian curriculum concerning the first foreign language only includes the CEFR-levels A1 to B1, only those levels are closely examined. First, the general definition of the levels is stated before considering the individual skills.

A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography,

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[6] In German: Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen (GER)

		employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans

(Council *Scales*)

The CEFR by the Council of Europe describes every skill very carefully, assigning a chapter for each aspect. Reproducing these, however, would go beyond the scope of this diploma thesis. Therefore, I am employing the self-assessment grid for learners, which displays the anticipated language proficiency in levels A1 to B1 in a concise manner.

Concerning the receptive skills at the level of A1, students are supposed to be able to recognize familiar basic words concerning family and the immediate surrounding when reading and when listening to slowly spoken language. Moreover, learners should be able to interact orally and written using very basic vocabulary and structures (see Council *Scales*).

Students at the language level A2 can understand high frequency vocabulary as well as personally relevant topics when listening and reading. In like manner, they are able to employ these phrases in their spoken and written interaction. Learners at the level of A2 already use simple conjunctions (and, but, because).

When listening and reading, learners at the level of B1 are able to understand the main points. Speech is comprehended even when spoken in high frequency. Moreover, students apprehend descriptions of feelings, wishes and events. Also, students are able to enter conversations unprepared and include descriptions of impressions and reactions when interacting and producing the foreign language (see Council *Scales*).

4.1.2. 6th grade

According to the Austrian curricula, then, pupils should be able to participate in conversations and speak coherently within the level of A1. Their competence of listening, reading and writing should correspond with A2 criteria.

4.1.3. 7th grade

Competences anticipated at the end of the third year of learning English – seventh grade in the Austrian school system – partly comply with A2 and partly with B1. Pupils should be able to participate in conversations and speak coherently according to the descriptors of A2. Listening should also correspond with A2 with the addition taken from B1's criteria that they "can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters" (Council *Scale*). Reading should also adhere to the definition of A2 with the supplement of B1 that the learner "can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language" (Council *Scale*). Writing, as well, should be at the level of A2 and already meet B1 regarding writing "connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest" (Council *Scale*).

4.2. Trial and error classes

I was able to test the following teaching suggestions in sixth and seventh classes of the Wienerwaldgymnasium. It is a school for secondary education, located in Tullnerbach, Lower Austria. Despite the rural region the school is still rather small (308 pupils, 40 teachers) due to an existence of only three years in 2010/2011 (see Wienerwaldgymnasium). Class sizes vary from 16 to 25 pupils. As I have been teaching German at the school for two years, the students already know me. Thus, they were not distracted by the appearance of a new teacher, but could concentrate on the content of the lesson. At the end of every poetry session I asked the students of the sixth and seventh grades to fill out a feedback sheet, describing how they liked the lesson and the new poetry approach to language. The students were allowed to use their native tongue in case they felt unable to express their thoughts. Nevertheless, out of 66 students only 4 chose to write in German. The learners were asked to give an account on how they liked the lesson (they could choose between three different smiley-icons) and what interested them especially. Moreover, the feedback sheet provided them with the opportunity to state their dislikes as well as any suggestions on how to improve the lesson. Concluding, they could complete the phrase "I just want to say …" to mention anything that had not been provided for by the preceding questions. An example of the feedback sheet can be found in the appendix.

In the following sections, remarks stemming from these feedback sheets as well as some poems composed by the students are included. These are indicated through the heading "Voices from the classroom"[7].

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[7] I mainly left poems and comments the way they were composed; only in rare cases I had to adjust spelling.

5. Teaching *Love That Dog*

5.1. Reading in class

In comparison to a poem, a whole novel in verse cannot be read in one lesson. Thus, the teacher is confronted with different options of how to read the book with the students. In his publication *Teaching English Literature* Engelbert Thaler distinguishes between six different ways of reading a book in class[8]:

Approach	Description
Straight Trough Approach	The whole novel is read at home by the students before classroom discussion starts.
Segment Approach	In each lesson one segment (or chapter) is discussed in class. This may be prepared at home or/and read at school.
Sandwich Approach	Some chapters of the novel are read, others are skipped.
Appetizer Approach	Only one excerpt from the whole book is read and discussed.
Topic Approach	Several books from the same literary genre, period, author or on a single issue are read in excerpts.
Patchwork Approach	Several books from various authors, genres and periods are read (in excerpts) and discussed.

(Thaler 105)

My teaching suggestions in the following chapters (chapter 6 to 8) are based on the assumption that *Love That Dog* is read as a whole. Consequently, the appetizer approach, the topic and the patchwork approach do not serve my purposes. Since Jack's story and his appreciation for poetry develop gradually poem by poem, I want to enable my students to experience the same. Due to the intertextual references, the book invites the reader to stop reading once in a while and take a closer look at the poems mentioned. This can be done together in class. The straight-through approach, therefore, prevents the closer examinations of certain aspects and the gradual development of literary appreciation by rushing

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[8] Thaler calls the suggestions in his grid „approaches", therefore I am using his terms in this chapter. Nevertheless, the different ‚approaches' to reading a novel should not be confused with the approaches to literature teaching addressed in chapter 2.2.3.

through the story. To read *Love That Dog* in class, I suggest an adaption of the Segment Approach.

In my own teaching experience, I have found that, although only parts of the books are assigned for reading, fast and enthusiastic readers tend to finish the book sooner than the class is scheduled to. Normally, of course, this is a practice that should be promoted. But in the case of *Love That Dog,* an exception needs to be made for this regular promoting of eager reading. Rather, I would suggest controlling the reading process. Otherwise the learners forfeit the literary experience because certain surprises and developments in the books are spoiled, and the students become bored when they are not allowed to give away all of their knowledge of the book in class. Accordingly, I would suggest selecting the books after each lesson and, thus, preventing students from reading on. Since the book is small-formatted this should not pose a logistic problem for the teacher. An alternative is to work with slides, presenting the poems one by one to the class with the help of projections. The book is handed out at the end of the poetry project as a sort of reward. This way, the teacher is able to prevent students from reading during the lesson when they should participate. The sandwich approach can be included in this procedure as well. Relevant passages are appointed by the teacher for classroom use. Certain poems can be skipped without hindering understanding the story. The students can read them later when receiving the book.

I am aware that my reading suggestions are controversial because they do not promote learner autonomy (see Sinclair). Citing Barbara Sinclair, it might be that it is my fear of "lack of control" (140) that led me to choose such a teacher-dependent reading approach. Nevertheless, Tricia Hedge poses the question whether "learner autonomy [is a] universally appropriate concept" (99). The author points out that learner autonomy needs to correspond with the "various types of teaching context" (99). Thus I am of the opinion that although I portion the reading experience, students are not necessarily robbed their possibility to "learn independently" (Sinclair 140). Considering that "[at] different times […] we operate at different levels of autonomy" (140), the students will receive opportunities with a higher level of autonomy regarding other aspects when working with *Love That Dog.* To conclude, I hope my suggestions concerning my reading and teaching *Love That Dog* are taken for what they are: recommendations but surely no regulations. In the end, the responsibility to

choose the approach that best fits the individual learner group rests with the teacher.

In chapters 6 to 8 I presuppose that the whole text is read, therefore, I highlight three teaching aspects of the book, using the text as a 'springboard' to further poems following the intertextual references. The dialogue with and the connection to the book, however, is maintained. Again, the ideas put forward are presumed to be adapted to the learners' needs. Since valuable suggestions and questions for reading circles can be found on various homepages[9], I will not go into detail concerning these.

5.2. Further comments

Sharon Creech wrote a sequel to *Love That Dog* called *Hate That Cat.* Once more, Jack is the main protagonist in the story, writing poems from his point of view. Nevertheless, the vocabulary is rather advanced, poems mentioned in the book are analyzed in more detail and metalanguage is applied. Thus, literary terms like 'onomatopoeia' or 'alliteration' are repeatedly used. Therefore, I would suggest reading this book in eighth grade or upper secondary classes.

