

A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN JAPAN: POETIC ENGAGEMENT
AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

by

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Abstract

Poetry is widely considered to be challenging for second language (L2) learners but recent studies have suggested that the use of poetry in the second language classroom can provide opportunities for authentic and meaningful interaction and learning. This thesis argues that learners in Japan have had specific cultural experiences with poetry which can be more fully exploited in the use of poems in L2 learning. Drawing on sociocultural theory and learner engagement, the thesis explores the benefits of encouraging Japanese university-level learners of English to engage with poetry in their English language programmes, reveals how such learners draw on their existing experiences with poetry in Japanese, and makes suggestions for pedagogical implementations.

The investigation reports a questionnaire about prior poetry learning and two ‘poetry response’ studies in which students were asked to respond orally (study 1) and in written form (study 2) to a series of poems in English. The findings from the questionnaire and both studies show that discussing poetry creates opportunities for authentic reading and language use, and that writing responses to poetry can be a particularly engaging activity, both cognitively and emotionally. The findings from this thesis suggest that poems have the potential to be used as engaging, fluency-nurturing texts in the L2 classroom.

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The poem “November 3rd” by Kenji Miyazawa from *Miyazawa Kenji: Selections* (2007), California University Press. Translation by Hiroaki Sato. Reproduced with permission of Hiroaki Sato and University of California Press.

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Glossary of Japanese terms

<i>Bungaku</i>	Study of literature
<i>Eigo</i>	School subject of English
<i>Haiku</i>	Traditional 3-line Japanese poem with 17 syllables
<i>Hiragana</i>	Japanese syllabary made up of 46 letters
<i>Juken</i>	Entrance examination system
<i>Kanji</i>	Chinese pictographs used in Japanese writing
<i>Katakana</i>	Japanese syllabary of 46 letters used for loan words
<i>Kigo</i>	Seasonal word in <i>haiku</i>
<i>Kireji</i>	Cutting word in <i>haiku</i> , used to provide structure to the poem
<i>Kosei</i>	Individuality
<i>Kokugo</i>	School subject of Japanese language
<i>Kyoiku</i>	Education
<i>Seishin</i>	Spirit, often used to refer to mental strength
<i>Sensei</i>	Honorific term for teacher
<i>Shodo</i>	Calligraphy
<i>Tanka</i>	Traditional 5-line Japanese poem with 31 syllables
<i>Yakudoku</i>	Practice of translating a text line by line

CHAPTER 1: POETRY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

1.1 Introduction

Poems have been a source of communication and knowledge for humans for millennia. All cultures and communities use poetry to mark important events, recall turning points, and tell stories. In many areas of public life such as politics, advertising and in the media, poetry and poetic language are ubiquitous. In contrast, in language learning contexts, poetry does not feature strongly, if at all. It seemed puzzling to me and even inexplicable to think that poetry infrequently appears in language learning contexts where poems could be useful in creating memorable learning experiences. This study is an examination of language produced by Japanese university students in conversations about and written responses to poetry.

The inclusion of poetry in any course of study must come with justification and explanation. If poetry can be so powerful, so arresting, and so memorable, what benefits can language learners gain from engagement with poetry? Investigating this topic, I am primarily concerned with what learners of English do when they encounter poems. During the time spent on this thesis, I have explored the potential uses of poetry, the absence of poetry in language teaching contexts and the potential of poetry memorable and meaningful communication in the language classroom. In contributing to the discussion on *why* poetry should be included, it is hoped that this thesis also contributes to the topic of *what* poetry should be included in an EFL course.

The future of English literature in Japan, if it is to survive the current challenges faced by all universities, is to make the subject appealing, attractive, and engaging for students who require English proficiency scores for their future careers. Literature courses which include types of activities that engage learners and hold their interest can become more successfully aligned with the goals of the students. Learner-centered teaching is making progress towards greater acceptance and application, but in other disciplines, these changes occur slowly. In this chapter, I discuss the motivations for the thesis and consider the lack of research into poetry in specific educational settings.

1.2 Motivation for the topic of L2 poetic engagement

In Japan, as with elsewhere, being proficient in a foreign language is closely associated with academic success, for example in academic fields and research-based careers. Being able to use English in situations which require speaking and writing is a goal of many students, particularly university students facing the challenge of the international workplace environment. In Japan, where poetry features strongly in first language (L1) literacy development (Chapter 3 of this thesis considers this in detail), poetry may have the potential to interest and engage learners. However, English as a foreign language (EFL) education falls short of drawing upon indigenous aspects of education effectively, including cultural elements of education such as literature and poetry. This thesis aims to investigate in what ways Japanese learners can connect with and interact with poems in speaking and writing.

There has already been significant interest in the topic of literature in English language teaching (ELT), with poetry as a less-common research area. A considerable body of literature already exists which suggests that literature can assist in personal and cultural development (Brumfit and Carter, 1986; Short, 1988; Carter and Long, 1991; Carter and McRae, 1996; Lazar, 1996; Kramsch, 1998; Maley and Duff, 2007; Macleroy, 2013), although definitions of quite what that development means can be broad. Literature has also been seen as a source of language and grammar (Maley, 1989), valuable for modelling variation in language (Widdowson, 1992; Lazar, 1993; Simpson, 1997; Collie and Slater, 2010). More specifically in relation to reading, literature has been viewed as helping vocabulary building or language awareness (Cranston, 2003; Weist, 2004; Badran, 2007). Connections between reading and writing have been found in studies which looked at using literature as the inspiration for creative writing (Preston, 1982; Spiro, 2004; Duff and Maley, 2007; Hanauer, 2010; Iida, 2012; Janssen and Braaksma, 2016). What these approaches have in common is a shared enthusiasm for literature. Teacher resources and suggestions about texts are useful and welcome, but only a few of the books and articles mentioned above contain data from contextualised studies in real settings. There have been a few voices against literature (Edmonson's 1997 discussion of these being the most often-cited example), but in general, the studies using literary texts have tended to argue in favour of its use.

While poetry in L2 education is a sub-field and narrow area of study currently, research into poetry reading and learners' responses to poetry may provide valuable insights for educators and researchers seeking to draw more successfully on local culture. Japanese L1 education and the indigenous culture of poetry (see Iida, 2012 on *haiku* writing, for example) could be more

effectively used in EFL contexts such as universities, in part because of its familiarity, but also since poetry has universal appeals across language and cultural boundaries. Part of the motivation for this thesis is then to argue for its use, and an equally important aspect of the argument is to demonstrate how poetry can contribute to English learning.

Although this thesis describes a specific context, namely Japan, further research may show that poetry in education could be used in other international settings. It is hoped that this thesis can contribute to a more clarified understanding of how responses to poetry may relate to language learning, and the results of the investigation may have further application in other contexts outside Japan. If literary texts, including poetry, are to continue to be used in second language contexts, then it should be possible for researchers and teachers to understand and demonstrate their benefits.

The primary motivation for the present study is to gain greater pedagogical knowledge about how poetry engages learners of English and its potential for use in language learning contexts. In response to recent changes in language teaching settings in Japan which continue to emerge in the current social and demographically dynamic context of the aging society, the justification of particular methods of teaching continues. The aim is to reach a more knowledgeable base from which to develop improved language courses for Japanese university students who can benefit from broadening and deepening their experiences with English. This thesis is situated in a real teaching environment, and during the course of the data collection the students were taking the poetry class together. Poetry is of particular interest at the current time since it is becoming possible to find and share poetry more easily, due to advances in technology such as the widespread uses of social media, the ubiquitous presence of online reading, and changes in reading habits.

Recent research has suggested that personal control over the language learning process can lead to more successful language learning (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2012, have discussed this in depth). In a poetry class, choice of material could be an example of this. Dynamic relationships between motivation, cognition, and emotion “continuously interact with one another and the developing context” (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p.259), while also relating to the benefits of personal control and autonomy. Autonomy, taken to mean taking charge of one’s own learning (Holec, 1981) is considered to be a basic psychological need, and concerns “the experience of initiation and regulation of the self” (Noels, 2009, p.302). The connection between learner autonomy, language learning and learner engagement, is one which this thesis investigates further also. Engagement is further defined in Chapter 2 and is a critical theme in the current

study. Finding out more about how metacognitive strategies and activities which encourage the development of such strategies as pair work and group work (see Storch, 2008 for an example) can lead to learner autonomy.

Poetry reading has also been explored from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Turner, 1980) which illuminated how language is made up of metaphors, so completely that we scarcely notice them. The resulting surge in understanding conceptual metaphors has led to an increased interest in poetic language as well as metaphorical language in all communication. Lakoff and Turner (1989) developed those ideas further in their book “More than cool reason: a field guide to poetic metaphor” to explain that learning about poetic metaphor, and poetry, in general, had significance to education. Metaphor is ubiquitous and appears in all aspects of communication, but “poetry, through metaphor, exercises our minds so what we can extend our ordinary powers of comprehension” (p.214). While metaphor analysis is not a key area of investigation in the current thesis, the exploration of metaphor in language is an area of potential future interest.

There have been recent calls for more studies in specific educational contexts, for example in settings such as universities which this thesis seeks to address. I share the view of others (Paran, 2008; Zyngier and Fiahlo, 2010; Hall, 2015b), that language learning through literature is under-researched and in need of further investigation. In a recent edited volume (Burke, Fiahlo and Zyngier, 2016), out of 14 chapters, four were concerned explicitly with poetry in language learning environments. Two of those were from Japan (Nishihara, 2016 and Teranishi and Nasu, 2016). The focus of the book is on scientific approaches to literature with studies from real contexts and demonstrates a growing interest in both empirical studies (using data from real readers) and a variety of literary texts. Expanding research findings to help understand poetry reading is one of the gaps which this thesis seeks to fill. Poetry does have the potential to be useful in language teaching contexts, but its usefulness is partially hidden. Through investigating poetry reading and learner responses to poetry, this potential can be explored, and its implications revealed.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Many teachers and students think that literature in language teaching has become increasingly marginalized, and with that poetry has effectively disappeared from language classrooms. At least since the rise of the communicative language teaching approaches of the 1980s, but also in the age of digital reading, poetry and other types of creative texts (including novels and short stories as well as other forms of creative writing such as essays and journalism) have become less common than before. Many language coursebooks feature little or no literature, as Gümüşok (2013) found from an analysis of 22 different EFL coursebooks and their literature content. Depending on the views of the teachers involved, the lessening of literature use is seen as necessary, welcome or is a trend which should be reversed.

The situation with poetry is more acute for a variety of reasons, including the belief that poetry is difficult for readers (in a first or additional language), and that teachers themselves have limited training in how to teach it. As the American poet and poetry advocate Billy Collins stated in his TED talk on poetry in public life, many of us, teachers and non-teachers alike, have what he calls “poetry deflector shields” activated in high school (Collins, 2012). The marginalization of poetry from L1 and L2 contexts is not new, nor is it specific to Japan. What is particular to Japan and the language learning context is that learners’ perspectives may not be prioritized when creativity is missing, and that in Japan in particular, there is a need for changes to improve language learning experiences. While there has already been earlier work done in a variety of contexts, a fuller picture of poetry in ELT is yet to emerge, and particularly from the perspective of SLA there are areas of interest which remain underexplored.

Poetry does not have a secure place in curriculums worldwide, and this precarity is seen in English studies in English-speaking countries as well as international contexts. In a recent edited volume, Dymoke, Lambirth and Wilson, talking about the place of poetry in English studies, lament what they call a “woeful neglect of the enormous contribution poetry can make to young people’s knowledge and intellectual development” (2013, p.1). The collection of articles from international settings then goes about to address this gap, discussing reading, writing and performing poetry.

In order to better understand how poetry can be a valuable resource for the EFL teacher, I borrow the concept of *poetic inquiry* (Prendergast, 2009; Faulkner, 2012) to consider how poetry in research. As Burns (2005) suggests about the evolving role of action research, there may be multiple cycles of investigation in a teaching context, with data collection followed by reflection

and consideration of the “implications of the findings” (p.59). The current study is not centred around activities in the classroom and so deviates from the typical description of an action research project, but it is socially situated in an educational context. In qualitative studies in the humanities or education fields, poetry can appear as a component in the investigation, a product of the research, or as part of the written analysis. *Poetic inquiry* is related to *reflective inquiry* (Farrell, 2007) and *exploratory practice* (Allwright, 2003) and occurs when the researcher centralizes the use of poetry to reflect, research, or write about experiences. All of these factors are relevant for the current investigation into L2 engagement with poetry.

1.3.1 The issue of teacher’s perceptions of poetry

The main topic of this thesis is engagement with poetry. Before we consider students’ responses to poetry, we look at teachers’ responses and opinions about poetry. One common reason for teachers to avoid poetry is that it is seen as difficult. For teachers who did not have positive experiences with poetry lessons themselves, there could be gaps in understanding how exactly to teach poetry, or lack of confidence in the syllabus they are required to teach, or both. Dymoke noted the tension between perceptions of poetry amongst teachers and curriculum planners and its place in examinations, calling for greater integration of theory and pedagogical justification for its use (Dymoke, 2001). It seems an uncomfortable truth that poetry is not well-loved many teachers or learners and when there is any teacher-choice in the development of the teaching resources, poetry teaching is reduced or removed from the curriculum altogether. Exceptions to this are recent discussions of teaching practices from an L1 class in the UK (Giovanelli and Mason, 2015) and the L2 context of Malta (Xerri, 2013). Perhaps the most significant barrier to the use of poetry in EFL settings is teachers, who have typically completed teacher-training programs with little or no use of poetry. Without innovation in teaching practices using poetry, new research does not appear.

Gaps in teacher training are part of the problem in literature education around the world. The general reluctance to use poetry is in part due to the limited training that EFL teachers receive and is not a problem which is limited to one place, or one type of teaching, or one language. Poetry reading is a type of reading which many see as difficult for its use of idiosyncratic language and unusual foregrounding of poetic language using alliteration, repetition and so on. The difficulty of poetry can be explored in detail using stylistic approaches (see Castiglione,

2017, 2019). Difficult poems, which resist reading are distinctive in their style and use of language, causing problems with readability, online processing and comprehension.

Teacher's knowledge of their field and the content they choose to teach may reflect on their own personal choices and feelings about reading practices. In a study reporting on the L1 primary school context in the UK, for example, Cremin *et al.* (2008) found out about teachers' own reading practices, illuminating problems or gaps in subject knowledge. While 75% of the 1200 teachers surveyed had read a book in the past three months, only 2% had read any poetry for pleasure. When asked to list poets, 22% could not name one poet, and many relied on the poems they had themselves read in childhood. In the classroom, less than 2% of teachers who had read aloud to their students had read any poetry. The findings suggest that a 'canon' of children's literature is regularly used, and that teachers themselves are not keen or regular readers of poetry. While the example from the UK is from a different context, the findings are relevant to the current study because they are so striking. Teachers' identities and positioning in the classroom is not the focus of the current investigation, but it is worth noting that even amongst teachers there may be reluctance to engage with poems.

In many teaching contexts, there appears to be teacher avoidance of poetry even when it is part of the examination schedule. Xerri (2013) for example writes about difficulties teaching poetry in Malta with mixed-level learners, and in his experience, it is both teachers and learners who suffer through poetry lessons. In the UK, L1 teachers of poetry feel bound by convention when teaching poetry (see Giovanelli and Mason, 2015). Teachers have a detailed understanding of the texts they are teaching, primarily being a situation where "re-readers guide first-time readers" (Giovanelli and Mason, 2015, 46). Teachers tend to ask leading questions, which learners know are heading towards the teacher's viewpoint, and which may appear to be open questions but are guided towards a narrow interpretation.

The issue of teacher involvement in the reading process appears to be an international problem, as other researchers in English teaching contexts report. In a typical reading lesson or poetry reading lesson, the teacher (as a "re-reader" guiding the "first-time readers") is responsible for directing the learners to the various parts of the text which the teacher believes are important to look at. The teacher usually takes on the job of noticing, and the gap between the knowledge of the teacher and the students sets up an imbalance in the process and even interrupts the authenticity of the reading, making the reading "manufactured", where authentic reading means reading that is:

...born out of an individual's own process of unmediated interpretation. That is, for a student to engage in authentic reading, they must have space to interpret the text, to experience it for themselves. If interpretation is imposed on a student, the resultant reading is likely not to be authentic, but manufactured. Manufactured readings are learnt, not made; they occur when readers are denied the space to engage in their own process of interpretation. (Giovanelli and Mason, 2015, p.42)

Related to reading is the issue of power-dynamics in an English classroom, where the teacher and student have an imbalance of subject knowledge. It is good practice for teachers to ask questions which they can predict or know answers to before asking, but for learners, the experience can remove their sense of personal autonomy. The expert-novice dynamic can be problematic in that the teacher's guiding questions "interfere with students' authentic engagement with the text" (ibid. 46). What this means for teachers at various levels is that many of them are not engaging authentically with poetry and that the classroom uses of such texts become affected. The problem of teacher-centered classrooms is particularly troublesome because the teaching preparation invariably creates an expert/novice dynamic and the learners rely on teacher interpretation for their understanding of the text. Xerri's solution is to give learners a more significant choice over their selection of readings, and by doing so to increase the learners' personal autonomy in the learning process.