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[9] Guides for reading circles:

Teacher Resource Center. *Poetry with a Twist.* Teacher's Guide to Book Fair. Scholastic. 22 May 2011. <http://teacher.scholastic.com/fairs/currconnection/poetrytwist.htm#>

Talk it up!. *Discussion Guide: Love That Dog by Sharon Creech*.15 October 2010. Multnomah County Library. 22 May 2011. <http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-love.html>

Teachers. *Love that Dog Extension Activity*. Scholastics. 22 May 2011. <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=10839_type=Book_typeId=3118>

Coxon, Kate. *Love That Dog and Hate That Cat by Sharon Creech. Teacher's Guide*. Harper Collins Publishers. 22 May 2011 <www.harpercollinschildrens.com>

Reading Groups*. Teachers Guide for Love That Dog by Sharon Creech.* Bloomsbury. 22 May 2011. <http://www.bloomsbury.com/Love-That-Dog/Sharon-Creech/readinggroups/details/9780747557494>

6. The Red Wheelbarrow

6.1.   Theory

Poetry is perceived as one of the highest arts. Thus, it should be enjoyed but not touched. Analyzing it seems like a mortal sin that destroys the unique effect the poem creates (see Widdowson, *Practical* 71). In her book *The Anatomy of Poetry* Marjorie Boulton finds poignant words to describe the urge to save an effective poem from further analysis:

> In the early stages of discovering poetry for ourselves, we often find that to pull it to pieces in any way, even to repeat it to another person, spoils it. Our first worthwhile experience of poetry is very personal, and we feel we want to keep it to ourselves much as we are inclined to be secretive about the beginnings of love in ourselves or about our experience of religion. We may feel that it is almost a profanation to investigate a poem too closely, just as it would be a liberty to be familiar with some person greatly respected. (Boulton 4)

Therefore, one naturally wants to save the unique impression the poem creates. Nevertheless - due to the powerful effect and the melodic nature a poem possesses - I would suggest comparing it to music. In this field no one dreads to learn more about a masterpiece. The consensus clearly is the more one knows about a piece of music, the more one can appreciate it. This, in fact, is also the case with poetry.

According to Widdowson poetry actually "provoke[s] irreverence" (*Practical* 179) because of its "aura of sanctity" (179). Therefore, this insurgent feeling should be encouraged in order to help students understand poems (see Widdowson *Practical* 179). Since a poem is always open to interpretation[10], a teacher cannot provide the students with its one and only meaning. Rather, one is inclined to teach them the tools to understand a poem to the extent that they can build their own opinion. Following this idea, the teacher needs to help the students understand the words and appreciate the form of a poem.

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[10] Henry Widdowson explains that "there is not, nor can be without misrepresentation, one definitive interpretation of the poem. Different readers will bring their own preconceptions and values to bear on their reading of it and will associate the poem with their own experience of reality, thus in effect creating their own connotations"(Widdowson *Stylistics* 123). See also chapter 2.3.6 on interpretation and meaning of poems.

In his book *Explorations in Applied Linguistics* Henry Widdowson points out that "the communicative value of a […] linguistic element is […] a function of […] its relationship with a set of essential conditions" (155). Hence, in the case of poetry, one needs to be aware of the linguistic context of a poem to understand the meaning of the words. L.A. Strong explains in his essay on "Poetry in the School" students are generally "apt to be startled by [the words of a poem] into immediate and wholly premature attempt to extract their meaning, with little or no reference to their context" (11). Like in everyday speech the meaning depends on the context a word is used in. Thus, when working with poems the pupils have to use their interpretative techniques to work out meaning of words since a poet might use well-known words in a different way than they might have encountered so far (see Obregón 144). Therefore, they should be able to fall back on ways of how to find out the intended meaning of the word. Accordingly, the students make use of the same interpretative technique they use when trying to understand everyday speech, as Widdowson points out:

> The process whereby we interpret poetry is essentially the same process whereby we interpret any other kind of language use, the difference being that in poetic interpretation the process is inevitably more apparent. (Widdowson, *Applied* 159)

Consequently, the analysis of the stylistic features "helps to foster interpretative skills and to encourage reading between the lines of what is said" (Carter, *Both ways* 5).

Despite understanding the words used, form is another focus when analyzing a poem. The students should arrive at an understanding for the unique way the poet chose to order his words; reaching the conclusion that a different positioning would have changed the poem. Jennifer Hill, thus, concludes that the aim of a poetry lesson that looks closer at words and form is "to demonstrate that the way a poem is designed and laid out is inextricably part of the work and cannot be changed without subtly altering the content" (83). Following this idea Widdowson claims that the task of the teacher, therefore, is to

> […] demystify poetry, democratize it indeed, by encouraging students to analyse it, read their own significance into it, rewrite it, make it their own. There is no place in this pedagogy for the ritualistic worship of canonized art. But nothing of value is denied to poetry by being irreverent about it. On the contrary, I would claim, it can lead to its value being recognized. (Widdowson *Practical* 179)

Like William Carlos Williams' famous poem "This is just to say", "The Red Wheelbarrow" at first hearing seems like a short prose note. Williams' poem is in

free verse and is composed of basic vocabulary. The eight lines are made up of 16 words broken up into a regular scheme of three two-line-couplets alternating with three words and one word per line. The following grid illustrates the regularity of the poem:

Line	Poem	Words
1	so much depends	3
2	upon	1
3	a red wheel	3
4	barrow	1
5	glazed with rain	3
6	water	1
7	beside the white	3
8	chicken.	1

(C. Williams 224)

The word constellation holds another surprise. Reading the poem slowly line by line, the perceiver will notice how the impressions, respectively the pictures in one's mind, change, as soon as one arrives at the next line. For example, hearing line 1 to 3, our mind inevitably creates the picture of a red wheel, only in line 4 one learns that the poem actually talks about a red wheelbarrow, not a wheel. This is also the case between likes 5 to 6 and 7 to 8. Thus, one constantly has to revise one's mental pictures evoked by the poem. This effect is created through breaking up compound nouns and collocations, without using hyphenation to warn the reader.[11]

In order to present a poem's unique structure to the learners Widdowson promotes "progressive derivation" (*Practical* 145) induced through "composing interim versions" (145). The students are confronted with derived[12] versions of a poem before finally reading the original. Thus, the learners have the chance to experience the powerful effect of minor changes in a poem. Widdowson starts off

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[11] For more detailed descriptions and analyses of the poem see Hollander, John. *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form*; Gee, James Paul. "The Structure of Perception in the Poetry of William Carlos Williams: A Stylistic Analysis"; Archer, Stanley. "Glazed in Williams's 'The Red Wheelbarrow.'"; Ahearn, Barry. *William Carlos Williams and Alterity: The Early Poetry*; Fry, Richard R. "Seeing the Signs: Objectivist Premonitions in Williams's 'Spring and All'".

[12] In his book *Practical Stylistics: an approach to poetry* Widdowson distinguishes between 'derived' and 'authorized' poems. 'Authorized' denotes the original poem, 'derived' ones are rewritten versions of the original. (see 145-150)

with turning a poem into a prose text. Afterwards, based on the words in prose, several poems, "gradually [approximating] to the original text" (145), are composed. With the time resources of 50 minutes and my workgroup being seventh grade teenage students at B1 level, I adopted this approach for my purposes. In line with the Chinese saying "Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I'll remember; involve me and I'll learn" (qtd in Hedge 100), the students are prompted to produce their own poems. Their different versions of the given prose text are compared before confronting them with the original, which can then be further analyzed following Jennifer Hill's emphasis on structure and appropriateness of the form as well as her suggestions concerning the splitting of compound nouns (see 82) in Williams' poem.

The approach chosen, then, is language-based and includes stylistics. Accordingly, it combines "language and literature study" (Carter, *Both ways* 2). Within the language-based approach the activity- and the process-principle are realized. Students are actively involved in meaning-making. They are not simply confronted with the original version of the poem, but help constructing it (activity based). Because of this process of arriving at the authorized version through construction, the learners are more likely to cherish the poem (see Carter, *Both ways* 3). To sum up, this language-based approach teaching suggestion comprises "student-centered, activity-based and process-oriented" (Carter *Both ways* 3) exercises.

6.2. Teaching[13]

In order to familiarize the students with the vocabulary used in "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams the teacher shows them a picture of white chickens and a wet red wheelbarrow (with the help of a beamer). Together the students name the objects. The teacher gives hints and asks eliciting questions. Afterwards the students are presented with what William Carlos Williams made out of these words in order to describe the farmyard scene. Nevertheless, the words are not arranged the way the author intended, but written in two lines like a prose text. The teacher informs the pupils that the words are originally taken from a poem. Thus, the students' task is to position the words so that they look like a poem as well. On colored paper sheets the learners arrange the words into a poem. Afterwards their versions are compared. The students explain why they decided to break up the lines and what impression the poem makes on them. The teacher then shows the learners the original by William Carlos Williams. The students receive a copy of the poem in order to mark the subsequent analysis. Together, they look closer at the poem and its prose equivalent. The teacher first directs the pupils' attention towards the split compound nouns and collocations. The students highlight the words that belong together on their sheets. Hereafter, the focus is on adjectives and descriptive words. The students have to find them without the help of the teacher. The results are compared and the teacher points at the contrast of the colors: the bright shining red of the wheelbarrow in comparison to the white of the chickens. Once more, the students mark the words on their sheet.