In Japan, the issue of a poetry-gap teacher training is significant. Teachers have limited opportunities to learn how to use literature in their teacher training (Teranishi, Saito and Wales, 2015). Nishihara (2015) for example, discusses how literary texts are taboo in university examinations in Japan, in part because the university professors themselves are uncomfortable with approaching and creating suitable questions with literature. The *juken* (examination) system at various levels is slow to respond to change, even when the government indicates that changes are necessary (MEXT, 2014). In practice, one effect of this is that literature teaching can be lacking in innovation since testing methods remain unreformed. The resulting problems for students are related to the teacher training issue, combined with Japanese culture which tends to favour quiet, contemplative thinking instead of outgoing language use. These are very brief introductions to topics which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

In Japanese literature classes, traditional teaching methods are important to consider. A teacher-centered translation method of literature teaching exists for cultural and historical reasons (as discussed by Takahashi, 2015 and in Chapter 3). While literature in English,

including poetry, is considered high-status and *bungaku* (literature) departments have English literature specialisms, the course content is often presented almost entirely in Japanese, including all lectures and the final examinations. In departments teaching English literature, the professors see themselves as content specialists and do not lower themselves to teach English proficiency classes, (known as *eigo*).

Following a cultural enrichment approach to literature learning, literature courses make only limited use of English and do not require students to use English much in class at all. In such courses, short segments of the text are typically translated by the teacher meticulously, and then critical evaluations of the work are presented in Japanese (Norris, 1994; Nault, 2006; Mondejar et al., 2012). The experiences of learners in Japanese university settings may be considered problematic in this regard, as the cultural experience of reading classic literature becomes prioritized over any other goals, including second language learning goals. Teranishi et al. (2012) report that in Japan the use of language proficiency examinations for English study has also influenced the marginalization of literature.

From the perspective of Japanese university students, however, school-based learning of literature has not been marginalized at all. For students who have experienced literature in a test-driven setting of high school, literature is often compulsory. Ushioda and Dörnyei (2012) found that low personal autonomy and low motivation are dual problems in Japan specifically and the resulting consequences of these problems reach far into the workplace and wider society. One of my university students, critical of the current state of literature teaching, wrote about her high school days:

The teacher did not care how we feel or think about texts. In class, there were ways that students have to answer the questions that the teacher asks. For instance, "what do you think the main characters thinks or feels in this situation?" The free answer was not allowed. We student have to say exactly what the teacher believes to be the right answer. If we answer differently, even if there is a little difference, the teacher kept asking us the same question over and over again, until we reach the answer to be expected. (sic).

Later in the same reflection, she writes about a better way to approach literature, which values and considers the feelings of students in a more meaningful and authentic way:

I believe literature classes should not be like this. Actually, the ideal literature class in my opinion is quite opposite of that in my high school. When we read a book, there should be various ways of feelings. Thus, the most important thing is the freedom of student's feelings. What teachers need to do in literature class is, I believe, to admire those variety of feelings that the student have, and to "discuss" those, for example, why he or she felt that way, etc. In this way, valuable ideas and impressions of students will not be undermined.

According to this perspective, there can be little meaningful interaction when reading literature without "feelings". The use of "undermined" here stands out, highlighting the lack of power-balance between students and teachers in the classroom. Feeling undermined is always negative, and in this context suggests that students have low agency or personal autonomy in the learning process (what Giovanelli and Mason, 2015 also highlight as a wider problem in English literature classrooms).

Related to the topic of teacher training and classroom activities is the wider issue of English proficiency amongst school leavers and university students, all of whom have studied English for at least 6 years. Although the following quote was written over 25 years ago, Ellis wrote about the Japanese context:

The problem of the "incompetent school learner"- that is, the learner who leaves school with knowledge about the language but with little or no idea of how to use this knowledge in communication – is a very real one in Japan, where English instruction is often carried out in Japanese and is focused on imparting declarative facts about the language (Ellis, 1991, p. 121).

Ellis is referring to the Japanese education system which tends to create school leavers who are unable to use English in any practical way, despite years of classroom instruction. Of course, a complex system such as high school education in a large country such as Japan will contain a number of different variables which makes the experiences different for each local context and setting, there are aspects of secondary schooling in Japan which are generally true in the system overall.

Literature does not feature in the *juken*/examinations in Japan which are valued for job hunting (p.228) and in real-world settings (Takahashi, 2009, referenced in Teranishi et al., 2012). The resulting absences of poetry from university English classrooms in Japan also may be due partly to the attitudes of teachers who grew up believing that poetry in school was difficult. Additionally, it is affected by the beliefs of administrators and program planners who

suggest that the time spent in the English classroom should be spent preparing for tests. Added to this is a gap in the way that departments have split their content and language classes between teachers. Poetry has been removed from language classrooms in Japan just as it has been marginalized in English curricula worldwide, rendering research into poetry a tiny sub-theme.

The current section has focused on several key points in relation to L2 learning in EFL contexts, recognising that there are existing problems with the ways in which poetry and literature in general may be taught, as well as the gap in teacher training related to poetry. The education context is discussed in Chapter 3 in more detail.

1.3.2 The missing element of poetry in ELT

In this chapter so far, I have suggested that poetry has a place in an EFL environment such as Japan because of its connection to local cultural knowledge as well as the potential suitability of poems in classes where learners may benefit from innovative uses of creative texts. The removal of poetry from language learning contexts is due to factors such as beliefs about the difficulty of poetry (amongst teachers as well as students), the absence of poetry in teacher training and an increase of testing as well as time spent on fluency training in EFL classes. To illustrate the point, I discuss various perspectives, including recent research from L1 and L2 settings which have problematised the issue of poetry. This is to help show that the topic of poetry can be complex and can bring out conflicting opinions, even amongst those who are responsible for teaching it.

The culture of learners is what Kramersch (1998, 2009) has promoted in detail, from the perspective of valuing literature as culture particularly. Without poetry in EFL classes, in a country known for its poetry, it could be argued that the local cultures are not yet being fully acknowledged and that they should be more closely valued. Poetry is also a suitable topic for research at present because of the growing interest in reading science in general (Wolf, 2008), accompanied by a developing understanding of what happens in particular when we read poetry. This is beginning to be investigated as a scientific field, as a number of studies of cognitive responses (in a field known as ‘neurocognitive poetics’) have begun to show (see, for a detailed example Jacobs, 2015). Cognitive approaches to literature interpretation, understood as an analytical approach, have evolved and become more numerous as researchers borrow computer assisted and corpus analysis tools, as reported by McCarthy (2015). Few studies have used data from educational settings, although literature has been a focus, to varying degrees, over the 20th

century (see Kramersch and Kramersch, 2000 for a review of 20th-century research appearing in one journal). The notion to point out here is that more work from specific education settings can help add to a more comprehensive understanding of poetry in language learning contexts and that research into poetry, in particular, requires greater attention.

References to poetry are difficult to find in journals related to L2 reading. A search of the journal “Reading in a Foreign Language” (available online at nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/), for example, reveals no uses of poetry in any of the titles since the journal was established in 2002, despite the sub-themes of fluency, teaching materials and reading instruction. Reading poetry in a second language may be a way of getting learners to approach challenging reads without using long or difficult texts. Yet this research in this type of journal is not reporting on poetry.

In some L2 contexts, poetry does not seem to be part of L2 reading pedagogy at all. Poetry reading is a type of reading, although its impact on reading research has been underdeveloped. According to Grabe (2009) there are various purposes for reading such as reading for general comprehension (reading a novel) or reading to learn (academic reading) and that different types of reading such as expository texts and narratives put different demands on the reader because “each purpose for reading engages cognitive processes in different combinations” (2009, p.13) and that the complexity of reading may be so great that it is multiple skills working together, and is not one, simple action. Grabe’s (2009) monograph does not cite any research using poetry, though the book is wide-ranging and thoroughly covers L1 and L2 reading in various contexts. This is significant since Grabe proposes that “a broad range of sub-skills and knowledge resources needs to be explored more carefully to consider appropriate implications for instruction” (2009, p.20). The book’s focus instead is on developing strategies and main idea comprehension, along with reading rates, reading fluency and motivation for reading. Grabe does not mention poetry reading, although his research into reading of other types of text is detailed and thorough. In the field of general reading research, poetry reading can be completely absent from books and conferences on the topic of reading.

The approaches used in ELT in many contexts has not always encouraged learners to engage with their readings of texts, or to develop a transactional relationship with the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). According to Rosenblatt’s transactional reading occurs when the text and the reader interact to create the reading experience. The meaning of the text will be affected by the reader’s background knowledge, personal experiences, and emotional factors. The action of reading, when seen from a sociocultural perspective, means that reading poetry as a socially situated activity. Iser’s theory of “aesthetic response” (1978, p.20) views the reader as actively involved

in the meaning making process. Poetry is a literary form which may allow the establishment of a personal connection with a text and the possibility to result in positive reading experiences. While it is beyond the scope of this study to look in detail at the benefits and limitations of particular teaching approaches, one aim of this thesis is to provide evidence of how ELT practices can evolve to meet the needs of learners while they study English with literature.

Poetry and other types of creative literary texts make use of what McRae has described as representational language (1991/2008). Representational language can be open to different interpretations and can be understood differently by different people. In being understood, or “decoded by the reader” (1991, p.3), the act of reading engages the imagination of the reader. Imaginative uses of language occur in various forms, including in conversations (Carter, 2004), but also in language play, which includes applications of rhyme, wordplay, and jokes (Cook, 2000). Carter (2007) noted that despite increased uses of literature in particular contexts such as broader understanding of clines of creativity (Cook, 2000; Carter, 2004), literature continues to be taught using traditional, teacher-centered approaches (Nash, 2007). There is a separate discussion about poetry and poetic language daily use which goes beyond the scope of the current investigation, except to say that poetry is ubiquitous. This difficulty in categorising poetry may be understood in relation to what Empson (1930) wrote about poetry being defined by its ambiguity. Ambiguity means an indecision and “intention to mean several things” (1930, p.7), which helps create a poem’s impact and significance. In recent years, corpus analysis of speech and writing have allowed researchers to point out that creative, poetic language does not only appear in literature and that foregrounding can appear in any type of communication, literary or otherwise. The language of a poem does not need to be particularly unusual, since in poetry “the language is exceptionally carefully chosen, but is not itself special language” (Toolan, 2015, p.235). Examples of foregrounded language are devices such as metaphors and simile, along with repetition and rhyme, which the reader is likely to focus on when reading and is expected to be remembered more easily. The relevance of this development is that poetic language has been seen more broadly in real world contexts such as advertising, journalism and related fields. Later research showed that creative language such as songs, advertising, jokes, and speeches also make use of the type of memorable language use which we may call foregrounded, creative, or poetic.

Summing up this section, teachers and researchers face various problems in relation to poetry in L2 education contexts. Amongst the most significant of these are the barriers to the inclusion of poetry in reading research, studies of EFL learning, or even in studies using literature. In the

next section, we consider how the current study will contribute to addressing the gap in understanding poetry as it relates to sociocultural theories of education with a focus on engagement. From the perspective of the learner, time has spent in class reading and writing about literature in a highly manufactured way for examinations. It might be expected, then, that literature classes create students who have experienced unsatisfactory interactions with literature. Poetry and other types of creative texts are often not given priority due to time constraints on teachers who are evaluated according to the results they can produce in standardized tests, particularly in university EFL settings. These gaps in knowledge may result in problematic teaching and learning or may prevent effective methods being trialed and retained in education contexts. Resulting from this could be an even more significant decline in the use of literature amongst language teachers who, of their own volition, choose not to use poetry, in part because they have not been trained to use it themselves. The topic of literature-based teacher training in international contexts is too broad for this thesis to consider in detail, but the results of these researched-based reports can help to give background to the current study. The following section states the contribution of the investigation and the aims of the thesis overall, and the final section of this chapter has a brief introduction of each chapter.

1.4 Aims of the thesis

In the previous section, we looked at the problems of poetry's marginalization and the lack of poetry's use in teacher training as well as its absence from research in L2 journals. Learners' and teachers' experiences with poetry may have been limited and exam focused. Despite these problems, poems and poetry are popular, culturally familiar and widely known. Asking learners to talk together about poems and encouraging them to write personal reflections about poems could create active participation and involvement.

With the difficulties described above, it may be a challenge to find a place for poetry in the EFL curriculum. Without support from teachers and from universities, poetry will not become more central to any EFL program. But with better research and more evidence to suggest that poetry is useful, then the case for poetry in a balanced EFL curriculum will become stronger and more effective. I want to argue that poetry, perhaps surprisingly, does not have negative connotations for Japanese learners and that the previous L1 literacy learning background of Japanese learners instead has fostered an interest in poetry. The next stage of the thesis is to

argue that previous involvement in reading and writing with poetry has built up an awareness of poems and poetry already which could, in the future, be used with greater success.

The primary objectives of this project are 1) to understand and describe the language used by Japanese learners when they respond to different poems and 2) to identify and describe L2 poetic engagement and suggest ways in which language learning may be fostered when responding to poetry. In this thesis, L2 poetic engagement is a combination of cognitive, social and emotional engagement, observable when interacting with poetry. The first general research question which guides this thesis is: *RQ1: How do Japanese university-level learners of English engage with poetry in English?* Several related questions are introduced at the end of Chapter 3.

In this investigation, I sought to gain a fuller understanding of L2 poetry reading and learner engagement with poetry as learners read, talked together, and wrote responses to poems. I examine learners' reactions to poetry using a class survey, and two activities: 1) paired interviews with learners reading poetry and 2) a pre-post extended production writing activity in which learners explained their understandings of poems. I also collected interview data and classroom field notes and follow-up interviews. Through these activities, and by reporting on their effectiveness, I hope to make a contribution to the field of poetry in ELT.

This thesis may prove useful for other researchers who are looking at ways to research poetry in language classrooms or for trainee teachers who are learning about ways in which poetry can become part of their teaching toolkit. The thesis provides a reference point for new methods of research into this area, in particular for those researchers who are already involved in teaching with literature. The categorization of learner responses using a variety of computer-based tools can assist others who are looking to go beyond qualitative evaluation. In the future, the use of data-informed research practices into learner language, and computer-aided analysis will continue to develop. Teachers who are using creative texts such as speeches, jokes, idioms, metaphors, and songs may be looking for ways to progress with their research. It is hoped that this will lead to a better understanding of the relationship between second language learning and the potential uses of poetry in subject areas bridging both L1 and L2 education.

The current study and the methodology used could become useful for those who are considering ways to structure their investigations. While only a small number of poems appear in the current project, future projects could make use of a greater variety of texts or a more extended assessment period. Particularly in growing areas of investigation such as uses of corpus stylistics and cognitive linguistics (Biber and Conrad, 2009), the methods used here could provide useful evidence for continued studies in particular educational settings. If it is possible

to identify when and how L2 poetic engagement occurs, it should also be possible to determine specific features of these interactions and then consider the implications of the results.

In this thesis I aim to provide support for the position that more could be done to help connect indigenous culture (such as poetry) and EFL. In a recent edited book (Teranishi, Saito and Wales, 2015), one theme of several chapters is “bridging the gap between L1 and L2 education” (Saito, A., p.41). There is evidence that the gaps between L1 and L2 education are becoming more of a focus for researchers in Japan. Teranishi and Nasu (2016) have discussed language learning and the gap between L1 and L2 study from the perspective of learners’ backgrounds, for example.

An additional aim is that I hope that the thesis can add to the conversation about how to use the L1 backgrounds of learners in the L2 classroom. Saito, A. (2015, p.42) looks at government policy, historical practices, and emerging trends, along with wide use of extensive reading in school programs. Her focus is reading skills in general and how these relate to literacy and the use of literature in Japan. The chapter looks at literature in general not poetry specifically, although it does contain some inclusion of poetry, most memorably when describing innovative practices with traditional poetry. In the current chapter, we look at elementary, secondary and tertiary settings in turn to illustrate the implications of the L1 educational experiences of Japanese learners which are relevant to the current project. The approach I have taken in this thesis is that I share the view that bridging the gap between L1 and L2 education is both necessary and constructive.

The use of poetry in the compulsory years of schooling is relevant to the current project since university learners who have been to Japanese schools will be familiar with poetry from their school years. As Takahashi (2015) reports, textbooks are used nationwide for all subjects, including English. MEXT sets broad standards for all schools from the kindergarten level through to upper secondary level to “ensure a fixed standard of education throughout the country” (quoted in Takahashi, 2015, p.28). In a review of education ministry (MEXT) documents from the 1980s, Takahashi (2015) reports on reviews and changes to the wording of English language course of study guidelines. Takahashi notes in particular that there has been a reduction in literature in MEXT guidelines, which has resulted in the marginalization of literature and literary texts. Replacing these have been more transactional factual texts, and repeated use of the word “communication” in official documents (also reported in Erikawa, 2004). When MEXT makes these changes, education institutions are expected to follow these suggestions, and for teachers this may mean that administrative instructions require use of key

terms in course syllabi and other documents. Takahashi's report is a useful example of how government goals have been seen to change over time although Takahashi was concerned with literature in general and not particularly the inclusion of poetry.

While there is currently no set approach which has emerged in the tertiary context at the current time, approaches which build on previous teaching and learning, consider research and informed good practices and are justifiable to course organisers will benefit from research such as that of this thesis. In addition to entering the discussion about how to teach and what to teach, the thesis can contribute to the field to help those involved in teacher training course development. While any change to testing culture may take many years to have any impact, studies such as this one with poetry used to provoke and gather student responses could be used to help guide curriculum planners in future literature courses.

Finally, while it is true that the thesis is driven by my own interest in teaching with poems, from a personal perspective, a study like this can be used to improve teaching and learning in other settings in the future. While the writing of this thesis is finished, preparing, planning and delivering courses each academic year is an ongoing process of learning. The biggest contribution of this thesis will be that through reading and writing about the topic, there will be future opportunities to use that knowledge for researching poetry and improving teaching with literary texts.

1.5 Thesis overview

Placing the learner in the centre of the investigation, through a triangulation of data (questionnaire, interview, conversation data and writing), the thesis aims to address the current gap in knowledge about poetry in the EFL tertiary setting in Japan. Chapter 2 presents a literature review related to poetry and learning from studies with L1 and L2 learners. Next, the terms 'engagement' and 'poetic' are defined as they are understood in this thesis. From the field of education, sociocultural theories and motivation studies. To narrow the discussion, the focus is to look mainly at previous research using poetry in the L2.

Chapter 3 contextualizes the thesis in the education setting of Japan, with a focus on the Japanese education system from the perspective of L1 literacy practices which include learning with poetry. In part to help identify a gap in current knowledge, but also to help contextualize the position that poetry has in Japanese education, this chapter aims to describe and explain

factors important to teaching literature with Japanese learners. The chapter also approaches the problem of how to understand the ‘responses’ in this thesis, both spoken conversations, and writings which are both examples of retrospective protocol data. Towards the end of this chapter, the research questions guiding the investigation are presented.

Chapter 4 begins with a description of the setting in which the study took place. I begin the chapter by describing the students and their language learning experiences, and then go on to briefly describe the reasons for creating the course. The beginning of the chapter also serves to illustrate the reasons why students may have been more interested in poetry than in other types of background reading or activities, given their age, the stage of their studies, and the mixed proficiency level in the class. The next part of the chapter is a description of the mixed methodology for the thesis, containing the details about two studies: Study 1 and Study 2. In this chapter, I introduce the methodological issues that guided my research with a very brief discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of different data collection methods and justification for their use.

Chapter 5 discusses the results of a poetry experiences questionnaire created for this thesis. I created a background experiences questionnaire (BEQ) with a focus on language poetry learning backgrounds. The answers to the BEQ revealed that students were likely to have shared similar experiences with poetry in Japanese.

Chapter 6 presents the results of Study 1 in which pairs of learners talked about poems together. I outline the paired interview (i.e. spoken data) in Study 1 of this project. I coded the data with an existing system from Hanauer, (2001a), which was adapted for this study. The mixed methodology uses bottom-up methods to work with an adapted coding method and top-down methods to examine learner responses to poetry quantitatively. I explain several key points related to engagement with poetry throughout the discussion and at the end of the chapter. At the end of this chapter describe how I adapted the activity for Study 2 to include more preparation time, a speaking-to-writing activity, and a chance for learners to share their knowledge about a poem in an expert-novice construct.

Chapter 7 reports the findings from Study 2, and analyses of written responses to poetry. The analysis of the data begins with automatic coding and searching using software for linguistic analysis, and this was combined with qualitative discussion to select other salient points about the data. The linguistic analysis allowed for the identification of features of the writing related to L2 poetic engagement. Through the discussion sections and analysis of the learner writing, I use examples to discuss possible evidence for L2 poetic engagement. After the initial description

of the learners' writing, independent raters graded a selection of the written responses according to a holistic engagement score. Relevant findings are discussed with an examination of results in light of the thesis research questions.

Chapter 8 brings together the conclusions of the thesis and also outlines pedagogical recommendations and discusses possible future research. This chapter is also one in which I review the main thesis questions, summarize the main findings and consider the implications of the study. The chapter includes several limitations of the research and then makes suggestions for further investigation into the use of poetry in language education.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the extent to which Japanese university-level language learners can rewardingly engage with poems in English. The current chapter will define some key terms used in the thesis. These are *poetry*, *poetic* and *engagement*. There are vast commentaries on all these terms in various scholarly disciplines, so being clear about how these terms are understood in this thesis is particularly important. Later the discussion will turn to what roles specific contexts (and the role of the indigenous culture) play in language learning and how best to facilitate the interactions between poems, learners and settings. The current investigation follows on from an existing body of knowledge about poetry from both L1 and L2 perspectives and sociocultural theories of education in order to bring together these approaches and examine their potential for language learning.

This chapter accordingly begins with a discussion of the terms poetry and poetic (Section 2.2). Section 2.3 discusses theoretical positions on poetry in L1 and L2 contexts, including recent research using poetry in EFL settings. Section 2.4 outlines sociocultural theories of education used in this thesis to talk about peer learning and the importance of the social and cultural context. Section 2.5 is devoted to the central theory of the thesis, engagement, leading to a definition of *L2 poetic engagement*.

2.2 What do the terms “poetry” and “poetic” mean in this thesis?

In this section of the chapter, we look at two key terms, poetry and poetic, as they are used in this thesis. Regarding the definition of poetry, the following makes three main points: 1) to understand poetry as a genre with marked linguistic elements 2) to recognise the evolving nature of poetry and 3) to consider poetry in the non-linguistic context of the world outside the poem (in this case the Japanese setting).

One initial perspective on poetry is that it seems to be a genre which the reader can identify immediately. Verdonk (2013) refers to stylistic conventions of poetry (p.15), which are aspects such as imagery, spatial organisation on the page, sound patterns and use of vocabulary or syntax. Through our experiences of poetry in early education as well as English exams and from popular culture, recognising the genre causes us to "adjust our reading accordingly"

(Toolan, 2015, p.231). Peskin (2010) found that young readers approach poetry using genre expectations, calling this skill *poetic literacy*. Toolan (2015) comments that typically some elements may be found in non-literary texts, but will be more frequently found in poetry. These include patterning, foregrounding, creativity in its use of language and that poetry has what he calls poetry's "fundamental spoken-ness and heard-ness" (p.232). Poetry can be made up of everyday language and still be moving and memorable. In his book *Stylistics* (2002), Peter Verdonk lists several ways that language and meaning in poetry are memorable. These are:

The meaning is often ambiguous and elusive; it may flout the conventional rules of grammar; it has a peculiar sound structure; it is spatially arranged in metrical lines and stanzas; it often reveals foregrounded patterns in its sounds, vocabulary, grammar or syntax, and last but not least, it frequently contains indirect references to other texts (2002, p.11)

Verdonk (2013, p.108) summarises his views on poetry further by saying that the aspects which are designed by the poet are related to graphology, phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. However, poetry may not always be a clearly defined genre. We are unlikely to mistake a recipe, a menu or a dictionary entry for a poem unless they appear amongst a book of poems. However, it is possible to imagine, as has been used in the social sciences, the writing of interview responses to look like poetry, or use of found poetry to frame social issues and stimulate discussions (Prendergast, 2009). Leech (2008) discusses more peripheral literary texts such as letters and shows that "some of the most typically 'poetic' characteristics of language" (p.6) such as metaphor and sound patterning can be found in non-literary texts as well. To sum up these viewpoints, we should accept that encountering poetry is likely to involve a genre categorisation in the first place, but recent trends in uses of poetry, for example across disciplines, may expand our understanding.

Next, we turn to comment on how understandings of poetry may have changed over time, although some historical definitions are still relevant and useful today. In his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), William Wordsworth described poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity" and argued that poetry exists to "produce excitement" (quoted in Parini, 2008, p.11-12). In *Biographia Literaria*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge differed from Wordsworth, stating that in poetry, the attraction of reading is in the journey itself. Coleridge went on to state that the two

main points of poetry 1) "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader" and 2) "the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination" (1817, Chapter XIV). The reader should be carried forward, not merely by curiosity, but by the pleasurable activity of reading poems. While these two poets were reflecting on how they saw poetry 200 years ago, the message that poetry excites is also useful today. More recently, we understand that poetry is "literature at its most concentrated" (Leech, 2008, p.6), meaning that there are rich ways that we can read and try to interpret poems. In his book *How to read a poem* (2007), Terry Eagleton defines a poem as "a fictional, verbally inventive moral statement" and adds that in poetry, it is the author who "decides where the lines should end" (2007, p.25). Another way of saying this is "poetry is language to which a special emphasis has been given" (Fenton, 2002, p.10). Poetry has changed since Wordsworth and Coleridge's time, but the points about interest and excitement remain relevant in understanding the appeal and attraction of poetry.

The next important point in relation to understanding what poetry means in this thesis is to recognise Japanese students' language and literary knowledge. Verdonk (2013) explains the notion of contexts, which means both the internal linguistic context of the poem and the "non-linguistic context of the world outside the text" (15). In Japanese, the word for poem, 詩 (uta/shi) can mean both poetry and song. Japanese poems were traditionally recited. Like English lyrical poetry, Japanese poems were traditionally sung and performed, and like English poetry, they have evolved and transformed over time. Japanese poetry is highly designed and reflective, requiring careful reading from the reader or listener. This is because the listener is paying attention to the poem, especially carefully to hear the cutting word (*kireji*). A comparison with the lyrical ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge (1800) would include recognition that both Japanese poetry and English lyrical ballads have undergone considerable changes over the past 200 years. A poet from Japan's Edo period *hokku* (later *haiku*) tradition such as Matsuo Bashou would have found that his understanding of poetry differed significantly from that of the 19th century opinions of Masaoka Shiki. What all this means for the current investigation is that the non-linguistic context of understanding the meaning of the word poetry to Japanese students should include recognition of the evolving nature of the literary tradition.

Briefly, we also consider the meaning of the word poetic, the adjectival form of the word poem. In the current investigation, poetic is used to describe anything with the properties of a poem. In linguistics, the *poetic function* (Jakobson, 1960) is one part of verbal

communication, along with the other functions (emotive, conative, metalingual, referential and phatic). The six functions apply to all cultures and languages (Waugh, 1980, p.59), and the poetic function is dominant when attention is drawn to poetic features in a text, "taking precedence over other functions such as conveying information" (Pope and Swann, 2011, p.14). The poetic function is not limited to poetry and may be present in the language of speeches and jokes. According to Jakobson, poetic or aesthetic language draws attention to itself through wordplay, rhyming, or other ways in which the message of the text seems to stand out. For learners of an L2, learning how to work with texts and communication in the target language will necessarily mean interaction and understanding of the poetic function in poems where it is dominant, but also in advertisements and newspaper headlines, or in social media posts. We recognise the use of the term poetic function by Jakobson, but in the thesis, the term poetic is used adjectivally to describe the language of a poem.

A final point to make about the meaning of the term poetry in this thesis is to explain how it may be possible to help students expand their own understanding of poetry by making connections between poets they were already familiar with and new texts or poets. In the opening session in the elective poetry course, we used discussions about poetry to personalise the experience of reading poetry. It seemed that students responded well to exploring definitions of poetry in English, and then coming up with their own ideas to try and explain what poetry meant to them. In class we used quotes about poetry from, for example, T.S. Eliot, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson from the anthology *Staying Alive* (Astley, 2002) or the subsequent collections *Being Alive* (Astley, 2004) and *Being Human* (Astley 2011). This approach aimed to bring poetry closer to the students' lives. For example, Maya Angelou's "Poetry can tell us what human beings are. It can tell us why we stumble and fall and how, miraculously, we can stand up" (quoted in Astley, 2011, p.21). The quote reminded the students of a well-known Japanese saying *Nana korobi, ya oki* (七転び八起き) which means "fall down seven times, get up eight". Angelou's message also seemed to connect with one of the most famous works from the poet and calligrapher Mitsuo Aida (1924-1991), in which he explains the reasons we fall as being because of our human flaws. The poem "にんげんだもの/Because I'm human" (Aida, 2008, p.26) features in school textbooks and is widely known. Through these connections, a conversation about poetry could continue beyond language and genre, looking at references to other texts, just as Verdonk suggested.

Any discussion of terms that mean different things to different people will inevitably mean that alternative views are excluded. This section has attempted to explain the terms poetry and poetic as they are understood and as they are used in this thesis. In the next part of the chapter, we look at connections between poetry, research and L2 learning.

2.3 Connecting theory and practice in poetry research

One of the aims of this thesis is to bring together theories of education to see how they can apply in the language learning of teaching English with poetry. Through this it should be possible to see what the implications are for the language classroom. Therefore, we look at the current position of theory and practice in poetry contexts.

In a review of the use of literature in the field of foreign language learning, Carter (2007) suggested that one of the challenges for future work would be the need to address “the absence of empirical classroom-based research” (p.11). Related to a trend towards connecting pedagogy with practice, the Modern Languages Association (MLA) wrote an outline of how they saw the future of translingual and transcultural competence. As an organisation with influence on the direction of academic trends, the MLA seeks to develop awareness of research which meets the needs of students in the modern world. The 2007 report emphasises the need for understanding how others think and feel, and outlines how this can be achieved with literature, film and other media. The benefits of engaging with such texts can be various, including “critical language awareness...historical and political consciousness, social sensibility and aesthetic perception” (2007).

In a systematic review article, Paran (2008) found that teachers do not always engage effectively with research practices. Paran’s (2008) report additionally noted that the majority of empirical studies had been conducted in higher education, while teaching language and literature occurs in a range of contexts, not only at the tertiary level. Paran called for new work to help create a balanced understanding of the state of literature teaching in specific contexts. This finding was echoed by Fogal (2015), who reported that there were gaps in crucial information in studies in the field such as student language level, data collected, and details about the education environment. Both made suggestions on how to improve the knowledge of the field of study which will also help students and teachers in classroom contexts.

One example of recent research which has responded to this call for greater research was conducted by Bloemert, Jansen and van de Grift (2016) who produced a framework for

understanding the background and traditional approaches to foreign language literature teaching approaches. The authors present a detailed account of how there have been four main approaches to literature in foreign language education: the text approach; the context approach; the reader approach and the language approach. The first two are concerned with the study of literature, which could be by looking at character development, literary features and structure and so on, always with a focus on the literary text itself. In the other two categories, the focus has been on the use of literature as a resource where the primary focus is the student's "personal interpretation and critical thinking skills" which could include cultural understanding, or their linguistic development, "vocabulary acquisition and reading skills improvement" using methods such as using texts as a model or source of input for language learners (Bloemert, Jansen and van de Grift p.174-76). The next stage of their research was to use the secondary classroom context as a location for deep investigation into learner beliefs, teacher beliefs and learner engagement with literature in their foreign language classes (Bloemert *et al.*, 2019). Such practitioner-driven research, which also considers various angles including student voice, represents possible future directions for the field.

2.3.1 Selected L1 studies and theoretical perspectives on poetry

When looking at poetry in L2 contexts, we can gain important insights from selected L1 poetry studies as background to this thesis. First, the Art as Technique approach from Shklovsky (1917/1965) stated that the purpose and defining feature of literary works as works of art is the concept of defamiliarization. In a poem, according to Shklovsky, the form or structure of the text is the focus of the reader's attention. In 1929, I.A. Richards gave English literature students poems they had never seen before with no title or author biographical information and asked them to rank the poems. Richards found that his students were unable to recognise the most canonical texts when the common expectation at the time was that these educated readers should be able to identify such famous and quality literary writing. Using retrospective reflection, the students' interpretations seemed simple and generally ignored the poetry nature of the texts, and so Richards named this style of commentary "plain sense" reading. The meaning will be translated into ordinary English sentences, ignoring the poetic qualities of the poem and talking about the poem as if it is merely prose (Richards, p.12). In a more recent study with L1 high school readers, Harker (1994) reported on the same issue with poetry reading, highlighting the lasting appeal of this research method. New Criticism (see also Empson, 1930) focuses on text-

driven methods of analysis, specifically the mechanical elements of poetry such as rhyme and meter.

Foregrounding has become a well-researched framework for analysing texts in poetry, drama, and novels (Van Peer, 1986). Van Peer's method of asking readers to underline sections of text which stand out has been used and adapted since in other studies and remains a key method in text-driven studies of literary reading (Leech and Short, 1981; Miall and Kuiken, 1998; Hakemulder, 2004). Foregrounding in the broader fields of social sciences and professional training is a recent development (Hakemulder, Fiahlo and Bal, 2016), which is evidence for the evolving nature of the field of research.

Using an expert-novice study of L1 readers of poetry Peskin (1998) investigated meaning construction using interactions with poetry. She asked PhD students (experts) and undergraduates/seniors at high school (novices) to read and "think aloud as you try to make sense of each of the poems. Say everything you are thinking" (1998, p.239). The foundations of her study were reading models (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983), actual readers (Culler, 1976) and expert readers (Kintgen, Holland and Gibson, 1984). The activity was completed individually, with the protocols analysed qualitatively and coded for uses of background knowledge, allusion to other texts, or other signs of sophisticated understanding. She found that the experts could confidently identify links to history, literary criticism, and cultural knowledge. As well as this, the more experienced readers could take time to experience pleasure in the reading process and reported such appreciation of the poems. Peskin's study also connects to research which looked at how novice readers approach texts (Scott and Huntington, 2007) and through exploring how experts read poetry (Warren, 2011; Zeitz, 2014).

Peskin found that even a young poetry reader approaches a text with certain expectations. In a study of poetry reading with young L1 readers of fourth, eighth and twelfth grades in an L1 classroom setting in Canada, Peskin (2010) identified features of what she called *poetic literacy*. *Poetic literacy*, according to Peskin, is a reader's ability to read, understand, and interpret poetry, responding appropriately to it. According to Peskin, the features of poetic literacy are 1) genre recognition, which refers to an understanding that poems often take a particular shape or form (e.g. the use of stanzas and enjambment), 2) conventional expectations which could indicate the understanding that the poem may contain a puzzle or resist interpretation and 3) textual devices which are singled out by an understanding of the uses of rhyme, meter and other language features. As Peskin explains: "For trained readers, poetic text processing involves genre decision, which triggers genre-based conventional expectation and direct attention to the textual

devices” (Peskin, 2010, p.77). Peskin was not working with second language learners, however. These two studies cannot be repeated in the L2 context but the key findings, that poetic literacy develops over time and that understanding of poems can lead to enjoyment and appreciation of the poems, are ideas which have informed the current project.