During the following line by line analysis, the students see how Williams boosts the impressions by using adjectives. Moreover, the students become aware of the changing pictures in their minds due to the line break up. To emphasize this technique the teacher draws the changing pictures on the board. When looking at line 3, for example, the teacher draws a red wheel on the board. Then she confronts the students with line 4 and has to adapt the picture on the board to make it match the description in the poem.

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[13] A detailed lesson plan as well as the material mentioned can be found in the appendix.

Since I conducted the lessons, I am only using the third person singular feminine as a pronoun referring to the teacher when describing the classroom happenings. This is also intended to facilitate reading.

Since the students are already familiar with grammatical descriptions, the final theory part focuses on the building blocks of the poem. This way, the splitting of the compound nouns becomes even more apparent. Furthermore, Hill points out that

> [it] should become evident that the effect of the unorthodox arrangement of the words in the poem is to slow things down and stress the separateness of the objects, the barrow, the water, the chickens, each of which has a line to itself. The readers are forced to look at the poem as they would at a painting, seeing the individual parts of it, their eyes moving back and forth over the scene, the red wheelbarrow gleaming in the rain and the white chickens. (Hill 82-83)

After learning this much about Williams' poem, the students are encouraged to write their own imitation of it. Beforehand, the teacher asks the pupils to think about what their lives 'depend upon' and what plays an important role in their daily lives.

Voices from the classroom:

Apple Trees

so much depends
upon
a big apple
tree
decorated with wrinkled
leaves
beside the small
stable.

(Kerstin)

So much depends upon
a fresh water
glass
painted with tooth
brushes
on the pink sink.

(Lena)

So much depends upon
a big apple
pie
glazed with sweet
sugar
in the kitchen
fridge.

(Thalissa)

so much depends
upon
a black giant
wheel
sprayed with graffiti
monsters
beside the sweet
shops.

(Victoria)

At the end of the lesson the students present their poems. Some of them even write more than one. To thank them for the lesson the teacher shows them her own imitation of Williams' poem.

6.3. Reflection

It was surprising how quickly the students worked. Consequently, several aspects could have been included into the lesson plan that would have deepened the experience of the poem further. The focus on the surface structure, for example, could have been stronger. Some poems by the learners show that Williams' arranging the words within the eight lines into a three-word, one-word pattern did not become clear to all of the students.

Voices from the classroom

So much depends
upon a pink freestyle
snowboard
and the
white
cold
snow.

(Jakob)

So much depends
upon
your own white room
key
when you have some chocolate
cake
with strawberry
jam.

(Ronja)

Moreover, attention could have been more focused on compound nouns and collocations. The students apparently had so far not been familiar with the concept of words belonging together (compound nouns, collocations). Thus, a more detailed introduction as well as several examples (swimming pool, ice cream, galloping horse) would have illustrated the idea behind the poem. Also, spending more time on the topic and giving them the chance to come up with compound nouns and collocations themselves would have deepened their understanding.

All in all, Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow" is a great source to introduce compound nouns and collocations, to revise grammatical descriptions and, most importantly, to encounter new possibilities of expressing oneself and creating effects with the English language. The students participated enthusiastically during the lesson and created great poems. According to their notes on the feedback sheet, they enjoyed learning about Williams' poem and especially writing an imitation themselves.

> **Voices from the classroom**
>
> I liked …that we could make our own poem.
>
>
> Something I did not like:
> It was hard to write a poem but it was awesome to learn that.

I feared the seventh-grade students would become weary with such an exhaustive analysis. Nevertheless, this concern was removed after I read comments like the one below:

> **Voices from the classroom**
>
> I just want to say … that it was interesting to hear so much about a small poem like this.

7. Shape Poems

7.1. Theory

Shape Poetry belongs to the major group of concrete poems, which is a visual type of poetry. The term 'concrete poetry' is believed to be first coined by Max Bill and Eugen Gomringer as well as by a Brazilian group of lyricists called "Noigandres" in the early 1940s/50s (see Gomringer 152, Heissenbüttel *Konkrete* 63, Higgins *Concrete* 233, Higgins *Shape* 890, Berry 1364, Auwera 139).

Helmut Heissenbüttel explains that concrete poetry can be perceived as a continuum of poetry and graphics (see Heissenbüttel *Geschichte* 67) which results in an indefinable boundary to graphics (see Pütz 171). Its main principle is a reduction to the basic elements of language into a geometrically ordered type face (see Heissenbüttel *Konkrete* 63). This is especially accentuated in shape poetry where the theme of the poem is expressed through the form of the poem (see Heissenbüttel *Geschichte* 68, Pütz 169).

> Einzelvokabel und asyntaktisch gebundene Gruppen von Wörtern [werden] über die Schreib- und Druckfläche verteilt. Zusammenhang und Sinn [soll] aus der Stellung der Wörter, dem verschieden großen Schriftgrad und ihrer Bewegungsrichtung hervorgehen. (Heissenbüttel *Geschichte* 67-68)

Thus, ensembles of words are the main focus of visual poetry, sentences are no longer used. In extreme cases, a concrete poem consists of only one word which is repeated several times. The intent of the poet, then, is to create a meaningful arrangement on the plane of the paper. Conventional structures of language and poetry are abandoned because concrete poetry wants to free itself from traditional constraints such as syntax, lineation or verse.

> Befreiung vom syntaktischen, zeilenmäßigen und metrischen Reglement […]. Wesentlich dabei ist, dass diese Befreiung visuell und ohne Rücksicht auf das phonetische Bild des Gedichts geschieht. (Heissenbüttel *Geschichte* 69)

The aim is not a 'string of text', but rather a 'plane of text' (see Bense 78). And only in rare cases is this modified type face supplemented by symbols (see Heissenbüttel *Geschichte* 68). Since this type of poem, however, is not build upon verses and lines, one might find it hard to recite such a poem. In fact, visual

poems are constructed for the eye, not for the ear – as its name suggests (see Wagenknecht).

Holmes and Moulton point out the advantages of pattern poetry for language learner. Although the pattern in visual poetry is more concerned with its visual appearance than with the pattern of the words, the benefits still apply. Thus, learners are enabled to:

- play with words and see what fits because the burden of discovering a proper format for a poem is removed
- create a polished piece of writing in a relatively short period, thereby experiencing "instant gratification"
- rehearse correct spelling
- use familiar vocabulary
- discover new vocabulary while using the dictionary or thesaurus to find words that serve their vision […]
- develop confidence in their ability to share ideas in writing
- nurture creativity by giving their imaginations free reign […]

(Holmes and Moulton 3)

The simple structure of shape poems "frees" language learners to express themselves without worrying about a possible form. The framework is already given and the students only need to fill it in (see Finch 29). This is exactly the same approach chosen in *Love That Dog* where Mrs Stretchberry encourages the students to copy the patterns of poems. This input leads to Jack's last poem which is "inspired by Walter Dean Myers" (Creech 86). Moreover, shape poems are constituted of singles words. Thus students are invited to produce poems "without the constraints of grammatical accuracy" (Finch 29).

The Austrian curricula states that an aim of the foreign language classroom is - despite the acquiring of English – to instruct students in autonomous learning (see bmukk[14]). Teachers, thus, should provide the learners with different techniques, methods and material, so they 'learn how to learn'. Barbara Sinclair denotes this notion as "learner training" (see Sinclair) and refers to a definition by Ellis and Sinclair who explain this approach in the following way:

> Learner training aims to help learners consider the factors which affect their learning and to discover personally suitable learning strategies so that they may become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their own learning.' (Ellis and Sinclair qtd. in Sinclair 142)

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[14] "Der Fremdsprachenunterricht hat darüber hinaus die Aufgabe, fachliche Grundlagen, Lernstrategien und Lerntechniken für den weiteren selbstständigen Spracherwerb, insbesondere im Hinblick auf lebensbegleitendes und autonomes Lernen, zu vermitteln und zu trainieren." (bmukk)

This approach aims at supporting the students in self-directed language learning particularly with regard to life-long learning. Therefore, the learners should encounter different strategies of learning in the language classroom. Shape poetry, in this regard, offers a new way to encounter vocabulary and to approach vocabulary difficulties.

Moreover, the Austrian curriculum emphasizes a creative holistic education to allow for an environment which facilitates learning.[15] Thus, the language classroom should encompass multi-sensory techniques, accommodating the different learner types[16]. A differentiation of learning methods[17], then, is constituted, for example, by the implementation of shape poetry. It appeals to both, visual and kinesthetic learner types.