We can also view poetry reading and the feelings which it inspires as being related to perspective and feelings (Miall and Kuiken, 1994). Focusing on L1 readers of poetry, Eva-Wood looked at engagement through what she called “thinking and feeling” (2004a, p.182). Poetry discussions could provide opportunities for developing language skills such as elaborating and negotiating meaning. Eva-Wood (2004a, 2004b) built on the work of Earthman (1992) who found that novice readers of literature tended to give “closed” responses, whereas more experienced readers used more “open” methods. For Eva-Wood, the engagement was signalled particularly through the elaborations which learners made in think-aloud protocols, particularly in how much detail they noticed from the poems. As Eva-Wood (2004) showed, elaboration can be visual, verbal, and text or real-world related. If L2 readers are displaying a kind of language practice, their elaborations are evidence of language output. Even a summary of main ideas, when using a combination of meanings from the poem along with learner’s own linguistic resources, is worthy of inspection since the language used is new, and the interpretation is original. Poetry has many possible explanations, just as conversations and discussions are varied and understanding of ideas is open to the individual. Discussing the possibility of multiple meanings embedded in a single text can help learners have a better understanding that their own language use can employ multiple meanings also.

In a recent study looking at literary judgement and how it varies amongst different readers, Spiro (2011) asked L1 readers of different expertise levels to respond to a range of different poems. She asked them to read anonymized poems and rank them for what she called their ‘poetic quality’. Spiro was investigating the varying readers’ aesthetic judgement. Her process of selecting poems involved a balance of eight poems: two were unpublished poems from poetry workshops; two were written by undergraduates; one was from a small publisher; two were from mainstream publishers, including one by a Nobel-prize winning poet, and one was a self-published poem (p.232) The poems were all between 10 and 25 lines long. She selected poems which dealt with topics such as nature, birds, animals, or the world. Spiro compared the responses of readers who had a professional connection with poetry (two teachers of creative writing and two editors of poetry books), with those of leisure readers. The leisure readers were lifetime readers of poetry. Spiro’s reason for choosing older readers instead of students was that

she wanted to explore how “informed adult readers” (p.232) describe their aesthetic judgement, and to move beyond the limitation that Richards found in his undergraduate readers. The results of the study demonstrated how readers “rationalize their intuitive judgement of what they like and do not” (p.231). The poems by the aspiring poets, whose work had not been shared outside their reading groups, were valued “just as highly” (p.243) as the ones by the professional poets. She found that the boundary between professional poetry and amateur poetry was not distinctly drawn, and that there was no consensus in how the poems were judged and that “some readers sought clarity, others ambiguity...some valued simplicity, others mistrusted it” (p.243). Poetic quality could not be conclusively identified or described, although the study did reveal a lack of consistent scoring for the poet’s status and experience. What this means for the current study is that either new or unfamiliar poems may be suitable for reading activities (and post-reading activities such as speaking and writing). If the names of the poets and the status of the poet do not constitute a way to judge literary quality, then the reactions of readers may be open to discussion and could be unlimited by convention. There are limits to how the Spiro study can be related to the current investigation since Spiro was working with L1 readers, several of whom were highly knowledgeable about poetry.

What many of these studies have in common is that they are concerned with looking closely at interactions with poetry and how poetry can be used in different ways to assist learning (whether reading skills, self-expression or textual comprehension). the studies in this section are all from L1 contexts, they are relevant to the current investigation as they all deal in different ways with the key issues of interacting and engagement with poetry.

2.3.2 Selected L2 studies and perspectives on poetry

As we saw in the last section, there have been several L1 studies using poetry in learning contexts from a variety of fields. Now we focus more specifically on key finding from L2 studies. As with the L1 studies, investigations using poetry in language learning contexts have sought to identify effective ways to use literature (including poetry) for educational development.

This thesis builds on the work of others who have used poetry with L2 learners, including studies using creative poetry writing. In a collection edited as part of the British Council’s “Milestones in ELT” series of publications, Widdowson’s (1983) paper on the foregrounded language of poetry (what he called ‘deviant language’) suggested that literature teaching was in

a state of change. Following on from this was a study using poetry writing with EFL learners in Thailand by Preston (1982). He used the approach of Koch (1973) and reports on writing poetry with language learners. Koch worked with children in New York schools, encouraging them to write poems about nature and topics which interested and excited them. The Blake poem “Tyger”, used in this study as an example of an anthologised poem, was one of the poems Koch used. Although this was an L2 setting, the students were elementary age. His students wrote poems which were like questions e.g. “Rose, where did you get that red?” after reading the Blake poem, inviting them to ask questions about the natural world, just as Blake did with the tiger. Preston used The Song of Solomon from the bible with trainee teachers in Thailand, helping them to adapt their poems which were written in the same style. The writing was done with help from Preston as the classroom teacher, and local beliefs and cultural knowledge were welcomed as part of the writing process. His results showed that even with difficult poetry, student teachers could capture the style of the poem and that the local culture of Thailand appeared to be successfully included in the students’ poems. Preston reported enthusiastically on the results of the project and concluded that poetry writing was both “useful and valuable” (501). Although Preston did not report on proficiency scores, or learner comments about the experience of writing, his approach was related to connecting L1 and L2 resources. Both Preston and Koch aimed to show that poems which may be considered difficult or archaic, can be used effectively with learners of different levels and ages.

The current investigation also recognizes the earlier work of research which looked at different ways of learning with poems which could be viewed in light of understanding how readers engage with poetry. Hoffstaedter (1987) was interested to know whether or not readers process the reading of poems in any particularly “poetic” way (75). Hoffstaedter accepted that the reading of poetic texts was a creative act and that poetry found in an anthologized collection or poetry read aloud at a poetry-reading event would be processed differently from other reading found in “everyday contexts” (p.79). Employing a think-aloud protocol/think-out-loud (TOL) procedure, Hoffstaedter reported on poetry reading across languages. Her subjects were an America student and a German student and later with three experimental groups who were high school students, language students, and engineering students reading poems. She concluded that native language background (L1 German or L2 German) affected the judgements made and she also found that some poetry readers tended to be most successful reading simple texts, some preferred complex texts, and the remaining third, which she termed ‘characterization’ readers (1987, p.85) preferred a combination of the two. The focus on *poeticity* in Hoffstaedter’s study

did not confirm differences in reading behaviour for different types of learners, however. While Hoffstaedter's study made use of student data, there was no attention to the potential interest, attention or engagement of learners when presented with poetic texts.

Poems can be approached using literary response practice as a kind of cognitive activity, through which higher-level analysis may develop later. Benton (1995) used reader response to investigate the teaching of literary response to young adult, L2 readers. He wanted to test the suitability of the reader response approach, and also to "respect both the integrity of the texts and of the readers" (p.333), in particular the validity of using such approaches with L2 students. The positive aspects of literary response seemed to be learning about disciplined writing, understanding texts deeply, and recognising that university students require stimulating activities which will develop their academic skills such as critical thinking. This final point has particular relevance for the current project because Benton returns to the issue of reading rather than literary criticism. He concluded by suggesting that teaching methods were important to "engage and motivate students" (p.341). Benton did consider the act of response as an end in itself but did not lose sight of the wider goal in teaching with literature was that "prime responsibility to our students is to help them become better critical readers, not literary critics" (ibid.). The current study builds on this study, although Benton seemed to be focused on investigating a method of presenting critical reading, and the current study looks more holistically at the role of poetry in engaging learners in output activities.

Hanauer conducted a series of empirical studies (Hanauer, 1996; Hanauer 1998a; Hanauer 1998b; Hanauer, 2001a) to find out about the ways that L2 readers approach poetry. In two early studies (1996, 1998), Hanauer was trying to find out how reading differs between different genres. What he discovered was when approaching very different genres (he used poetry and encyclopaedia entries), his students brought different expectations and ideas to the discussion. Hanauer also argued that literary reading can be considered relatable to real-world activities since learners come into contact with literature such as songs and poetry in daily life, and that overall there is a need for investigation of this topic using empirical methods. Hanauer (2001a) looked at poetry reading again as a way to evaluate poetry reading processes, considering the resulting conversations as evidence for language learning but did not focus on speaking skills. Hanauer asked pairs native speakers of Hebrew who were learning English to talk together about song lyrics and in his study, finding that they "recognise aspects of aesthetic textual manipulation (such as rhyme) and used it in the actual meaning construction process" (Hanauer 2010, p.35). According to Hanauer, poetry reading involves a series of stages: "The second

language learner seems first to notice and analyse linguistic form and from this enter into a process of interpretation and elaboration in relation to the understanding of the poem” (Hanauer, 2010, p.36). One problematic aspect of the Hanauer study was the choice of poem (Leonard Cohen lyrics) which prompted religious questions which my Japanese students would possibly find confusing.

In a review article of poetry reading research Hanauer (2001b) looked at empirical studies of poetry reading and recommended more research in specific contexts to help understand the poetry reading process, particularly for language learners at different stages of their learning. Hanauer (2001a, 2001b) suggests that the various schools of literary theory have taken differing and sometimes contradictory stances towards the same topic. The historically text-led approach has evolved to include interest in the reader and the reading of literature, and an interest in varieties of readers. The current study acknowledges previous work looking at poetry reading with “ordinary readers” (de Beaugrande, 1985) and a case study of “expert readers” by Kintgen, Holland and Gibson (1984), as described in Hall, 2015 (Chapter 5).

Working in the US with second language learners, Hess (2003), described her “formula for meaning making” with poetry. She discusses how poetry can be “a vehicle for thought” and “an instrument for shaping language” (p.19). The creation of language is assisted by the poem, not coming from the poem itself. Hess found that a structured approach to poetry can help to create meaningful language activities which integrate the four skills and heighten “interest and involvement” with lessons (Hess, 2003, p.20). Her main suggestion was when it comes to talking about meanings, she prefers to provide a suggestion of many different possible meanings, and then asks students to talk about their preferred meanings, or the ones which have more meaning for them, thereby scaffolding the learning. Both of these writings by Benton and Hess are evidence for a continued interest in the topic of critical literary response, from different countries and with different types of students.

Next, we consider a set of approaches to teaching and learning which are together called “literary awareness” (Zyngier, Fiahlo and Rios, 2007). Activities and classroom activities can be created to develop literary awareness in a course of study, a unit of work or a single lesson. Trying to find ways to teach literature arose in response to a perceived need for pedagogical approaches to literature teaching. Although reading itself is a receptive activity, responses to reading literature are by nature productive, either spoken or written. Literary awareness leads to a kind of literary “awakening” (Zyngier, Fiahlo and Rios, 2007, p.198), necessary for the kind of intercultural understanding that Lazar (1996) and Kramersch (1998, 2009) and Kramersch and

Kramersch (2000) have suggested. Kramersch also argued that the integration of literary texts into the language classroom can help language learners gain essential cultural knowledge of a target language community (2013). According to literary awareness, the “role that feelings play” (Zyngier and Fiahlo 2010, p.14) should also be considered in L2 literature classes. Engagement with a variety of creative texts can help develop understanding of creativity in reading. In a recent intervention with high school students in Brazil, Viana and Zyngier (2017) report on using various types of literature to develop the skills of responding to literature. Through reading literature and writing about it for assessment purposes, students became more accustomed to the idea of working beyond the literature and starting to make their own creative works. An additional goal was that learners exercised critical thinking (p.317). The current follows on from the work on literary awareness recognizes that it has had an impact on literature teaching internationally.

Literary awareness occurs in a number of other steps. The first is *reaction*, a personal, non-transferable emotional experience. It requires the physical act of reading, the perception, decodifying and relating the signals on the page and involves the immediate emotional reaction and the first non-formal, verbalized (or not) impressions (e.g. laughter, curiosity, anxiety). The second moment is that of *awareness* itself, which depends on observation and retrospective reading, when the reader starts to think about which aspects of the text caused his or her reaction. The third moment can be identified with the visualizing of *textual interpretation*. Here the reader perceives the text under study as a part of a wider system where history, ideologies, literary tradition, conventions and so on are at work. A fourth moment is that of creation, when students play with language in order to produce their own literary pieces. The current study builds on the principles of reaction-creation, in that learners are being encouraged to read and respond to poems independently and will at the end of the course of study write their own poems and essays on poetry. The fifth way is an *experiential* view of reading literature, which pays attention to personal development through reading and looks at how the experience itself adds to the changing development of the learner. The current study builds particularly on the fifth of these stages, considering how the experiential view of reading literature can be especially memorable and engaging.

The idea of learners as developing readers has become more acceptable in recent research with literature. Vassallo (2016) reported on a study with advanced users of English in Malta who read a striking excerpt and then reported on their response to the work. The aim of the study was to investigate literary reading with pre-university readers and by learning about their “interactive

engagement with the literary text” (p.84), and then from there to help them to increase their confidence and independent reading. Although the text used in the study was from a novel and not poetry, it was easy to see how this approach could be adapted for different settings and texts. Independent reading is a particular goal for literature teachers since young readers are usually too dependent on the teacher, are not “challenged nor are they encouraged to respond to literary texts as independent, individual readers” (Vassallo, 2016, p.84). Discussing the young adults as “learner-readers” (p.86) and the spoken responses that they gave as “reflective speaking”, the approach used think aloud/out loud protocols (TOL) which can capture reading processes. They also used an “after the task writing” activity (p.92), which they categorized as a non-verbal “retrospective report” (after Ericsson and Simon, 1993, quoted in Vassallo, 2016, p.92). The stages of examining literary reading makes sure to position the learner at the centre of the analysis, encourage learner autonomy, use verbal and written reports and look for evidence of metacognition (p.84). Analysis was completed using analytic categories with emerging themes related to creativity and affect.

In the next part of the chapter, we look at theoretical aspects of the investigation related to sociocultural theories of education and engagement. The chapter ends with a definition of L2 poetic engagement.

2.3.3 Recent studies using poetry with EFL learners in Japan

Next we move more specifically on to research which has been conducted in the Japanese context. In this part of the chapter we look at aspects of the research literature which will clearly illuminate social and cultural elements of the Japanese university context. Several recent studies in Japan have investigated poetry at the tertiary level, investigating topics such as what kinds of texts to use and how to evaluate learning. What these reports all have in common is that they have been seeking to clarify and describe how poetry can be used in the Japanese setting. The current investigation aims to add to the existing knowledge about the connection between language learning theories, L2 learning and poetry by investigating learners’ engagement with poetry.

In an EFL teacher training classroom, Rosenkjar (2006) investigated stylistic approaches to presenting poetry, using famous, anthologised texts. In a study teaching conceptual metaphor, Picken (2007) tried to determine how learners understood poetry when they had learned about metaphors. He commented on the similar ways in which some conceptual metaphors were

described. In two recent studies, Sakamoto (2015) and Nishihara (2016) looked at how confidence in English use develops in response to poetry. These studies are all from recent collections and reflect a continued interest in poetry research in Japan, as well as indicating a need for further research in this area.

In a study based in Japan, Picken (2007) used conceptual metaphor approaches to explain how literature, including poetry, could be used in the language classroom. His monograph discusses how reader response theory, stylistic approaches to reading and metaphor can combine effectively in language teaching contexts. Picken's main idea is that there can be opportunities for language learning when teachers select literary texts carefully. When teachers use poems to raise awareness of metaphors, learners can begin to identify metaphors when reading. Not only for use with literature, the wider presence of metaphor in non-literary texts, Picken's study took a reader-driven approach to literature in ELT. He used "Stopping by woods on a snowy evening" by Robert Frost, and in a follow-up study, "The road not taken" asking students to write an interpretation of the final stanza of the poem in Japanese and then analysed the results for use of their understanding of metaphor, focusing on LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Picken used L1 interpretations in his approach, instead of writing or speaking in the target language of English. His argument was metaphorical interpretations achieved a "high degree of consistency" (p.103) after studying conceptual metaphors and that the interpretations "referred almost invariably" to the metaphor in their answers. His results do seem to suggest that in terms of metaphorical awareness or competence, that learners can achieve understanding and application of taught principles using poems. One variation on this idea would be to try and focus on encouraging different interpretations to the same poem, or valuing interpretations which went against the expected direction (in this case, explaining how life is not like a road and is more like something else, perhaps). Practising interpreting skills with texts such as poems could lead to greater flexibility when encountering other types of discourse.

The problem of reticence or silence in language learning contexts is an ongoing concern of researchers. To investigate the problem that university studies in Japan are often reluctant to offer opinions in an EFL class, Sakamoto (2015) used Japanese poems and translation exercises with university students to encourage English in the language classroom. Her focus was on overcoming students' reticence and encouraging communication and confidence in English. In a poetry reading course at a private university, Sakamoto's method was to ask students to translate Japanese poems into English and share their translations, hoping to encourage "meaningful communication in English" (p.200). Significant in this study is that the class used

English in all of the lectures, discussions and assignments. Sakamoto commented that she was using content-based methodology and a communicative classroom environment. Beginning in the learners' L1, students read Japanese poems and Sakamoto gave lectures on the poems, and then as homework they selected ones to translate. The translated poems were then submitted digitally after each class and in the following lesson the translations were used as a basis for small-group discussions. Since the assignment for the course was also in English, the term paper provided an opportunity for students to improve their English abilities in a variety of ways. The end of semester reflective questionnaire results showed that students liked the activities in the class for the challenge and the chance to translate. The focus of the chapter was explanatory and pedagogical rather than using analytical approaches to evaluate students' work. Sakamoto's chapter in the collection by Teranishi, Saito and Wales (2015) was the only one out of 15 chapters written from the Japanese context to discuss poetry.

Through poetry writing using Japanese *haiku* in English, recent research has shown that L1 knowledge can be used to bridge the gap between L1 and L2 learning. Iida (2012) used Japanese *haiku* writing in the university setting to achieve that aim and help learners develop voice in writing. *Haiku* is a traditional form of Japanese poetry which is familiar to Japanese learners from their L1 literacy learning (the topic of elementary school poetry writing is discussed further in Chapter 3 of this thesis). Iida's work uses portfolio writing of *haiku* over the course of a semester, encouraging learners who have limited experiences with poetry in English to use their knowledge of Japanese poetry (*haiku*) as a kind of scaffolding for the development of L2 writing skills.

In his 2012 study, Iida analysed prose writing which his learners produced after they had engaged in the *haiku* writing activities, finding that *haiku* writing influenced the learners positively, contributing to their developing sense of voice in writing. What is interesting about the approach described by Iida is that there does seem to be a connection between different genres of writing. How Iida's investigation relates to the current thesis is that his approach also uses poetry writing as a classroom intervention is also an example of bridging the L1 and the L2. Japanese students who have experienced poetry writing in their L1 can build on that knowledge as they write in the L2. Iida deals with the issues which typically arise when discussing poetry writing i.e. how it can be graded, how the teacher can provide feedback and how to deal with low-level learners. His approach has been inclusive and suggests a way forward in L2 poetry writing practices, even in mixed-level and low-level classes. One implication of Iida's study is that indigenous cultural practices such as poetry writing should be more fully

accepted into EFL teaching in Japan. Another implication of his study is that in the wider context of Asia, where similar poetry writing culture exists, that ELT could also approach poetry writing as a tool for learning. The current study acknowledges the approach used by Iida and recognizes that the background learning of Japanese students should be more fully integrated into ELT practices.

Japanese readers seem to approach poetry with some of the same strategies as they would with information or expository texts. In a recent reader-centred study, Nishihara (2016) analysed Japanese university students' poetry reading strategies using Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by woods on a snowy evening". The students had not received training in literary response and were classified as having "limited experience of poetry reading" (p.163) and were a very mixed-level group with a variety of English proficiency scores. Nishihara's method was to use lesson time to give a class of students a poem to read and then ask them to complete an awareness-raising activity. Learners were asked to write their understanding of the poem, while also underlining up to three parts of the poem which "may have caught your attention" (p.156). Reflections were written in Japanese and no discussion between students occurred. The underlined sections were used to evaluate reading strategies, indicating that they are using similar strategies for both types of text. For example, learners were interested in repetitions in the text, just as repetition in an expository text would indicate importance or main points but could not explain literary features or understand poetry's sound-meaning related to repetition, alliteration or assonance. One interesting aspect of the reading strategies study was that Nishihara found that there was some background knowledge involved in the L2 reading. He concluded that the learners were over-reliant on expository reading strategies, and that more research into the topic would be helpful. He also found that "learners seemed to know the importance of literary language without being taught" (p.164), which could be interpreted to mean that they have some background knowledge about literature and bring a positive disposition to the reading of a poem, despite its difficulty.

In this part of the chapter the focus has been on L2 studies in Japan which have used poetry. Metaphor competence, poetry writing and reading strategies have all been studied using poetry. In the next section, the key term 'engagement' is defined, with the aim of explaining its use in the context of the current study. The chapter finishes with a working definition of L2 poetic engagement.

2.4 Sociocultural theories of education and L2 poetry

As we saw in the last section, the thesis explores poetry in educational setting of the university context in Japan and so previous research with Japanese learners and poetry is useful to consider. One of the main approaches this thesis will focus on is learners' interactions with poetry in a collaborative learning environment using pair work and peer learning. In order to explain the rationale for this approach, it is important next to look at sociocultural theories of education and how they can be applied to poetry in L2 education. While each of these areas of education research has been explored in detail elsewhere, this section introduces selected points as they apply to the current investigation.

Sociocultural theories of education suggest that learning comes from social interaction in the first instance, and results in learning becoming internalized. Sociocultural learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) presumes a basic tendency for learning to occur incrementally, through expert-novice activities or through structured or scaffolded activities. Vygotsky more specifically suggested that scaffolded learning takes place when learners engage in speaking activities such as discussions (Vygotsky, 1986); however, scaffolded learning opportunities might also include writing in response to a stimulus or activity. What this means in practice is that learners can benefit from interaction with each other and that knowledge is socially-situated.

Scaffolding was an idea promoted by Vygotsky which gained further support from Bruner (1978) and is commonly used to describe how learning occurs at home, or how pair and group work in a classroom supports learning. The case of a young child learning a language means that the caregiver will support and provide step-by-step support for the child, using appropriate challenge where needed and resulting in independent language use (see Foley, 1994, p.101 for further explanation of this idea). According to Bruner, scaffolding provides support for developing skills so that a child can concentrate on the activity (Bruner, 1978). In practical terms in an L2 poetry lesson, the scaffolding could mean simplifying an activity or breaking it into steps, providing a model which could be used or adapted, selecting the materials carefully for difficulty level and challenge, and helping learners to identify and focus on improvement. Both Bruner and Vygotsky emphasised the importance of the environment and promoted the idea that adults (or peers) should play an active role in the process of learning.

Reading also is a social activity, as Appel and Lantolf (1994) investigated by conducting a study of reading recall with L1 and L2 users. The investigation required them to read a narrative and an expository text and then recall the details. They analysed recall protocols to narrative and

expository texts, looking for the externalising of structures which could indicate comprehension. When a text presented difficulties, in conversations about the texts there will be use of metacomments or “private speech” (p.439). Private speech is the “externalization” (p.439) of mental processes such as planning and learning. These strategies included the use of orientation, including storytelling and creation of macrostructures (p.443). Orientation serves as a way that individuals approach a plan to understand a text, which in turn can reveal comprehension processes. Following on from this is the idea that learning occurs incrementally and involves internalization (Lantolf, 2000). Appel and Lantolf also found differences in the responses to different types of text, with the narrative being more easily accessible than the expository text.

Interactive learning, with a focus on collaborative learning, is another facet of the influence sociocultural learning theories are having on education. Storch (2002) asked pairs of learners to work on tasks together, reporting on their use of joint progress towards their speaking goals. A later study, again looking at interactions between speakers (Storch, 2008), suggested that success in completion of pair activities relies on collaboration and cooperation and through active participation in a dynamic learning situation, in this case through reading and responding to poetry. Applying this to L2 contexts means creating manageable activities with relatable content which can be completed successfully. v

Related to collaborative engagement, we consider Lantolf and Thorne’s (2006) position on socio-interactional constructivist theory and L2 development. Teachers can design activities which look for answers to problems, overcome difficulties and become skilled in their area of study. In a poetry reading classroom, learners are often asked to spend time on reading and re-reading a short text, in search of meaning and interpretation. Poetry reading is particularly relevant to this type of investigation because of its typically non-literal language and the need for detailed and close reading. Building on the reading model of van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) and Vygotsky’s framework, the investigation aimed to illustrate the essential idea of how incremental learning occurs.

In this brief section we have seen that social and cultural aspects of learning, including group dynamics and collaborative learning, are useful to consider in the current investigation.

2.5 Theories of engagement and L2 learning

Here we come to the main part of the theory in this chapter. The central focus of the thesis is L2 poetic engagement, in particular the ways in which engagement with poetry can focus learners on their interactions with language practice (speaking and writing). In the previous section we considered the importance of sociocultural theories of education and discussed how these theories influence the thesis. In this part of the chapter we look at theoretical approaches to engagement which have informed the thesis. In 2.5.1 we look at L2 applications of theories of engagement, and in 2.5.2 a specific framework has been proposed which can be used to understand interactions with poetry.

Engagement is a dynamic construct which has seen a growth in interest across varied academic fields over the past 30 years. While a lot of research has already been done in the wider field of second language (L2) motivation, the sub-field of engagement is an area of developing attention. In a model for reading engagement, Wigfield and Guthrie (2000) list the factors *motivation, strategies, social context* and *conceptual knowledge* when discussing the term engagement. The aim of this section is to introduce definitions of engagement which are relevant to the current study and by doing so, frame the later analysis and uses of the term engagement. In a comprehensive review on the state of engagement as an education context, Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) identified the categories cognitive, affective and behavioural as key findings of engagement research, but they warned that the full understanding of the term must be done with awareness of its complexity. Motivation and engagement are inherently linked (Blumenfeld, Kempler and Krajcik, 2006, p.476), but of the two, it is engagement which is more visible and observable. Engagement results from motivational processes but may be “relatively more public” and “objectively observed” (Reeve, 2012, p.151).

Engagement is related to “inherent growth tendencies” (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p.68) such as self-motivation as well as the conditions needed to foster these positive processes. Self-determination theory (SDT) is a general theory of cognition which looks to explain human motivation and personality. Three parts of engagement are autonomy, competence and relatedness SDT, and basic psychological needs theory (BPNT) is made up of several related concepts each particular to different motivational effects. SDT in part seeks to explain the innate trait that humans share in being inclined towards personal growth and that this “self-motivation” helps create the positive conditions for learning and growth to occur (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p.68). These are autonomy (taking charge of one’s learning), relatedness (a sense of belonging to a community) and competence (feelings of being able to complete a classroom activity). The application of SDT theory to L2 learning (Wellborn, 1991; Noels et al., 2003; Reeve, 2012) has

helped to frame the understanding of motivation and engagement. Deci and Ryan developed SDT to study human motivation, including BPNT which deals with psychological needs and desires. Engagement is what can see and measure because it is externalized, and engagement is dependent on several factors which can either positively or negatively affect the learner (Noels, 2009; Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2012). We are all moved on by self-motivation, which helps create positive conditions for learning (Ryan and Deci 2000, p.68). When talking with a partner about a poem or other text, it is natural that we tend to search for meaning. Even if the outcome is that the student dislikes the poem, engagement of some kind has occurred. How this relates to the definitions in this section is that cognitive engagement and affective engagement are both useful in that they relate to SDT and BPNT, the belief that “humans innately tend toward autonomy, competence and relatedness” (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p.255) and how it applies to language learning (Noels et al., 2003, Noels, 2009).

The SDT and BPNT models of learning connect the psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness with action, including engagement, resilience and goal-oriented participation in academic activities (Skinner, Kindermann and Furrer, 2009). Skinner and Pitzer (2012) used the earlier work of Connell and Wellborn (1991) to show the current state of engagement in the language learning literature. The Self-System Model of Motivational Development (SSMMD) connects theories related to education, using an integrated model. As can be seen in Figure 2.1, there are four aspects to this model, the first of which is context, which includes the teacher, the context of the school and could also mean additional support including family support. The second aspect of the Self-System model is “self”, which is about the needs of the individual, and relates to SDT. The action taken by the self leads to engagement (or disengagement as an absence of engagement), with the various emotional aspects which combine. The final part of this model, which is the most important for many studies of engagement in school settings, is the outcome, measured in terms of academic learning and achievement.

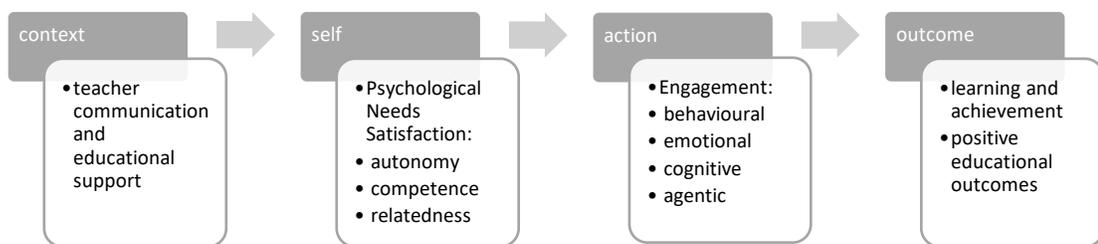


Figure 2.1 Relationships between needs, action, engagement and outcome adapted from Skinner and Pitzer, 2012, p.29

The term engagement can be used to discuss student engagement with academic work, from daily school experiences to long-term attendance and academic success. Because of its emphasis on the positive educational development, its appeal is broad. Engagement can be discussed at different levels: community involvement, school involvement, engagement in the classroom and academic engagement with learning activities (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012, p.23). In this thesis, the most relevant of these is engagement with learning activities, defined as:

Student engagement with academic work, which we define as constructive, enthusiastic, willing, emotionally positive, and cognitively focused participation with learning activities in school (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012, p.24).

As Figure 2.1 also shows, the results of engagement can be seen in behavioural engagement, which occurs when effort, task persistence and attention are present. Behavioural engagement is associated with academic achievement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004) while its absence, disengagement, has the opposite correlation.

In a recent PhD dissertation using frameworks for engagement, Michell (2012) used the term academic engagement and agency to explore middle school classrooms. Michell's approach was to explore the classroom setting, analysing types of engagement labelled task engagement, disciplinary engagement and dispositional engagement.

In the next section, several additional models of engagement are presented and their links to interaction with poetry are discussed.

2.5.1 Applications of engagement in L2 contexts

Engagement is a “multidimensional construct that includes cognitive, behavioural, social, and emotional dimensions of engagement among second and foreign language learners in the classroom” (Baralt, Gurzynski-Weiss, and Kim, 2016, p.50). An inclusive framework for engagement we would consider is from motivational theories of education. In a report detailing previous studies in which the term “engagement” was used to investigate aspects of second language learning, the authors define the study of engagement as follows:

We describe engagement as a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive, behavioural, social, and emotional dimensions of engagement among second and foreign language learners in the classroom.” (Philp and Duchesne, 2016, p.52)

Explaining and understanding the concept of engagement requires looking at education theory and considering engagement as the visible, observable aspects which show motivation for learning. Engagement can be seen to refer to the “extent of a students’ involvement in a learning activity” (Reeve, 2012, p.151) first defined in academic domains by Wellborn (1991) and closely associated with motivation in reading research.

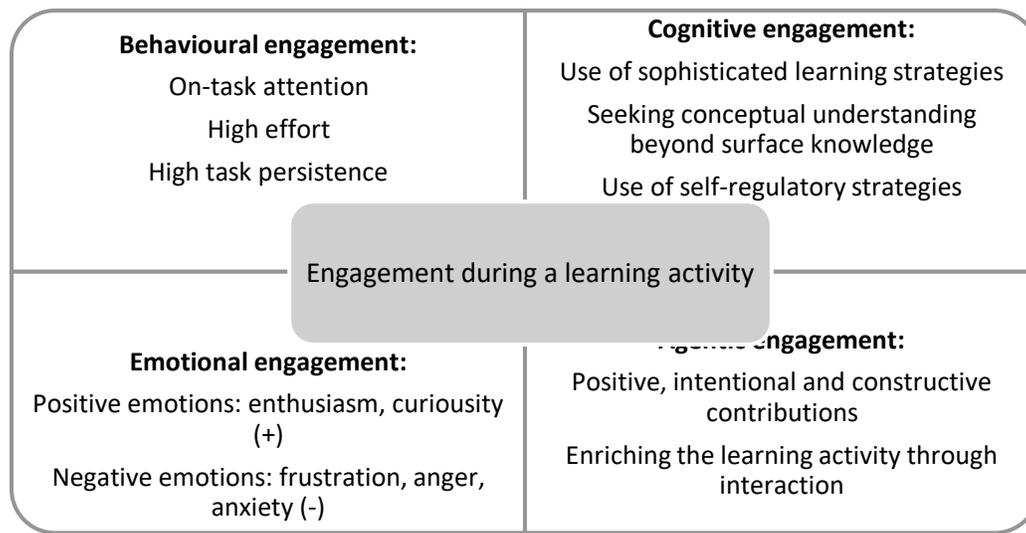


Figure 2.2 Four related aspects of students’ engagement during a learning activity (adapted from Reeve, 2012, p.151)

As can be seen from Figure 2.2, in this inclusive model of engagement during a learning activity, there are four elements which make up engagement. The first of these categories, behavioural engagement, may be observed by a teacher or by students themselves in a classroom setting, using field notebooks, videos or diaries from the classroom. It may also be evaluated using timed reading and attention to a learning activity, or by comparing different activities. The current study does not make explicit reference to behavioural engagement, although its relationship to attention and persistence is related to cognitive engagement. All of these elements of engagement during a learning activity occur when learning conditions are suitable (as

determined by SDT, discussed above) and so feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness are necessary for learning to occur.

In recent research bringing engagement research and L2 education together, Philp and Duchesne suggested that social engagement is an important element in understanding classroom contexts and environments:

Learners are likely to be more effective in language learning when they are socially engaged: that is, when they listen to one another, draw from one another's expertise and ideas, and provide feedback to one another. (Philp and Duchesne, 2016, p.57)

Cognitive engagement is observable again in the actions of learners during a learning activity, or through their reflections and as a result of awareness-raising activities. Cognitive engagement could also occur in a paired activity when learners support each other's progress towards shared understanding of a text or to solve a problem. This element of engagement appears to be part of what the teacher can evaluate through learners' written work and also through their conversations. Cognitive engagement could also be seen in what learners say or write about their experiences, and in this sense, it is well suited to the current study which looked at learner language and language development.