The following teaching suggestion introduces the learners to poetry as well as to the book *Love That Dog* and questions the students' image of and feelings towards poetry. The pupils should experience how open a definition of poetry is by encountering "The Apple" by S.C.Rigg and Jack's dog poem. The main emphasis of the lesson is to familiarize the students with a new technique of revising and working on (difficult) vocabulary.

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[15] "Ganzheitlich-kreatives Lernen: Der Einsatz von spielerischen und musischen Elementen bzw. ganzheitlich-kreativen Methoden ist auch im Fremdsprachenunterricht notwendig, um möglichst förderliche Lernbedingungen für Schülerinnen und Schüler zu schaffen. Multisensorisches Lernen vermag die Aufnahmebereitschaft, Erinnerungsleistung und Motivation zu aktivieren und bringt daher vielschichtigen lernpsychologischen Gewinn." (bmukk)

[16] Fleming devised the VARK-model of learner types based on a neuro-linguistic model. VARK is shortened from the four learner types: visual, aural, read/write and kinesthetic.(see Hawk and Shah 6-8)

[17] Differenzierung der Arbeitsformen: Unterschiedliche Voraussetzungen bei den Schülerinnen und Schülern (Lerntypen, Lerntempo, Neigungen und Interessen, soziale Fertigkeiten, Stärken und Schwächen) sowie unterschiedliche Stundendotationen müssen durch verschiedene methodische Zugänge, Umfang und Komplexität der Aufgabenstellung bzw. durch entsprechend individualisierte Formen der Arbeitsaufträge und der fachlichen Förderung Berücksichtigung finden.(bmukk)

7.2. Teaching

Love That Dog is a companion on the journey to exploring creative language use. In the process of becoming acquainted with Jack, the students find themselves in the same situation as Jack had been at the beginning of the book. They are confronted with the question of what poetry is. They may like it, or not – and are supposed to put their thoughts into words. In this relatively unguided writing activity, the students are not restricted concerning vocabulary, tense, etc. The only rule is to condense their impressions into three sentences. Students then await further instructions. With the help of power point slides the teacher shows the learners how to cut their sentences apart and how to glue the pieces into their school exercise book. The order of the words should be maintained. However, they can choose where to break up the lines. While the students perform their task the teacher moves among them to help with possible difficulties, and to observe and take note of the pupils' attitude towards poetry. This introductory writing activity should be limited to ten minutes. At the end of the activity the teacher invites the students to take another look at their writing. The form has changed. The words transformed from prose into poetry. Some poems are read out aloud.

At this point, the teacher tells them about a boy named Jack who had to do the same exercise and found very clear words to express his sentiments. A slide shows Jacks first poem, dated September 13. The teacher goes on to present Jack's reaction when asked to write a poem himself. After coming to know Jack, the students read a poem by Jack wherein he shows enthusiasm for a poem. Thus their curiosity provoked, the educator shows the students the apple poem. The learners are asked to find the worm in the apple. Then the students are confronted with a colored version which simplifies finding the worm. Next, they encounter Jack's version of a shape poem. Since the students have been learning food vocabulary, they are asked to produce a shape poem using the vocabulary they recently acquired. The teacher prompts the learners to try to use the words which seem difficult to them or with which they had problems (spelling, memorizing). They have to use color in this exercise, which makes the poem more distinct, and the vocabulary easier to perceive. While the students are working on their shape poems, the teacher functions as a translator and helps the learners when advice is needed. At the end of the lesson the learners are

allowed to move around and look at the shape poems of their colleagues. Also, the teacher explains how this kind of poetry is a great way to review vocabulary. At the end of the lesson the teacher thanks the students with her own creation of a shape poem which incorporates words from the students' latest vocabulary lesson.

7.3. Reflection

The class was very open-minded to my teaching and to new ways of treating the language because so far, poetry did not play any role in the English classroom (or at least, went unnoticed in grammar rhymes, and vocabulary songs). At first the students were taken aback by my constant use of English. The slides displaying the tasks, however, supported understanding. Some students finished the writing of their opinion very quickly; others seemed to have difficulties forming English sentences. Since the usual English teacher attended the lesson, she helped the students who needed extra guidance. The class in general is very talkative, thus, the instructions concerning cutting up the sentences needed to be repeated several times. However, everyone was able to compose their first English poem. During the whole exercise the students questioned the instructions, wondering about my intention. After I disclosed that their sentences had turned into poetry they were genuinely surprised. This activity apparently made quite an impression on the pupils because I even received cut-up sentences turned into a poem on several feedback sheets.

Telling them about Jack from *Love That Dog* I concentrated on emphasizing my words with gestures to ensure understanding. Jack's poems amused the students and they were eager to read more about the boy. Vocabulary difficulties were not apparent. The learners loved the apple poem and when I told them it was a riddle and they had to find the worm, the class fell completely silent concentrating on the poem displayed on the board.

After seeing Jack's dog poem the students were eager to create their own shape poems. I explained to them that they should use vocabulary they considered difficult. Some opened their exercise books and looked up words they had spelled incorrectly in the last homework. The rest of the lesson the students worked diligently on their poems, rarely interrupting their work to ask for help concerning vocabulary they did not know yet. After the lesson the poems were put up on the classroom walls.

Voices from the classroom

What did you like?
"Dass man aus Wörtern ein Bild machen kann."

To my surprise, the learners embraced poetry and asked for more. I informed them that they can use shape poems for all kinds of vocabulary. However, I do not know how many pupils went on using this way of revising vocabulary. It would be interesting to research the impact of using this shape poem exercise on the students' performance in vocabulary quizzes.
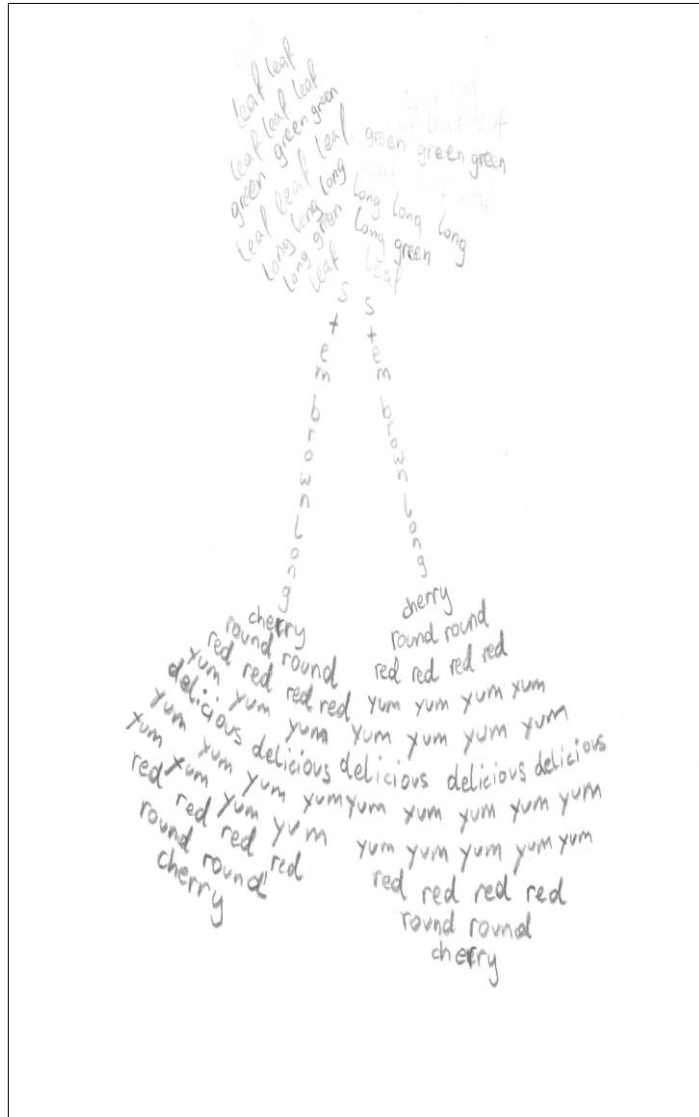
8. Street Music

8.1. Theory

Practicing pronunciation involves speaking words out lout. Yet many learners dread speaking in front of the class in an unfamiliar foreign language. Even well-prepared classroom discussions on engaging topics fail to involve those students. Therefore the language teacher needs to apply different techniques to motivate these unengaged students to speak the foreign language. Choral reading is such a creative technique (see Obregón 141, Gullan 1). The Choral English College Institute explains that choral reading/speaking is

> […] the art of using voices in unison (all) or part (small group) to produce a piece of poetry […] that highlights, through performance, the images and the mood that the writer of the piece envisaged. (CEC)

Approaching poetry verbally, in fact, is not a new idea. Before the invention of printing many poems were only passed on through word of mouth. Poetry was supposed to be spoken. Printing improved and enhanced the reading society, yet it also changed the character of poetry. Fisher points out how poetry evolved due to the fixation on paper.