Emotional engagement, according to Figure 2.2, can be positive or negative. Emotional or affective engagement has a number of different definitions. One perspective is to say that it occurs when learners "experience affective reactions such as interest, enjoyment or a sense of belonging" (Trowler, 2010, p.5). Emotional engagement can also be seen as synonymous with involvement and enthusiasm, with the opposite feelings of anxiety or boredom. In a second language classroom, for example, topics of interest to learners can bring about engagement with the language learning process through their ability to consider a shared or joint investment in the language learning process. Affective reactions which draw in the reader can be seen in responses to poetry which can be either positive or negative, and just as learner reflections can result in greater or lesser detail, depending on the experience they describe, emotional engagement may be detailed and extended through negative emotions as well as positive ones. Through considering learner reactions to poetry from the emotional engagement perspective, it is hoped that these nuances may be explored and better understood.

The last category in the related aspects of students' engagement during a learning activity is "agentic engagement" (Reeve, 2012, p.151), which is usually present when learners are creating new ideas, offering their own perspectives and developing their own interpretations. Agentic engagement could be named social engagement in a paired or group activity. While some reticent students may not feel entirely well-placed to do this every day in class in discussions for example, when they are asked to try and make their own interpretations with a poem, they are positively inclined to attempt it.

2.5.2 Engagement with Language (EWL) Framework

A second framework for engagement comes from the field of language awareness and Engagement with Language (EWL). Using the framework set out by Svalberg (2007, 2009) in her criteria for identifying EWL this has three aspects: cognitive, affective/emotional and social engagement. The related ideas of involvement (related to social engagement), commitment and motivation (related to affective engagement) are also explained by Svalberg to compare the terms. Action knowledge in the category of cognitive engagement is what Svalberg calls "making knowledge one's own" (2009, p.4).

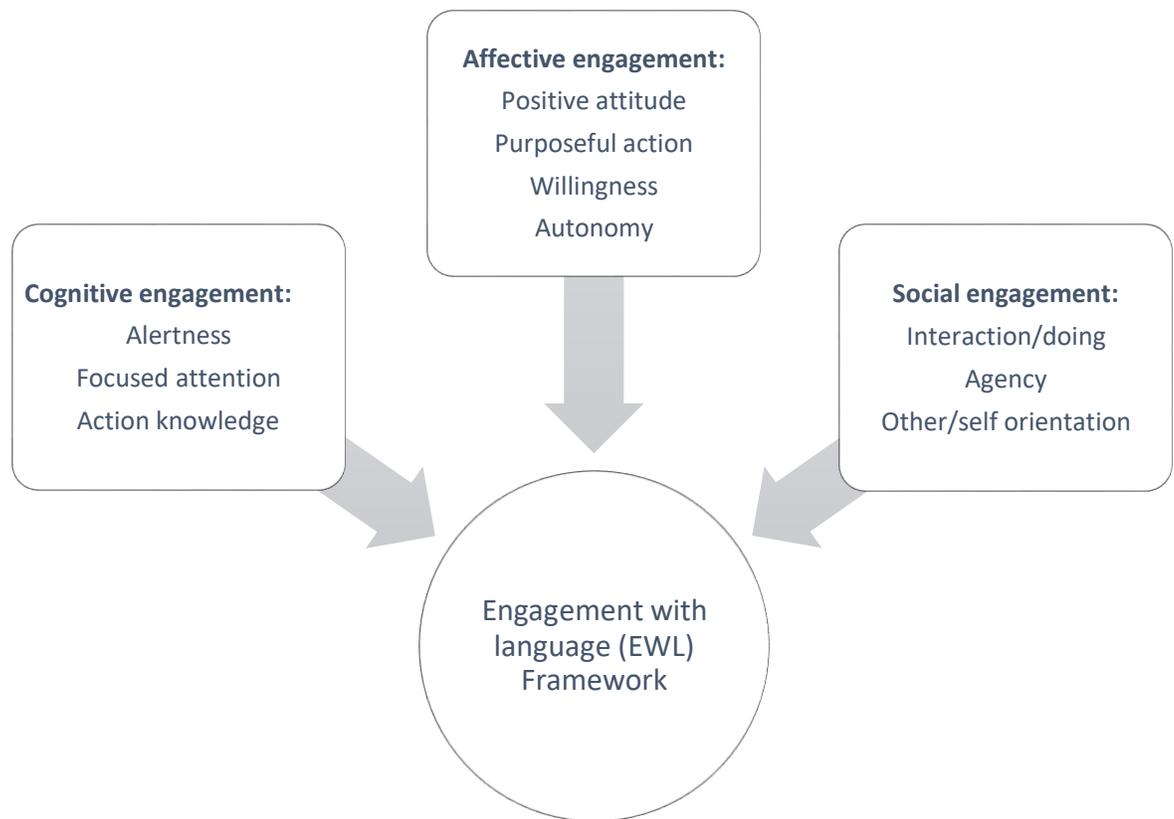


Figure 2.3 Engagement With Language (EWL) framework. (Adapted from Svalberg, 2009, p.4)

Cognitive engagement is made up of focus, attention, and reflective or analytical language use. When the learner seems to notice language and respond to it meaningfully, this helps reveal their cognitive engagement. The affective section of Figure 2.3 describes how the learner may have a positive disposition, a willingness to participate in the activity and have some purpose and focus on an activity. A difference between the previous model, which has behavioural engagement as a separate concept, in the EWL framework focused attention and alertness are included in the cognitive engagement category.

Emotional/affective engagement could also be negative, seen in negative feelings, feelings of dislike and so on. Affective engagement can be considered in terms of learner autonomy, according to Svalberg (2007, 2009) since behaviour towards an activity can be independent or self-driven. The third aspect of engagement which can be better seen in speech than written responses, is the social aspect of engagement.

Social engagement, when positive, is going to involve interaction, negotiation and can involve co-constructed meaning making (see Mercer, 1995 for other examples of how meaning is constructed). EWL is a useful framework in particular because it helps to frame and distinguish between cognitive, affective and social aspects. Svalberg's model was used by Baralt, Gurzynski-Weiss, and Kim, (2016) to compare the interactions and attention of Spanish EFL learners performing either cognitively simple or complex paired activities. They used learners' interactions and also a questionnaire to see that all three types of engagement were evident. Results showed more attention to language forms, which they referred to as cognitive engagement, particularly in the more complex activity. Social engagement, which was seen in supportive interaction and personal involvement in the activity. They also compared face-to-face interactions with online activities and found that all three types of engagement were low or absent in the online interactions.

Overall, the two approaches (i.e. engagement during a learning activity and engagement with language) are useful approaches to help develop a greater understanding of the term engagement and how it can be seen. In the next section of this chapter, we bring these ideas together to say how I see L2 engagement with poetry in this thesis.

2.5.3 Working definition of L2 poetic engagement in this thesis

In this thesis, L2 poetic engagement is viewed as a combination of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and social engagement, observable when learners interact with poetry. The motivations outlined by Ryan and Deci as they related to language learning, are autonomy, relatedness and competence, all of which will relate to the action required for engagement. L2 poetic engagement refers both to thinking (cognitive engagement) and feelings (emotional engagement), and to aspects of engagement with poetry as noted by Eva-Wood (2004a, 2004b) and Zyngier and Fiahlo (2010). L2 poetic engagement is defined as *focused, reflective interaction with poetry involving cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and social engagement*. Emotional engagement can be positive or negative, resulting in "curiosity" or "anxiety". Cognitive engagement, according to this model, is use of sophisticated learning strategies and self-regulatory strategies, where there is some attempt to seek knowledge beyond surface knowledge.

2.6 Conclusions

This thesis aims to investigate the claim that poetry has the potential to engage learners, and that more research is required in specific contexts to explore that possibility. The current chapter looked at previous work which has been done in L1 and L2 settings using poetry, and also provided working definitions for use in this thesis. In the current investigation, I consider engagement to be a term which can be understood in the context of SDT theory and motivation theory, as well as the categories in the EWL framework. Engagement is related to theories of motivation, SDT theory of basic needs, and sociocultural theories. In the next chapter, we consider the theme of connecting L1 and L2 education by investigating the L1 literacy practices which Japanese learners have experienced, which include poetry. Chapter 3 continues to provide additional contextualisation by looking closely at the Japanese education context, relevant to the current investigation because there are clearly social and cultural elements to poetry which are specific to Japan. The next chapter also looks at the education context of Japan from the elementary level up to university, considering how poetry is an inherent part of the educational experience.

CHAPTER 3: POETRY IN THE JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

In the first two chapters, we saw how poetry has been researched in the ELT field and some problems which exist related to teaching and student perspectives of poetry. In the current chapter, we look more closely at the L1 experiences related to poetry, school life, and literacy learning. The aim of this chapter is to help contextualise the setting by providing background and details about the Japanese education system. In 3.2 the discussion begins by recognising the connection between L1 and L2 learning, particularly as it relates to literacy practices and the setting of Japan. As in many countries, Japanese school children learn their L1 using poetry, including genre-based understandings that Japanese poems are written in a particular way. In 3.3, the focus is relevant details from the educational context of Japan as they relate to current practices. Following this, section 3.4 is in three parts, looking at poetry education in elementary schools, secondary schools and in university. Sections 3.5 and 3.6 describe some recent research which has explored literature and poetry in Japanese context. In section 3.7. I reflect on my perspective as a teacher in Japan how this shaped the direction of the investigation and in 3.8. The chapter finishes with the research questions for the thesis overall and conclusions.

As we will see in this chapter, L1 literacy practices are linked strongly to literature, and students have completed many hours of learning with literature, including poetry. L1 engagement with literature, including poetry, has involved time-intensive learning, but literature in L2 education cannot follow the same difficult path.

3.2 Bridging the gap between L1 and L2 poetry education

"I discovered heterogeneity within homogeneity, uniformity as the starting point for variety, standardization as a catalyst for creativity, and individualization as a means to become group oriented" (Sato, 2004, p.18).

The aim of this chapter is to ground the investigation firmly in the contextual setting of the Japanese education system, arguing that indigenous culture, including L1 literacy practices, are important to consider. Japanese students who have grown up in Japan and learned Japanese in the public school system have encountered Japanese poems and have a schema for poetry. As

we saw in the last section on typical elementary, secondary and tertiary interactions with literature in, Japanese learners have already interacted with poetry in a variety of ways. Literary experiences continue throughout a person's life, from early language development and into adulthood (Miall and Kuiken, 1994). For example, Miall and Kuiken's literary response questionnaire (1995) addresses readers' orientations to literature, including insight, empathy and other emotional factors. As readers do seem to respond to poetry and literary devices with personal perspectives as Miall and Kuiken (1994, 1995) have claimed, then it follows that "potentially confused novice readers" could benefit from instruction that pays special attention to personal responses (Eva-Wood, 2004b, p.176). While Eva-Wood was working with 11th grade students in a literature class in the United States, the current investigation also sees the necessary connection between understanding, feelings and supporting understanding, particularly as these things relate to the L2 setting. L1 and L2 education are not separate in the eyes of the learner, but from a teacher perspective they may appear to be divided.

In a monograph on school culture from the field of comparative education, Sato (2004), reports that school environments in Japan are more diverse than the curriculum documents alone would suggest (see quote from the start of this chapter). It is natural to expect that even with a standardized approach, that the creative ways which teachers and students work with content is highly varied. This chapter mainly looks at one side of poetry education, that is from the perspective of curriculum documents, to show the aims of the curriculum which include poetry. The reality of how poems are used by individual teachers is beyond the scope of the current study, although it is recognised that within the system that interpretation of curriculum documents will vary in the school context itself. The shared backgrounds of learners, which have included poetry reading and writing throughout their school years, are worth considering here since there is a connection to what has been previously learned in early educational experiences and how learners approach their tertiary studies. From the perspectives seeing learners as participants who become gradually more active in their participation, the beliefs of the school system gradually become more embedded.

In Japanese public schools, poetry features strongly in first language (L1) literacy development and this prior learning is not always used in the EFL classroom. Experiences with poetry may include interactions with multimodal texts such as calligraphy in Japan. I take the position in this thesis that there should be more done to bridge the gap between L1 educational experiences and L2 studies. At times, research approaches to poetry have not used coordinated methodologies or referred to the work of others, particularly across the L1-L2 divide. As

described in the previous two chapters, literature in general, including poetry, remains underused in many contexts, including EFL settings in universities. While the uses of poetry may vary from place to place, there are many countries which have poetry as part of their L1 language learning curricula, because of its links to culture and heritage, as well as the potential for learners to relate the learning of poetry (either reading or writing) to experiences outside the classroom.

A relatively recent development in Japan is the extensive reading (ER) practice of reading simplified literature in language classes, for language development primarily. ER has made considerable gains as a counter to the typically teacher-centered English classroom as it provides increased personal autonomy for learners through the option to choose their reading. ER alone can create a gap in learning because learners may not be given opportunities to read closely or carefully, discuss readings, or speak/write about what they have read (see Figure 3.1).

In L2 ER classes, the primary aim is “improving motivation toward English” (see Day and Bamford, 1998 for a detailed introduction and Hirvela, 1988 for some earlier observations on the practice), while the topics and specific materials themselves are not the focus of the lesson. Literary texts which have been specifically altered (to remove low-frequency words and complex sentences) are offered to students in a kind of course library. Researchers who are using some types of literature in language learning contexts in Japan usually aim to use ER for fluency purposes (and as a secondary outcome, increased scores on reading tests). Sometimes referred to as *pleasure reading* (Beglar, Hunt and Kite, 2012), the choice of reading that ER allows for, and the quantity of reading that can be done in terms of running words and numbers of completed books, is in contrast to the usual intensive reading which occurs with reading textbooks and teachers’ choices of reading texts. Reading rates, comprehension rates and other language-based outcomes are the main focus in both research and practice, and that simplified (graded) rather than unsimplified (ungraded) texts provide the greatest reading rate gains. ER as a tool for fluency development does not contain any language instruction at all (see Figure 3.1), but instead gives over the classroom time to reading silently, discussing books with groups or taking quizzes based on comprehension.

Another issue with ER is that the materials are adapted for specific fluency purposes, sometimes affecting the quality of the resulting text. Some materials used in ER programs are good quality, but other simplified texts are not carefully adapted, resulting in a lack of “musicality”, including natural use of multi-word units (Bland, 2013, p.8). There are problems with manufactured activities in ER classes which require students to submit summaries of the stories they have read, when in the real world we do not usually go about writing summaries of

books. Studies using graded readers in ER contexts have been popular in Japan for some time, with the trend set to continue. For this thesis, I decided not to use graded or learner materials, instead taking a different view that a more varied reading experience, along with closer interaction with literary texts, would be different and hope to look at literature learning from a different angle.

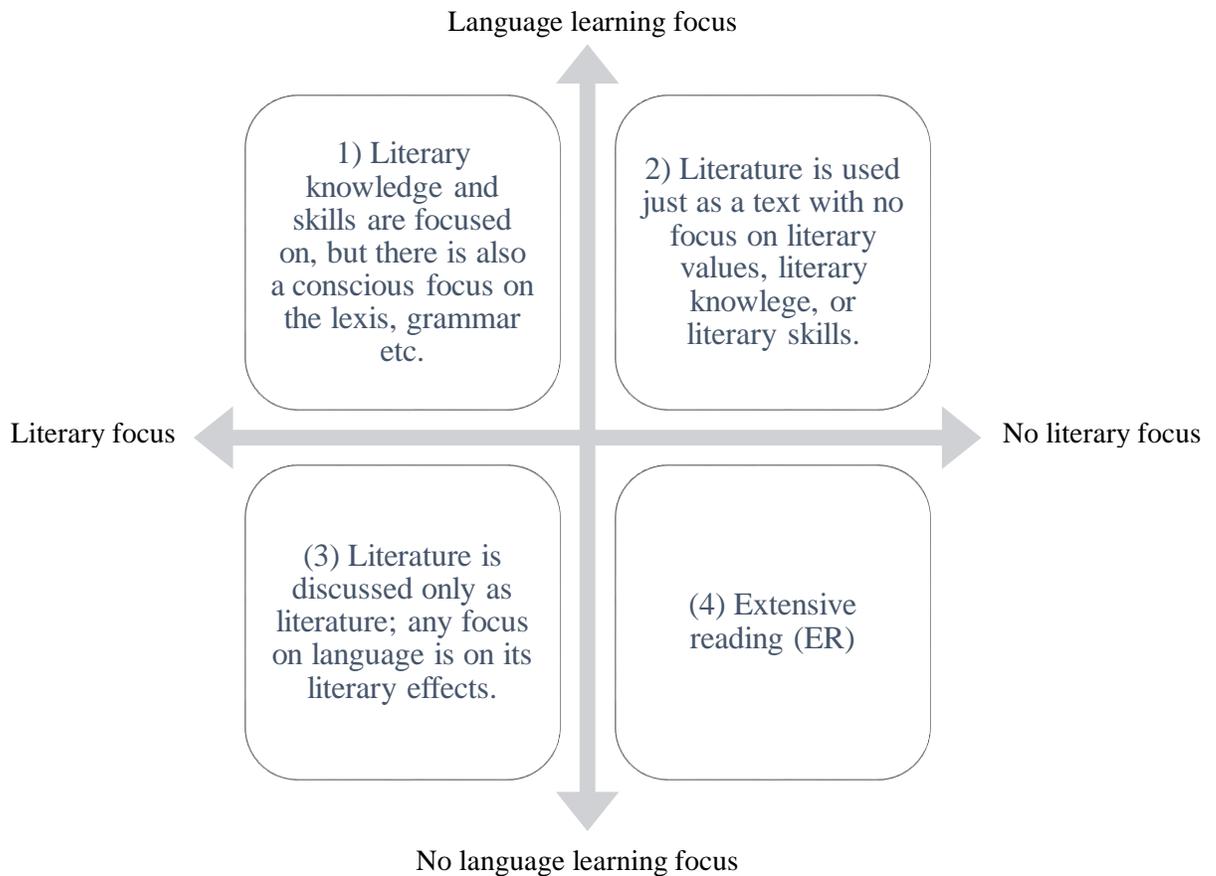


Figure 3.1 The intersection of literature and language teaching (Adapted from Paran, 2008, p.467)

What this thesis aims to do is to provide additional support for the position that poetry, particularly when it is used to promote language use with output activities such as speaking and writing activities, has a place in ELT education. The strength of ER as an intervention method is that it provides space and time to students who are developing their skills of reading. In most intensive reading classes, however, the teacher-led style of questioning, or use of comprehension activities can stifle individual thought and lead to low confidence. ER emerged as a way to

counter the traditional styles of teaching which still exist in Japan, giving students choices about what to read and allowing them personal autonomy in the reading of learner literature. ER serves those purposes well and is an approach which can be managed easily with incremental learning and texts appropriate for the level of the student. The main point about ER as part of this discussion is simply that it is primarily a reading fluency development approach, and by itself is not meant to be a balanced program of study.