> [Printing] made poetry the concern of the eye instead of the ear. Poetry was more often read, but less often uttered. (Fisher 32)

Marjorie Boulton appeals against this prevalence of silent reading of poetry and worries about the lack of spoken literature in the language classrooms.

> I am convinced that much of the rather anxious confusion about poetry […] is caused by an education that has depended too much on silent reading and has cultivated silence as virtue, too little on any humans voice except the didactic voice of the professional teacher […]. Poetry, as much as drama, is meant to be performed, to be heard rather than read with the eye. (Boulton 15-16)

Boulton, joined by Jennifer Hill, Michael Benton and Geoff Fox, is of the opinion that only by reading a poem out loud can it be fully understood and appreciated (see Boulton 16, Hill 47, Benton and Fox 275). Nevertheless, our time shows affection for the 'music' of poetry. Since the "best way to appreciate music is to attempt to make it oneself" (Fisher 35), choral reading or speaking is a way of interpreting poetry that is gaining popularity (anew).

The method of reading poetry chorally, however, is not a new invention. For example, it was used in the early Greek drama, where the plot was generally

presented by a speaking choir (see Booth and Moore 87, Tryphanis 482). In the classroom, choral speaking incorporates three important aspects: "learning [,] performance [and] enjoyment" (ELA). Choral reading can be realized in different ways:

- *Refrain*: The repetitive part of the poem is read by the whole class, while the rest is read by individual students. This form is very common.
- *Unison*: The entire poem is read together. Supplementary sound effects might be added.
- *Antiphon*: The class is divided into several groups. Each group presents a part of the poem.
- *Cumulative*: Voices (individual or whole groups) are added or subtracted in order to emphasize the poem.
- *Solo Lines*: Certain passages are read by an individual.
- *Line Around* is a different kind of solo lines. In this case every line is spoken by a different person (see ELA).
- *High/ Low Voices*: The teacher divides the class into high and low voices which adds another interesting aspect to the performance.
- *Teacher-student dialogue*: The teacher reads a line of the poem, the class 'answers' by reading the next line (see Spiro 14).
- *Canon*: The students are divided into several groups. The teacher assigns a certain passage to each group. Shortly before the first group finishes its lines the next group already starts – the readings overlap. Thus a sort of canon is created (see Spiro 14).

The prime principle of (choral) speaking is to provide the speakers an atmosphere in which they do not feel embarrassed (see Strong 15). As Choral reading is a kind of group activity, the pressure on the individual to perform in class is removed (see Byrne 35, CEC, Booth and Moore 87). Nancy Hadaway, Silvia Vardella and Terrell Young accordingly classify it as a "collaborative and nonthreatening way to participate orally" (797).

Choral reading, moreover, enables the teacher to focus specifically on certain pronunciation aspects. Thus, a different problem can be worked on in each lesson: "for example, word stress, reduced vowels, sentence stress, intonation, and production of particular sounds" (Obregón 142). However, regardless of the form chosen, the students should always be provided with enough time to rehearse the poem properly. While preparing it is also very helpful to provide the

learners with a dictionary so they can check pronunciations (see Booth and Moore 86). This is also consistent with the claim in the Austrian curriculum for second languages to foster the use of learning aids and specifically familiarize students with the verbal realization of phonetic transcription[18] (see bmukk).

Choral reading not only encourages pronunciation but also the experience of poetry. Students are often unable to 'hear' the poem with their 'inner voice' when they read it (see Strong 15). By reading it out loud together learners will slowly overcome this difficulty. Moreover, "[when] poems are read aloud, the heart and the core of the poem emerge" (Booth and Moore 85). Thus, it helps understanding and interpreting a poem. When attempting to speak the words of a poem the students inevitably wonder how certain words are supposed to be said. This forces them to interact with the text and allows them to arrive together at a meaning of the text which is then orally expressed (see Fisher 35).

The benefits of choral reading in the Second/Foreign Language classroom can be summarized as follows:

- Learners are encouraged to work together to achieve a common goal which is a "peculiar satisfaction that is always felt in communal effort, the working together of a team to achieve a harmonious effect" (Fisher 35).
- It is a practice of fluent speech which is mutually performed and thus persuades even insecure students to speak out loud.
- Choral reading provides a valuable technique to focus on different pronunciation features - such as "clarity of diction, phrasing, stress and rhythm, control and variation of peace" (Ainy 3) - which can be practiced in a structural and engaging way (see CEC).
- María Estela Brisk and Margaret Harrington state that choral speaking also "decreases oral reading miscues" (92).
- The technique also helps students to train 'reading with the ear' – to hear an inner voice when reading silently (see Strong 15).

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[18] Umgang mit Lehrmaterialien und Lernhilfen: Die Schülerinnen und Schüler sind möglichst früh in den eigenständigen Umgang mit Lehr- bzw. Lern- und Übungsmaterialien sowie mit Wörterbüchern (in Print- und Online-Version) einzuführen. Das rezeptive Beherrschen der internationalen Lautschrift ist als Hilfsmittel bezüglich der Aussprache und Intonation nach Möglichkeit anzustreben. Damit wird das selbstständige Erarbeiten von unbekanntem Wortmaterial gefördert. (bmukk)

- Choral reading is no 'childish' language activity, but especially popular among adult learners as Brisk and Harrington emphasize (see Brisk and Harrington 92, McCauley 527).

- Moreover, choral reading is not dependent on a certain number of learners. Poetry can be performed by small groups or whole classes (see ELA).

- The method of reading poetry aloud is applicable for all learner levels, independent of language proficiency (see ELA).

- Choral reading forces the learners to concentrate on the text and find possible interpretations which are then expressed through performance.

The following teaching suggestion demonstrates the different ways of realizing "Street Music" by Arnold Adoff (see Adoff qtd in Creech 100) with the help of choral reading. A pre-reading discussion on the different sounds of the street opens the lesson. The aim of the discussion is to familiarize the students with the topic, establish a connection to prior knowledge and to collect relevant vocabulary (see Hill 46). In order to stay within the time frame of 50 minutes difficult vocabulary is translated and given on the poem-handout. The poems are printed on sheets in different colors. This simplifies the subsequent formation of groups.

8.2. Teaching

The teacher starts the lesson by asking the students for their musical preferences. The discussion is then directed towards the music one can perceive in the streets. After mentioning different musical styles and instruments the remarks slowly point to what most people might label as 'noise'. The class collects different noise-sounds and their sources on the board. Afterwards the handout with the poem "Street Music" by Adolf Adoff is distributed. The students have time to read it silently. Then they are asked to form groups according to the color of their handouts. Each group receives a slip of paper telling them how choral reading should be utilized. Group tasks include reading the poem in a 'dolby surround way', assigning the reading of each word to another person, performing the poem line by line, reading the poem together with special attention to speaking either very loud or very quietly, accentuating the poem with sounds and assigning solo parts. The slips further explain the task. Within the next 20 minutes the groups practice their performance. The teacher moves among the students to help with pronunciation difficulties and counteract possible uncertainties. The learners work very focused. After the work phase the students return to their seats and each group performs the poem in the assigned way. A subsequent discussion focuses on the different readings and the impression they created among the students. Then the poem is read together, everyone incorporating features he/she likes. A final reading follows the antiphon concept. Each row in class reads one line. In the concluding activity the learners watch a YouTube-video of a choral reading performance of Adoff's poem by American elementary school students. The learners voice their opinions of the performance.

8.3. Reflection

I was already familiar with most of the students in class and thus knew that they were very musical. The boys were especially keen on copying rap and hip-hop songs during breaks. Therefore I decided to introduce them to Adoff's poem. The students very actively participated in the music-discussion. Some students were unable to come up with specific words but showed an astonishing ability to paraphrase. Moreover the class members willingly provided each other with vocabulary suggestions. Thus, I was rarely used as 'dictionary' when collecting relevant vocabulary on the board.

While they worked in groups the students displayed great enthusiasm. In accordance with Fisher's remark that the learners are forced to interpret the text in order to perform it, the meaning of the poetry was heatedly discussed. Along with groups already practicing their performance, not only the noise level in the poem was high. Strong, however, already cautioned me: "One very important thing – the teacher must at no stage be afraid of noise. It both delights and helps children (and adults) […]" (Strong 10).

The subsequent performances were received with great awe. While working on their task the students had not realized that each group was preparing a different way of reading the same poem. Fisher explains that "[part] of the interest in Choral Speaking lies in the fact that one poem may be spoken in many different ways, each giving a distinctive emphasis" (Fisher 40). This notion was mirrored by the students' remarks on the feedback sheets:

Voices from the classroom

What did you like?
"Die Idee ein Gedicht vollkommen verschieden klingen zu lassen, obwohl es dasselbe war."

Moreover, the students appreciated the chance of producing a lot of spoken English in one lesson and the fun factor of the activities.

Voices from the classroom

"It was really funny and we laughed a lot."

This lesson could be further developed by recording the different ways of performing the poems. The students could then look for pictures that illustrate the words of the poem (either on the internet or taking the pictures themselves). Finally, the recording and the pictures could be turned into a picture-slide-show featuring the recording of their poetry performance in the background. Uploading the final products to the school's homepage or to YouTube would pay tribute to the students work. This way, the students would be provided with a practical goal they want to accomplish and would also experience success when their video/slide-show is finished. Moreover, the publication of the lesson's products might motivate other students to explore poetry and choral reading as well.

9. Conclusion

The intention of this diploma thesis has been

> to show that a study of [poetry] and a study of language can be mutually supportive [and] that a literature study can contribute to the students' command of the language […]. (Hill 106)

When I started to write my thesis I did so believing that students are 'over-fed' with poetry (like I was in school). Thus, my intention was to save them. I hoped to change their negative attitude towards poetry to an appreciation of this genre. How surprised was I to find that students embraced poetry! Realizing my lesson plans at the Wienerwaldgymnasium, the pupils were eager to listen to poems and to work with them. Thus, there nowadays seems to be a lack of poetry in the classroom. Although the text books[19] do include poetry (in songs, grammar exercises, pronunciation activities), the students' attention had never been drawn to it. Therefore, the pupils were keen on learning new ways of encountering language. This experience has motivated me to further foster the use of poetry in the language classroom and among my colleagues.

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[19] In the English lessons of the sixth and seventh grades the English book series *More* by Helbling are used at the Wienerwaldgymnasium.

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141-152.

10.3. Pictures

p. 3: dog 1

http://www.sharoncreech.co.uk/reviewpics/dog.gif (17 February 2011)

p. 31: Sharon Creech and her editor

http://www.publishersweekly.com/photo/220773-JoannaCotler_SharonCreech.JPG
http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/10203-record-breaking-crowds-at-the-national-book-festival-.html (17 February 2011)

p. 41: dog 2

http://www.sharoncreech.co.uk/doghomepics/lovedog_03.gif (17 February 2011)

Appendix: scissor

http://media.4teachers.de/images/thumbs/image_thumb.672.png (16 January 2011)

Appendix: glue stick

http://school.discoveryeducation.com/clipart/images/gluestik.gif (16 April 2011)

Appendix: white chickens and red wheelbarrow

http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_usuCTzh_blI/S66bj5oiVfI/AAAAAAAAAas/8aiz-tBN_ug/s1600/chickens+and+wheel+barrow+3.JPG (24 April 2011)

Appendix: rain water

http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_bOSFGPUFbeg/R1rSBDOZkuI/AAAAAAAAAHI/4awoDQFwJ7w/s320/raindrops.gif (24 April 2011)

11. Appendix

Content

Lesson Plan: Red Wheelbarrow (3rd grade)

     Power Point Presentation

Lesson Plan: Shape Poems (2nd grade)

     Power Point Presentation

Lesson Plan: Street Music (3rd grade)

     Group Work

     Poem: Street Music

Feedback Sheet

Lesson Plan: The Red Wheelbarrow
3rd grade

What?	How?	Material
Intro	Today I want to show you a poem I really like: "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams	PPP
Activity 1 (farm yard pic)	Before showing you the poem, I need to discuss a couple of words → What do you see on the picture? – *chicken, wheelbarrow* → What colors do they have? – *red, white* → Look closer – the wheelbarrow is wet! What could that be? (It's from the sky.) - *rain water* → So in a very nice way you could say the wheelbarrow is glazed with rain water ("überzogen" – like a cake)	
Sentence by Williams	Here is what William Carlos Williams wrote about this situation depends upon = "hängt ab von" → In fact it is a poem – how would you break up the lines to make it look like a poem? → Try it!	Little sheets of paper (A6)
Presentation of broken up lines	How did you do it?	
Poem by Williams (a closer look)	That's how William Carlos Williams did it! - Distribute poems among students so they can mark what we are going to talk about. → Let's look closer why his solution is so special. → What are the differences between the sentence and the poem? → Do you see: two words usually belong together and he breaks it up on purpose! → Also: he contrasts a bright, shining red with the white	Poems
Poem by Williams (line by line)	Let's look at the poem line by line! → lines would be fine, but he makes it greater through adjectives → surprises through second part of the word	

Poem by Williams (grammar)	What are the building blocks of the poem?	
Activity 2	Let's try it ourselves! (HW)	A6 sheets
Feedback		Feedback-Sheets

.

The Red Wheelbarrow

by

William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens

The Red Wheelbarrow
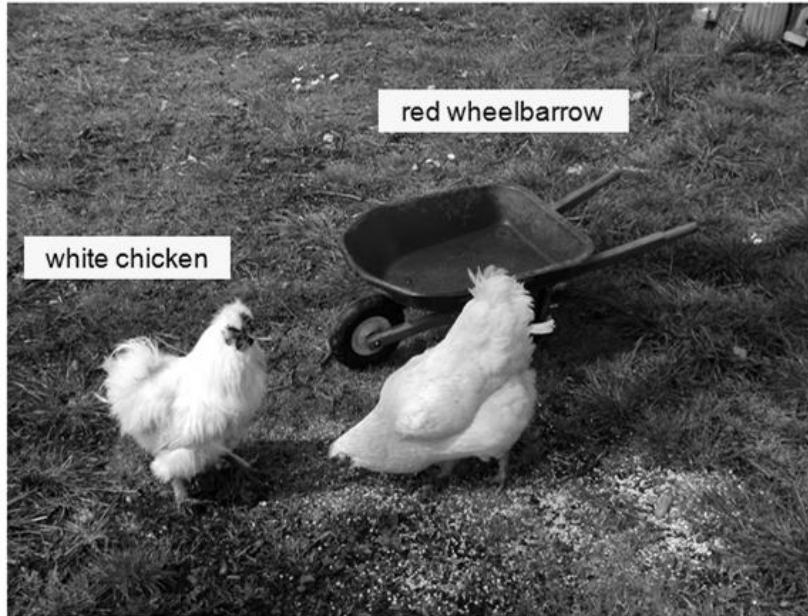
By
Carlos William Carlos
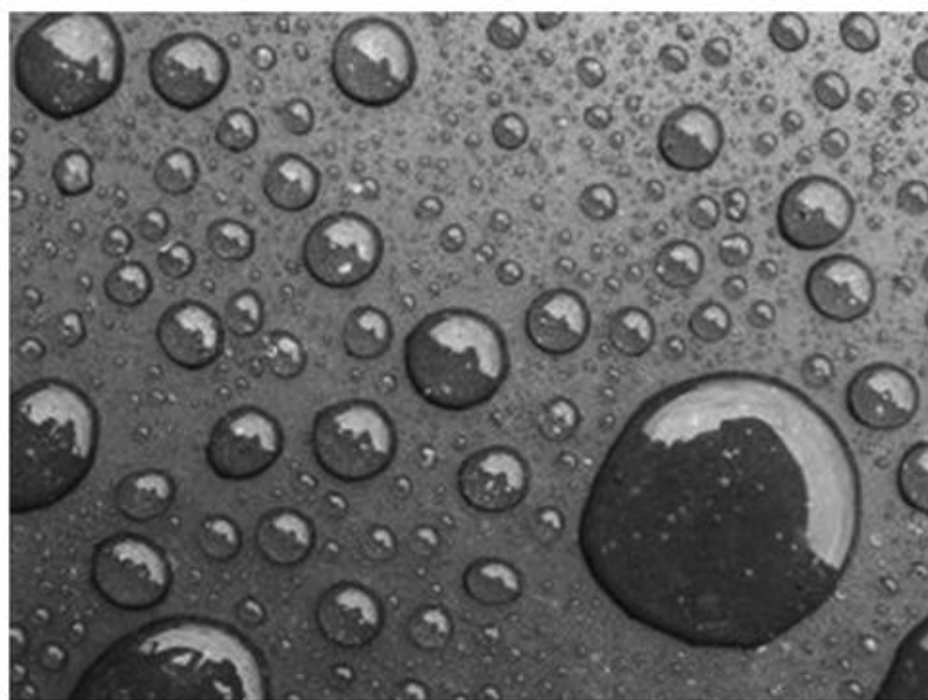
What do you see?