3.3 Poetry in the Japanese education system

While all teaching contexts have features in common, and to a certain extent the problems for literature teaching apply worldwide, there are always culturally specific aspects of the education environment to consider. The current chapter aims to look at poetry in the educational context of Japan, with a focus on ways in which the school system develops an awareness of poetry from the elementary school years onwards. This chapter looks closely at the Japanese education context and poetry within it, taking the position that educational and learner background is relevant to the current project.

Japanese public schools today use guiding documents from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). These curriculum documents cover learning activities and suggested methods of approaching learning. The points of particular relevance to the current study are all concerned with the specific content mentioning poetry teaching. From these documents, publishers create textbooks which are given to students for a nominal fee, and these are used as the primary source of content in public schools. The current chapter considers the curriculum documents from MEXT and their corresponding goals for learning as a key indicator that poetry is embedded in L1 literacy practices in Japan. What this chapter does not do is look closely at what teachers or individual schools do with the content they are given, which of course varies widely.

In Japan, creativity and poetry learning are embedded into the curriculum in the early years. Poetry acts as a vehicle for L1 literacy education. In Chapter 3 of this thesis, the focus is to examine the Japanese elementary school L1 literacy practices to argue that language learning histories, including poetry reading as part of that, are essential to consider. In Japanese elementary schools, textbooks feature songs, poems, children's books along with excerpts of readings from classic literature. The familiarity which Japanese learners have with the genre of

poetry means that they can categorize poetry as a genre and read it as such but has yet to be effectively integrated into EFL teaching.

Japanese elementary school covers six grades (age 6-12) with the academic year beginning in April. Compulsory education continues to junior high school (age 12-15), by which time it is expected that proficiency in reading and writing Japanese will have been achieved. In Japan, poetry features strongly in L1 literacy development which means that Japanese students have had exposure to poetry in elementary school, through reading and writing *haiku* (see Saito, A. 2015; Saito, Y. 2015; Takahashi 2015 for recent writing describing this). With the aim of understanding the context of poetry in L1 classrooms in Japan, it is essential to consider the top-down structure of schooling and the use of textbooks for each subject.

The modern Japanese school system began in the Meiji period (1868-1912), developing at the time under international influences. At secondary school, this was largely from Prussian education, still evident today in boys' school uniforms. In the elementary grades, it is thought that Dewey's notion of reflection influenced curriculum development (Cave, 2007, p.29), and is associated with the growth of the individual. According to Dewey, learning is a continuous cycle of development, and that is how the creation of knowledge occurs (see Trowler, 2010 for how Dewey has influenced the study of engagement).

In Japan, teaching practices set out and developed during the modernization of the Meiji period continue today. While there have been developments and changes in policy and choice of texts for different levels over the years, there is still continuity in the approaches to teaching and in-class use of textbooks for learning (see Oba, 2012, cited in Saito, A, p. 45). Each of the class subjects, art, mathematics, social studies and so on have a textbook, and students are expected to have the correct textbooks for each day of lessons without the option of leaving the books in school for the next day. The rigidity of the system may not be enjoyable for students, and parents may become frustrated with, but the continuity of the system is also considered to be a key strength. Textbooks present particular difficulties for innovative teaching, but through this system the content is explicit learners can review work at home easily. According to Gerbert (1993), the Japanese national textbooks help to bring to fruition the image of the child as a contemplative and thoughtful member of society, but to not always foster analytic approaches to learning (discussed in Cave, 2007, p.103).

There has traditionally been a sense of the necessary changes needed for citizens to fit into society smoothly. In Japan *deru kui wa utareru* (出る杭は打たれる), which translates as “the

nail that stands out will be hammered down” is a proverb commonly applied to general situation but also refers to how an individual will experience the education system. If individuals stand out too much, the system (rules of behaviour, social expectations, group consciousness) will urge the individual to change their thinking. The phrase could be construed negatively but may not be so if considered natural that education will create smooth cooperation. In Japan, since social cohesion is so highly valued and causing trouble for others is considered to be undesirable, individuals are under pressure to avoid being “the nail that stands out”.

Learning to read and write is the main focus of any education system, but in Japanese, this must be done incrementally over years of intense and focused study. Each learner of Japanese needs to master the scripts native to Japan, *hiragana* and *katakana*, along with Chinese characters called *kanji*. While the characters used to represent meanings in Japanese writing do make use of the Chinese writing system, there are differences between the characters, and the pronunciation of characters varies significantly. Written Japanese consists of *kana* phonograms and *kanji* logograms. The two *kana* alphabets are *hiragana* and *katakana*; they each contain 46 basic letters and other additional modified forms which must be mastered before fluent reading can be achieved. All three sets of writing are taught in the first grade of elementary school, i.e. 46 *hiragana*, 46 *katakana*, and the first 80 *kanji*. The *kokugo* (Japanese language studies) curriculum includes a set course of study which consists of a certain number of Chinese *kanji* for each grade. Reading texts must be grade-appropriate, as students at different levels will not have encountered unknown *kanji* until the appropriate grade. *Kanji* can have multiple readings, which means that the pronunciation of the *kanji* will be different depending on its context. All three scripts must be used together in both reading and writing, and the focus on learning uses a mastery of skills and spaced repetition for memory.

In this short section on the Japanese education system, it is possible to infer that literacy practices have certain features related to the history and culture of the country and also the particular features of the writing system. Japan is not the only country with a difficult writing system, and the approaches to learning writing may be similar to those of other countries. The background here is provided to help illustrate that literacy practices are highly valued in Japan, and that Japanese language as a school subject retains a prestigious position as a central part of the school experience. Learning to be literate in Japan is hard work and requires many years of focused study. As we will see in the next part of this chapter, learning Japanese (language) also includes learning with poetry.

3.4 Schools as communities of practice

As the earlier sections on sociocultural theories of learning have already described, there is a growing interest in researching the impact and relevance of setting and environment on language learning. Awareness of poetry as a genre and understanding of its intention to create a meaningful message is a part of the learning which has occurred incrementally over the school years. Learning contexts, including schools, are "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991) which means that they are socially situated, within which learning occurs through several related factors. These factors are practice (learning as doing), community (learning as belonging), identity (learning as becoming) and meaning (learning as experience) (Wenger, 2009). An example of this in the Japanese elementary classroom is the use of writing in Japanese literacy development. *shodo* (traditional calligraphy), is learned using poetry, quotes, and proverbs. *Kanji* occur in the elementary curriculum in a pre-defined order according to grade level. All students must submit their best work from brush painting workshops and homework, with the best work displayed in classrooms and then selected for regional competitions. *Shodo* practice reveals the features of communities of practices through the actions of doing (painting), belonging (to the school and wider community), becoming (a proficient Japanese writer) and experiencing (the selection of best work).

Texts used for *shodo* writing in Japan are essential seasonal vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, greetings, and poetry. Learning to be a literate Japanese person involves all of these things, and the use of poetry in these contexts is an integral part of the learning process and reading experience. Through the communities of practices framework, poetry and Japanese literature is important for the three features of practice, community, and meaning. In this chapter, I argue that the shared L1 literacy and poetry learning backgrounds of Japanese university students in this project can be helpful in considering the interest, engagement, and approaches to poetry.

When learning to read and write, we are also learning to be part of a community, which also includes reading practices. From the sociocultural perspective, literacy is considered to be a social practice which is embedded in contexts which are both historical and social (Barton, 2007). With this is the notion that literacy itself is more than simply reading and writing since it also includes talking about texts and understanding texts conceptually, which also makes literature difficult to evaluate (Paran and Sercu, 2010). Learners' motivation in the learning process is related to interest and level of concentration and enjoyment (Crookes and Schmidt,

1991). The involvement must come from learners themselves. This can also be seen in terms of motivations for developing skills such as reading and writing (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p.33). Donato (2000) notes the support that materials can provide, particularly when L2 learning occurs, and Norton (2006) connects sociocultural theory and identity.

In the communities of practice model, learners are “mutually engaged” in their learning (Wenger, 1998, p.73). Being mutually engaged in reading poetry in school means that there is a joint enterprise of literacy development, using poetry reading and writing to achieve this literacy in Japanese. Lave and Wenger (1991) consider identity itself to be interwoven with the development of increasing participation in a community of practice, during which time we move from being peripheral participants to being more active members of a community. In this thesis, the notion of communities of practice is used in relation to Japanese schooling and participating in the literacy practices of using poetry related to aspects of L2 poetic engagement.

An additional concept which is relevant here is the notion of “practices” as used by Barton (2007) to refer to the way in which literacy is part of education and social practices, which involves learning in school and outside. In Japanese L1 literacy practices, this means that poetry reading is part of the development of both writing and reading skills as they develop. Early engagement with Japanese poetic forms such as *haiku* or *tanka* (short Japanese poems) in elementary school generally include personal response and creative writing. Poetry is a central part of the journey to achieve literacy in the Japanese L1 classroom. Composing a Japanese *haiku* always requires particular attention to the word choice because of the syllable count (in Japanese the word used to describe syllable is *on*). In Japanese, elongated vowels and double consonants count as two syllables. The goal of study is clear from the curriculum goals for the subject of Japanese, which begins with the aim (English version by MEXT).

To develop in pupils the ability to properly express and accurately comprehend the Japanese language, to increase the ability to communicate, to develop the ability to think and imagine and sense of language, to deepen interest in the Japanese language, and to develop an attitude of respect for the Japanese language.

Figure 3.2 First overall aim of the Japanese language curriculum, MEXT, 2017, p.1

As can be seen in Figure 3.2, there is no direct mention of literature in the above quote, although the next section of the document introduces literature appropriate for the grade levels. Words such as “properly,” “accurately” and the phrase “develop an attitude of respect” suggest a top-

down focus on order and uniformity, although this may not have a negative nuance in Japanese. Notable here are other uses of language which are more related to creativity, that is the more fluid terms “think,” “imagine” and “deepen interest” which suggest a more creative approach and may be more closely aligned with the reading and writing of poems. Concerning reading skills such as fluency, it is apparent that poetry writing is a part of the development of writing skills such as vocabulary selection, editing and writing for an audience.

Like the ideas of Fish’s interpretive communities (Fish, 1982) there is a shared understanding of class poems as experienced in Japanese language classes. Fish introduced the idea of interpretive community to say that of us share perspectives and opinions from our cultural backgrounds, and that these aspects of the reading experience are also significant. Fish claimed that the interpretive community was a key part of the process to make meaning, creating an “informed” reader. In the context of this thesis, the concept of interpretive communities of readers is useful in considering the role of L1 literacy practices. I argue in this thesis that background learning such as poetry reading is useful to recognise when teaching Japanese students, as, in Fish’s term, the learners have come from the same interpretive community.

Practices common in elementary, secondary and tertiary literature classes are discussed in the next part of the chapter, with a reflection on the findings of these practices and comments on the implications for the current investigation.

3.4.1 Engagement with poetry in elementary school: Literacy

In this section the main idea is that the background of learners who have participated in L1 poetry learning will have a shared understanding of poetry. The result of this previous engagement with poetry will mean that poetry has been an integral part of their literacy learning, and that this background will be part of their education which is useful to consider. Poetry is part of the long tradition of literacy practices in Japan which involves reading and writing original poems, as well as learning about the lives of famous Japanese and Chinese classical poets. Reading and writing practices from the first grade of elementary school onwards are focused on developing mastery of reading and writing Japanese, and poetry is enlisted to help. The individual, grade-levelled objectives for the *kokugo* curriculum can help to show how this respect for the native language relates to literature and poetry, and how these principles would have been presented to Japanese learners who have experienced that school system. Of course,

it is true that the government can control materials, but teachers can interpret and use the materials in any number of ways.

In first grade, there are 80 kanji, in second grade, 160 and so on, until 1006 kanji have been studied by the end of sixth grade in elementary school, along with another 1,130 in junior high school (MEXT, 2017). These are known as the *kyouiku* (education) *kanji* and are set nationwide. An equivalent in English would be the teaching of sight words and phonics using a strictly defined set of words and letter-combinations for each grade. The approach in Japanese is different in part because of the complexity of the *kanji*, and the increasing number of combinations. The use of different scripts together is difficult yet must be mastered for any writing, including poetry or letter-writing and so on. It is not possible to skip any of the *kanji*, which has implications for the education system which values content mastery. *Kanji* tests in elementary school are always graded using marks out of 100. Japanese schools set winter, spring and summer holiday homework for students to reduce the risk of failing to achieve mastery of that year's *kanji*. All writing in elementary school is done by hand, with penmanship a key aspect of schooling. University entrance application essays are also typically hand-written. The emphasis on skill mastery and handwriting does value penmanship but does not allow for support for those with difficulty learning the *kanji*.

First-grade students learn to read through the recital of rhythmic short stories from the textbook; typical daily homework is repeated reading using the same textbook poems and stories. In-class activities include choral reading and group readings of the texts. As for writing, first and second graders are learning to write sentences in Japanese but starting from grade three, they are learning “To write poems and stories based on what pupils are familiar with or what they have imagined.” (MEXT, 2017, p.6). The section of the curriculum document which is of most interest to Japanese learners’ background in L1 poetic literacy is the “items related to the traditional linguistic culture and characteristics of the Japanese language” (ibid, p. 7).

Here, starting from the third grade (students age 8-9) is the explicit direction that instructions be given:

To read aloud or recite simple literary tanka (Japanese traditional poem) or haiku (short form of Japanese poetry), by imagining the scenes and getting the feeling of the rhythm; and (b) To know the meaning of proverbs, clichés and idioms, that have long been used and to use them.

Figure 3.3 Grade three-four Japanese reading guidelines, MEXT, 2017, p. 7

In the instructions in Figure 3.3, a focus on history and culture is relevant. In point (a) this includes speaking activities (the difference between reading aloud and recital is how much memory work is involved) and imaginative activities “imagining the scenes”. Both *tanka* (traditional five-line poems which are an older form of poetry) and *haiku* (traditional three-line poems which developed from the *tanka* tradition) have memorable rhythm as these poetic forms developed as wordplay. Proverbs and other examples of wordplay are well known and can be learned by heart. Through poetry, reading with emphasis is practiced, and through the content of poetry, personal development of imagination in response to poems is encouraged. In interpretations of these guidelines, in grade three and four, teachers will ask students to write their own poems. Perhaps in response to a school event such as sports day or a school trip, there will be writing opportunities with the finished work being displayed on the classroom wall. Weekly diary writing and homework over school holidays (summer and winter) will also typically involve personal writing activities such as diaries.

Poetry in Japanese language education is not an optional extra, but a compulsory part of L1 literacy practices which is deeply embedded in the cultural aspect of the curriculum. In the fifth grade the reading and writing of poetry is further developed as students are expected “To write poems, *tanka* or *haiku* and to write stories or essays based on what they have experienced or imagined” (ibid, p.10) and for reading they need “To understand the outline of the content of Japanese or Chinese classic literature that is familiar to them and post-modern literary writing, and read them aloud” as well as “To gain awareness of literary devices such as metaphor and repetition” (ibid, p.12). This content is likely to be taught with clear teacher-instruction, memory activities and review tests, although it could include more imaginative activities such as role play, stage productions or singing. The use of words in the curriculum document such as “imagining”, “feeling” and “awareness” suggest that creative uses of poetry and other creative texts are encouraged.