What do you see?

chicken

What do you see?

wheelbarrow

chicken

What do you see?
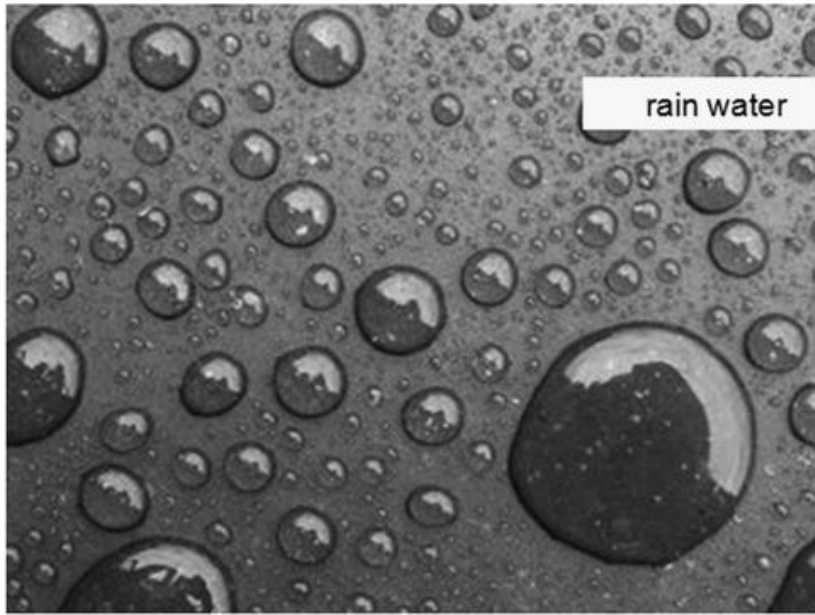
rain water

What do you see?

red wheelbarrow

white chicken

glazed with rain water

Carlos William Carlos

So much depends upon a red wheelbarrow glazed with rain water beside the white chickens

---

Carlos William Carlos

So much depends upon a red wheelbarrow glazed with rain water beside the white chickens

→ **What does the poem look like?**

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

So much depends upon a red wheelbarrow glazed with

rain water beside the white chickens

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

So much depends upon a red wheelbarrow glazed with

rain water beside the white chickens

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

Line by line

so much depends
upon

…

Line by line

so much depends
upon
a (red) **wheel**

Line by line

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow

Line by line

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
(glazed) **with rain**

Line by line

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water

Line by line

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the (white)
chickens.

Line by line

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

Elements of the poem

so much depends upon	
a red wheel	
barrow	
glazed with rain	
water	
beside the white	
chickens.	

Elements of the poem

so much depends upon	Intro
a red wheel	article + adjective (colour) + 1st part of noun
barrow	2nd part of the noun
glazed with rain	*What it looks like* past participle + preposition + 1st part of noun
water	2nd part of noun
beside the white	*Surrounding* preposition + article + 1st part of noun
chickens.	2nd part of noun

Let's try it!

so much depends

upon

…

Sunflower

by Michaela Scheinhart

so much depends
upon
a yellow sun
flower
waving in the summer
wind
beside the dirty
road.

Lesson Plan: SHAPE POEMS
2nd grade

What?	How?	Material
Intro	Today I want to do a fun lesson about poetry. Do you know what poetry/ a poem is?	board
Activity 1 (1st poem – break up sentences!)	What do you think about poems/poetry? - Write 3 sentences on the colored sheet. Write 1 sentence per line - cut the sentences apart - cut the 1st sentence apart and glue it on the second sheet - do the same with sentence 2 and 3! → It's a poem!	PPP, colored sheets (A6), A4-blank paper
Jack	I want to show you the book *Love That Dog*. It's about a boy called Jack. He is 10 years old. I'll show you what he wrote, ok? poem 1 and 2	PPP, *Love That Dog*
Jack	He really liked another poem. I'll show you! → Read together	
Apple poem	Show apple poem + colored Read together	
Dog poem	Look at Jack's shape poem	
Activity 2 (shape poem)	Let's try it! We can shape our words like that as well! You just learned words for food. Let's use them! (You can use the book.) Maybe you can paint food from the menu. I have also made a shape poem – I'll show you at the end of the lesson! Do it in color!	A3 sheets PPP (own shape poem)
Feedback		Feedback-Sheets

Step 1:   Write 3 sentences about poetry/poems!

Sentence 1 ◇ಜಝಕ❸ಹ⑨②ಳಝ❸⑨ಳ❸②ಳಝ❸②

Sentence 2 ಜಝಝಳಹಝಝ⑥ಹಜ①ಝಝಹಝಝ⑥ಹ❸ಝ

Sentence 3 ಝಝ❸⑥ಝಝ❸ಹ⑥❶ಝಝಹ❸❶⑥ಝಝಜ①ಳ

Step 2:   Cut the 3 sentences apart!

Sentence 1 ◇ಜಝಕ❸ಹ⑨②ಳಝ❸⑨ಳ❸②ಳಝ❸②

- -

Sentence 2 ಜಝಝಳಹಝಝ⑥ಹಜ①ಝಝಹಝಝ⑥ಹ❸ಝ

- -

Sentence 3 ಝಝ❸⑥ಝಝ❸ಹ⑥❶ಝಝಹ❸❶⑥ಝಝಜ①ಳ

Step 3:   Cut the sentence apart!

Sentence 1 ◌ | ଓଋଷୋ❸ৡ | ⑨②ৡଯୋ❸⑨ | ৡৡ❸②
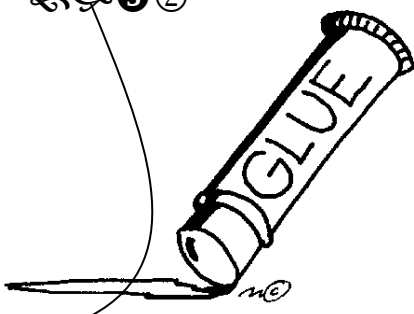
Step 4:   Glue the pieces underneath each other!

Sentence 1 ◌   ଓଋଷୋ❸ৡ   ⑨②ৡଯୋ❸⑨   ৡৡ❸②

ଓଋଷୋ❸ৡ

⑨②ৡଯୋ❸⑨

ৡৡ❸②

Do the same with sentences 2 and 3!

It's a POEM!

SEPTEMBER 13

I don't want to
because boys
don't write poetry.

Girls do.

SEPTEMBER 21

I tried.
Can't do it.
Brain's empty.

FEBRUARY 21

That was so great

those poems you showed us

where the words

make the shape

of the thing

that the poem

is about—

like the one about an apple

that was shaped like an apple

and the one about the house

that was shaped like a house.

My brain was pop-pop-popping

when I was looking at those poems.

I never knew a poet person

could do that funny

kind of thing.

The Apple
BY S. C. RIGG

s
t
e
m

apple   apple   apple   apple
apple yum apple   yum   apple yum apple
juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy
crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy
red yellow green red yellow green red yellow green red
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple   apple
yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum wormy worm yuk yuk yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum wormy worm yuk yuk yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
red yellow green red yellow green red
crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy
juicy juicy juicy juicy
apple apple

s
t
e
m

apple apple   apple apple
apple yum apple   yum   apple yum apple
juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy
crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy
red yellow green red yellow green red yellow green red
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple   apple
yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum **wormy worm** yuk yuk yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum **wormy worm** yuk yuk yum yum
yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum yum
yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
apple apple apple apple apple apple apple
red yellow green red yellow green red
crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy
juicy juicy juicy juicy
apple apple

FEBRUARY 21

I tried one of those

poems that looks like

what it's about.

MY YELLOW DOG

by Jack


```
                                              head head
                                                                        snifsnifsnif
                        bodybodybody        ad              he
            tail tail    low   body        he      EYE        ad
        w      yellow yellow  body         y        E)            nose
          o       yell        body         d     heAd     nose              snifsnifsnif
          l         o         body         o      R  head
          l              w    body         b
  wag     e            bodybodybody                           slobber
          y           leg            leg
  wag               leg leg        leg leg                    slobber
  wag                 leg            leg
                      leg            leg                       slobber
                      leg            leg
                      leg            leg
                       paw            paw
```

A hamburger

by Michaela Scheinhart

bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread
bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread
bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread
bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread
lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce
lettuce lettuce tomato tomato tomato tomato tomato tomato lettuce lettuce
cheese cheese cheese cheese cheese cheese cheese cheese cheese
meat meat meat meat meat meat meat meat meat meat meat meat
lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce lettuce
bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread
bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread
bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread
bread bread bread bread bread bread bread bread

Lesson Plan: STREET MUSIC
3rd grade

What?	How?	Material
Intro	Today we are going to do a special lesson. Put up your hands: Who likes music in this class? What kind of music do you like? I brought a special kind of music with me today. Do you know what an 'orchestra' is? And what 'drums' are? The special type of music is called 'street music'. What could that be? Any ideas? What kind of sounds do you hear on the street? Who are the musicians? Who is in the orchestra?	board
Read "Street Music" by Arnold Adoff	Arnold Adoff wrote about this kind of music in his poem 'street music' → distribute (different colors!) Read it silently first. I looked up some vocabulary for you.	poems in different colors
Get together in groups	Look at your sheets: you have different colors. When I say 'go' I want you to get together in your color-groups and I'll give you an activity to do. Go!	
Group work (different readings of one poem)	'dolby surround'-way: everyone in your group reads another word produce sounds read quietly or really loud parts only by one or two persons – mix it up!	
Presentations of readings	Let's try it together now!	
Presentation of school class performing "Street Music"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umMWcYsXru0 DreamExtreme Performance of the Arnold Adoff poem Street Music	
Feedback	I'm writing a book about poetry and interesting ways to teach it. One of these lessons I tried with you.	Feedback-Sheets

Group Work 1

Read the poem in a 'Dolby surround'-way!

Use the four corners of the classroom and speak from there. You decide how many people stand in a corner and what they read.

Group Work 2

Everyone in your group reads another word. Try to make the words 'sound'!

Group Work 3

Find sounds for the poem! Use them when reading the poem!

Group Work 4

Read the poem together and pay attention to speaking very quietly or really loud.

Group Work 5

Read parts of the poem together, other parts should be read by only one or two people. Mix it up!

"Street Music" by Arnold Adoff

T h i s   c i t y:
t h e
a l w a y s
        n o i s e
g r i n d i n g
up   from   the
s u b w a y s
u n d e r
  g r o u n d:
slamming from bus tires
and taxi horns and engines
of cars and trucks in all

v o c a b u l a r i e s
                                of
clash
flash
screeching
hot metal l a n g u a g e
  c o m b i n a t i o n s:
as   p l a n e s
o v e r h e a d
        r o a r
an
o r c h e s t r a
of rolling drums
and battle blasts
assaulting
        my ears
w i t h
t h e
a l w a y s
  n o i s e of
t h i s c i t y:

street   music.

Vocabulary help:

to grind - grinding:	knirschen, schleifen
slamming:	zuschlagen
tire(s):	Reifen
horn(s):	Hupe(n)
engine(s):	Motor(en)
truck(s):	Lastwagen
clash – to clash:	Zusammenstoß/ Geklirre – zusammenstoßen/ klirren
flash:	Aufblitzen/ Blinken/ Blitz
screeching:	Gekreisch
metal:	Metall
combinations:	Kombinationen
overhead:	Überkopf-/ droben
roar:	dröhnen
to roll – rolling:	rollen/ wälzen
drums:	Trommeln
battle:	Schlacht/ Kampf
blast(s):	(Wind-/ Trompeten-) Stoß/ Explosion/ Krachen
to assault - assaulting:	überfallen/ angreifen

Feedback

(You can also answer in German!)

How did you like this poetry-lesson? ☺ 😐 ☹

What did you like?

Was there something you did not like?

Do you have an idea how to make this lesson better?

I just want to say …

Abstract

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit setzt sich mit dem Einsatz von Gedichten im Englischunterricht auseinander. Ausgehend von der Annahme, dass Jugendliche Gedichten gegenüber skeptisch eingestellt sind, möchte die Autorin Wege aufzeigen, Gedichte in den Augen der SchülerInnen aufzuwerten. Praktische Vorschläge zur Umsetzung von Gedichten werden anhand des Buches „Love That Dog" von Sharon Creech demonstriert.

Die Arbeit enthält daher im ersten Teil eine allgemeine Einführung. So wird versucht zu erklären, was ein Gedicht und ein ‚Roman in Versen' ist. Im Weiteren wird darauf eingegangen, welche Schwierigkeiten der Einsatz von Gedichten im Englischunterricht mit sich bringen könnte. Die nachfolgende Aufzählung der Vorteile macht jedoch das Potential von Gedichten deutlich. Nach der Definition von Gedichten und ihren Vor- und Nachteilen im Englischunterricht, beschäftigt sich der erste Teil der Arbeit auch mit den möglichen Umsetzungsmöglichkeiten von Gedichten im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Dabei ist auch der Problematik der Interpretation von Gedichten ein Unterkapitel gewidmet. Sharon Creech und ihr Vers-Roman „Love That Dog" wird dem Leser ebenfalls im ersten Teil vorgestellt.

Der zweite Teil widmet sich der Umsetzung des Vers-Romans anhand ausgearbeiteter Stundenpläne. Dabei werden sowohl die Vielseitigkeit des Werkes, als auch verschiedene Zugänge zum Unterricht mit Gedichten aufgezeigt.

Die Reflektionen zu den jeweiligen Unterrichtsvorschlägen beweisen eine überraschende Begeisterung der Jugendlichen für Gedichte und sind somit eine Motivationsquelle für den weiteren Einsatz von Gedichten im Englischunterricht.

LEBENSLAUF   Michaela Scheinhart

PERSÖNLICHE DATEN

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Josef Nemecek–Straße, A - 3021 Pressbaum

Geburtsdatum und –ort: 05. Juli 1986, Wien

Staatsbürgerschaft: Österreich

AUSBILDUNG

2005 - 2011	Universität Wien, Institut der Anglistik und Germanistik
2008 – 2009	Central College in Pella, Iowa
1997 – 2005	Gymnasium Sacré Coeur Pressbaum
1993 – 1997	Volksschule Pressbaum

BERUFSERFAHRUNG

September 2009 -	Englisch- und Deutschlehrerin am Wienerwaldgymnasium (BG/BRG Purkersdorf – Standort Tullnerbach)
Juni 2009 -	Journalistin für NÖN (Niederösterreichische Nachrichten)
August 2008 – Mai 2009	German Language Assistant am Central College in Pella, Iowa
August 2008	Deutsch- und Englischlehrerin bei den Lernferien „Study&Fun" im Sacré Coeur
Juni 2008	Workshop „Das österreichische Musical: Grimm Märchen mit österreichischen Liedern und Tänzen" an einer Pflichtschule in Kesckemét, Ungarn in Kooperation mit dem Österreich Institut (ÖI) Budapest
Sommersemester 2008	Tutorin von Ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Eva Müller-Zettelmann: "British Literature 1660-2000"

September 2007 – Juli 2008	Betreuerin im Internat Sacrè Coeur
August 2007	Deutsch- und Englischlehrerin bei den Lernferien „Study&Fun" im Sacré Coeur
Mai 2006	Deutsch-Theater-Workshop an einer Pflichtschule in Kesckemét, Ungarn im Rahmen des Projekts *Immersion- Deutsch an Gastschulen*" in Kooperation mit dem Österreich Institut (ÖI) Budapest
Sommer 2005, 2006, 2007	Co-Leiterin von Kinderferienwochen der Pfarre Pressbaum

BESONDERE KENNTNISSE UND FÄHIGKEITEN

Sprachen:	Englisch , Französisch, Latein (Grundkenntnisse), Spanisch (Grundkenntnisse)
Computer:	Kenntnisse in Microsoft Word, Excel, diverse Bildbearbeitungsprogramme, Arbeit im Internet

Führerschein Klasse B

DaF/Z (Deutsch als Fremdsprache/Zweitsprache)-Lehrer-Ausbildung

Schilehrerausbildung für Schulschikurse

HOBBYS UND INTERESSEN

Leiterin einer Jugendgruppe der Pfarre Pressbaum, Lektorin der Pfarre Pressbaum, Mitglied des ORFF-Orchesters Pressbaum, Mitglied der Musikschule Oberes Wiental, Inline-Skaten, Radfahren, Lesen, Singen, Tanzen, Reisen, Basteln