The Japanese language education uses the integration of poetry and literature as a source of content as well as an opportunity for creative literacy development. The structure of the course goals from the Japanese education strand of the elementary curriculum follows what is understood in general education to be the principle of the spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960). Introduced by Bruner in 1960, The spiral curriculum is an approach which is used to structure and present educational topics over time, over the long arc of the child’s education. The approach advocates repeated exposure to ideas and processes, careful planning of content and ideas, and

a gradual increase in complexity. In this case, reading simple poems, writing poems and talking together with peers, and learning language and culture through poems all become more complex as Japanese children start with easy texts and build up to reading classical literature. Related to the spiral curriculum is the principle of discovery learning (Bruner, 1961), which deals with the role of the teachers in shaping independent knowledge creation and thinking. Teachers should design lesson which can facilitate learning without always requiring the teacher's input, and that the process of autonomous learning can also be built up over time. The use of the spiral curriculum and discovery learning together are pathways to independent skills development and use. Because of this, these literacy practices represent a resource which could be adopted more comprehensively in the L2 classroom.

As well as poetry reading and writing, learning about literary figures and their major works is typical in the Japanese reading experience. One example of this is a classic poetry collection, *hyakkunin-isshu*, (one hundred poets) from the 1200s, discussed by A. Saito (2015, p.49) as an example of how history and culture continue to inform modern teaching practices. The work is made up of 100 five-line poems from different poets from that time. The resulting collection exists today as a set of poems which is familiar to Japanese readers because of its position as classic literature and for its endurance, but also because it is made up of short, memorable texts. Some students recall being asked to memorize these in class. Each poem in the collection is still viewed as a living text which can be used in educational settings to help connect the current reader with the past. They are not simply historical texts, as these have been brought to life in *kokugo* lessons.

As a result of this method of utilising the poems from the 100-poets, one-poem collection in class, many Japanese people, as I found with my students, can recognise them from their first lines. I was surprised to find this out when teaching Japanese university student since the age of the poems would seem to mean incomprehensibility and a lack of relevance. Many of my students know these poems, and some have done recital or memory games where they learned the poems. For teachers hoping to motivate learners to expand their working memory while at the same time helping to provide a background to culture and literature, these short poems are widely used. It would be difficult to imagine the Canterbury Tales in the UK being so widely known, even though they also enjoy continuing recognition.

In a recent study of Japanese writing practices by Spence and Kite (2018), poetry writing in elementary schools is seen to be related to expression and personal development. Reporting that poetry appeared “embedded throughout the language arts curriculum” and that sometimes

students became so interested in poems, that “classroom practice overflowed” (p.64) to the home life and that children sometimes saw many opportunities for writing poetry after learning about them in class. In the next section, the focus is to consider some ways in which the use of literature in secondary education setting develops these ideas while becoming more directed towards preparations for examinations.

3.4.2 Engagement with poetry in secondary school: Examinations

This section focuses on Japanese secondary schools from junior high school (three years) to high school (three years). L1 learning, including the study of literature, is focused on achieving success in examinations. While L1 study of literature in elementary schools may include creative writing and flexible uses of class materials, in secondary school the exam focus becomes more intense. It is not argued here that literature learning in L2 should repeat what is done in the L1, but that L1 learning with literature is better acknowledged and understood. The present study is an effort to show that by developing opportunities for expressing beliefs about thinking and feeling with poems, that aesthetic reading can be useful in language learning contexts.

The path to university is shaped by the *juken* (examination) system. *Juken* can be part of a child’s educational path earlier or later, but in most cases in Japan the *juken* system is most intense in high school. High school curriculum content is based around the National Centre Test for University Admissions, used by all public universities as well as some private ones. The *kokugo* section of the exam consists of four parts: “an essay in modern Japanese; a passage from a novel in Modern Japanese; an extract from a literary text in Classical Japanese and a brief extract from a literary text in Classical Chinese” (Saito, A. 2015, p.48). All questions are multiple choice and there is no essay in the centre test. Not all students take the national exams and opt for private university examinations instead, but the influence of the centre test is still very strong. As a result of test preparation, Japanese learners have had limited experience in giving extended personal reactions to any type of literature in essay form, or with formulating their own critical responses to any text which they have written. One effect of this is its connection to skills such as speaking since English learners in Japan may approach conversation thinking that they need to find a correct response. In writing, Japanese learners have not been assigned critical essays and they have not completed extended production written activities which ask them about their responses to poems or other types of literature.

Examinations using literature in Japan are focused on a narrow set of skills and texts, which is a part of the learners' educational background. Although teachers may, occasionally, try to innovate their teaching methods and move beyond traditional teaching styles, they will not receive credit for these differences when inevitably evaluated against students' examination results. Students in Japan appear to share a common background in reading Japanese literature during their school years and as they progress through the *juken* system. One consequence of the *juken* system for teaching poetry is that there is an understanding that literature should have some singular or correct meaning. The problem of seeking one particular answer for questions about poetry is in part due to the educational principle that standardization is an important aspect of the education system but also comes from *juken* preparation, which involves a lot of memorization and specific answers to questions.

One additional implication from this discussion of Japanese educational experiences is that approaching the high school years and university entrance examinations, poetry learning, and literature learning may tend to value receptive knowledge more than productive knowledge (Nation, 2001; Nation, 2006). Receptive knowledge means listening and reading, while productive knowledge is required for speaking and writing activities. In literature classes in secondary education in Japan, receptive knowledge may be prioritized over productive knowledge due to the use of examinations to test knowledge. It would be natural to then expect a gap between language knowledge and language use; learners who have read about poems and learned about literature but have had little experience to speak or write about them. Later in the thesis, results of a speaking activity (Study 1, Chapter 6) and a writing activity (Study 2, Chapter 7) investigate these two areas of productive language use using poetry.

3.4.3 Engagement with poetry at university: Translation

The last two sections considered the approaches to L1 literature teaching in Japan, and the next section continues this by looking at Japanese teaching methods for the higher grades. The current section also considers English literature at this level, as English literature is a popular subject at university also. It is often the case that the learners' experience with English poetry and literature in Japan is with texts in Japanese translation. It is not unusual, for example, to find Shakespeare taught to freshmen students who do not yet have the English proficiency to comprehend the language of the original and so the text is read in translation (see Teranishi *et al.*, 2012 for a historical perspective and description of this tradition). In the Japanese tertiary

context, English literature tends to be taught using mainly Japanese translations of texts and Japanese language explanations (See Teranishi, Saito and Wales, 2015 for several examples of this). Many faculty members in Japan teach literature using word-for-word translations, due to the preferences of the teachers, or the English ability of the learners, or both.

In the Japanese literature classroom at the tertiary level, *yakudoku* has roots in Confucian methods of teaching. Translation in literature classes exists in many contexts around the world, and in literature classes in Japan this is known as the *yakudoku* (translation) method (see Norris, 1994 and Nault, 2006 for Japan-based perspectives). The word is made up of two parts with “yaku” to mean “translate” and “doku” as “read”. *Yakudoku* or translation reading is done at the sentence level and is typically done by the teacher providing a class of learners with a sentence to be translated, then explaining the translation word for word, and finally by providing a suitably translation which is used as the model or ideal translation. In a survey by the Japan Association for College English Teachers (JACET), over 70 percent of teachers working with English in Japanese high schools and universities made use of this method (Hino, 1988, quoted in Nault, 2006). Although this survey was conducted in the 1980s, it continues today. A typical classroom situation is described below:

First, after students read aloud a part of a novel or poem one by one, they translate it into Japanese. If there are some mistakes in their pronunciation or the translation, the teacher corrects them and explains the grammar points if necessary. Sometimes the Japanese teachers' interpretation will be given. After gaining an understanding of the poem or novel, the teacher and sometimes the students will make some comments on it. We can say that this is an ordinary literature class in Japan. (Kaneko, 2008, p. 20)

In practical terms, *yakudoku* means that “students are not asked their opinions of literary works in English as it is considered beyond their abilities” (Nault, 2006; p.135). This way of literature reading using English, still widely used in Japanese high school and university settings is likely to be the most familiar way that learners of English have encountered literature in English. The resulting low interest in literature, a sense that literature is difficult, results in low levels of personal autonomy in the reading process. The reasoning behind continuing with this method is that it gives attention to form and can help to provide students access to grammatical structure and linguistic variation, as Norris (1994) and Nault (2006) describe. However, while no

individual approach to literature may be better than this one, it is worth noting that Japanese students who have studied English in school from high school on have learned in this way.

In Japan, the literature teaching situation is particular to the context and teaching of English. It is important here to distinguish between two different aspects of English study. These may be related to the culture and language model of literature teaching. There is *eigo*, “English” in Japanese, often interpreted to mean English conversation and English speaking. English teaching may make use of poetry, songs, or nursery rhymes to focus on fluency, pronunciation or other aspects of language learning. The language development uses literature as a tool for learning. In universities, ELT practitioners use methodology from TESOL and education theory to improve the language proficiency of learners and may be judged by the progress that students make on proficiency tests.

University departments in many countries, including Japan, are structured in such a way that language and literature classes are separated. Paran (2008, p.466) reports on a similar situation in US language and literature departments but that the situation has improved since the 1980s (also reported by Carter, 2007). The cultural enrichment approach would suggest that Shakespeare or Hemingway are useful texts to learn because of the insights they offer into the understanding of culture and history. In Japan, this means not only separating courses and staff, but also, naturally, the language of instruction. Literature in Japanese universities is a Japanese teaching area of expertise, and this usually results in teacher-centred approaches to translation-based reading.

From the perspective of testing, how to develop some kind of evaluation of literary knowledge can be problematic. Many university settings in Japan still test only receptive skills such as reading, instead of asking learners to write essays or speak about the texts they have learned. Nishihara (2015) approaches literature testing by experimenting with a number of different types of questions in a literature examination. He found that integrating principles from stylistic approaches was favourable to some other comprehension type questions, although the format of his test still adheres strongly to Japanese testing norms using multi-choice questions and true/false statements. There needs to be more empirical studies based on how writing or speaking develops in language learning contexts.

Although this chapter has looked at poetry and L1 language teaching, the effects of testing also have an impact on L2 learning. One way of framing the problem of low interest in English is to look at the language proficiency outcomes of Japanese learners when they have been studying English. A typical university graduate in Japan has studied English for ten years and

will be evaluated in English proficiency based on ability to pass an English language test. The test may have four skills, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the *Jitsuyo Eigo Gino Kentei* (Test in Practical English Proficiency) known as EIKEN, or it may only test the receptive skills in listening and reading in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), (TOEIC), but for most students these tests will be their main purpose for studying English. Focusing on test scores can result in less personal autonomy in using the target language, for example through dedicating study time to testing (both practice tests and actual tests), as opposed to personal communication.

Several studies have looked at different ways in which literary texts may be used to evaluate skills other than language-based proficiency. Instead of looking at gains in language level, Benton (1995) used a literary teaching approach to teach literary response, which is one of the most traditional methods of poetry evaluation in L1 contexts. Gilroy and Parkinson (1996) conducted a systematic review of teaching literature, identifying areas for future teaching and researching. They noticed that the diversity of teaching situations in different contexts made it challenging for any researcher (or teacher interested in planning a course using sound research principles) to find consensus about how to teach literature. Van reported on literary analysis in the Vietnamese EFL setting (Van, 2009). Paran and Sercu (2010) posed questions about the ways and means through which literature teachers must align themselves to create courses with teaching and testing in mind. In many settings, including Japan, these choices are not entirely free for teachers to govern themselves and may be decided by university policy, institutional norms, or cultural expectations.

Through the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, literature features strongly in the education context of Japan. Approaches to literature in education may have evolved slowly since the Meiji period, while a traditional approach to literary texts remains. In the next section I reflect on the implications of these points from my perspective as a teacher-researcher, and then go on to discuss some implications for the current study in the final part of this chapter.

3.5 Reflection and perspective on the Japanese context

The idea for this study grew from the way that I experienced teaching poetry to Japanese university students, who on the whole were very positive about approaching poems in English. My students appeared to relish the challenge of poetry and were not at all put off by the need to use dictionaries as they read difficult poems. This general approach appeared to be in contrast to how they felt about other types of reading activities, usually homework academic texts which needed to be read and then examined closely for comprehension and understanding. Whether the brevity of the poems or the sense of novelty initiated an original interaction with the poems, there was an enthusiasm and sustained interest in the way that learners would seem to read a set of song lyrics, or ballad, or sonnet, and then earnestly, without cynicism, talk together about the meaning they got from poems.

One implication of the educational backgrounds described in this chapter is how the knowledge about language learning using literature has shaped my view of the learners and their perspectives. This project also had its beginnings when I was working as a high school English teacher in the UK and later New Zealand. I was looking for ways to examine my practice as a teacher of language and literature and learn more about the uses of poetry in the classroom. The teaching context was working with L1 English users and teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL). While the systems in the UK and New Zealand differ in some ways such as their methods of selecting texts for study (as detailed in Dymoke, 2012), they both share the principle that assessment of English literature is best evaluated in testing situations such as examinations. Evaluation of English literature on tests and in longer assignments is the primary focus of the school year, though “opportunities for students’ engagement are undermined by the assessment imperative” (Dymoke, 2012, p. 395). Dymoke also believes that testing literature may compromise other goals of education such as critical thinking (Dymoke, 2001).

For most teachers of English poetry, removing testing from the curriculum is an impossibility, and the choice of text is the only real variation from year to year. The freedom to avoid examinations became my reality when I moved to university teaching in Japan and was asked to create and teach a poetry course in a university setting. This course would not need to have an exam at the end of the semester, but instead, there could be presentations and discussion activities which fitted into a communicative approach with a focus on the learner. My experience as a high school literature teacher meant that I understood that many students in L1 English literature classes hold negative views of poetry, which I found to be different from my later

experience in Japan with university students. It was surprising to me that learners approached poetry with a generally positive disposition, and that there seems to be a distinct lack of negative views about poetry in general (see Chapter 5 for results of a questionnaire which helped to shape my view).

The background of my own experiences teaching poetry overseas in an exam-based education system helped to shape the current project and my own perspective is part of the thesis also. Knowing the backgrounds of learners can help in understanding their motivations and beliefs about learning. With a background as an L1 English literature teacher, I was able to see a contrast between the overall opinions expressed about poetry by my students in L1 settings and the learners in Japan, which encouraged my initial inquiry into the topic. If poetry is purposefully removed from an L2 curriculum, then, it may be a missed opportunity to connect with learners about their experiences of reading which may already be familiar to them. The current study then became a way of learning more about students and their learning backgrounds.

3.6 Research questions investigating L2 poetic engagement

The first three chapters of this thesis have provided a background to the topic, the justification for the study and the context of inquiry. Chapters 2 and 3 focused on the literature and theoretical frameworks in this investigation. The research questions are exploratory and in general they are aimed at understanding the construct of L2 poetic engagement for Japanese learners, a term that could then be examined in relation to other learner groups. The first question is the general question which led to the development of the other questions:

RQ1: How do Japanese university-level learners of English engage with poetry in English?

The next question is answered in Chapter 5:

RQ2: How do extant poetry-reading experiences of Japanese students affect their engagement with poetry in English?

These two questions are answered in Chapter 6:

RQ3: What identifiable differences are there between the conversations that Japanese learners have about a famous Japanese poem and conversations that they have about an English poem and which of these types of poem results in greater L2 poetic engagement?

RQ4: What can Japanese learners' spoken responses to poems reveal about L2 poetic engagement and what are some pedagogical implications of the findings?

The final research question is answered in Chapter 7:

RQ5: What can Japanese learners' written responses to poems reveal about L2 poetic engagement and what are some pedagogical implications of the findings?

3.7 Conclusions

Interacting with poetry has been a feature of L1 literacy practices at all levels of education in Japan. The aim of this chapter was to describe the Japanese educational context and discuss ways that poetry is experienced by Japanese learners through their cultural experiences.

In Japan, teaching tends to be teacher-led for many practical reasons such as space, funding in public schools and cultural practices which respect the teacher as a source of knowledge. Teacher-led instruction can be a highly successful way of standardising the curriculum, making it fair and accessible for all students equally (in principle). One consequence of an over-reliance on teacher-led instruction (instead of more learner-centred activities such as pair work, group work and collaborative learning) is that learners can be timid with new texts, lack confidence to read independently, and are not comfortable with activities which might include student-led or reader response approaches.

In looking at the issue of poetry reading in the education context of Japan, it was necessary to look back into the elementary and secondary school curriculum before looking forwards to the tertiary curriculum. The standardization of content and presentation of materials could reinforce the commonalities between participants and is not in itself negative. Instead of standardization being seen negatively as in the 'one-size-fits-all' approach suggests in Western education systems, shared goals have a more nuanced meaning in Japan. Looking at documents such as official curriculum statements is only one aspect of the education ecology and does not show all sides of the diversity of education practices in Japan.

Poetry is not an optional part of the Japanese elementary school curriculum since it is explicitly named in education ministry documents (MEXT 2014; 2017). The learning of Japanese in the elementary grades is focused on skill mastery and uses poetry to learn about language and culture with increasing complexity and depth. Japanese learners are therefore familiar with reading poems from their L1 educational experiences.

It is possible that learning completed during elementary and secondary schooling could encourage interest and engagement towards poetry since poetry reminds us of childhood experiences and development of reading behaviours. In Chapter 5, I report on a poetry questionnaire which discusses learners' opinions and beliefs about poetry and looks more closely at this assumption. In this thesis, I argue that the shared experiences of learners who experienced poetry could be a reason for poetry's greater inclusion in tertiary L2 contexts in the future. In Chapter 6, looking at in conversations between students, we will see evidence for shared experiences of poetry from answers to a poetry background questionnaire and from student responses to poetry.

To sum up, the main point I want to emphasize in this chapter is that Japanese poetry is used in the L1 language classroom third grade onwards and that poetry is likely to be highly familiar to students through its inclusion in their Japanese language classes. It appears that poetry is familiar to Japanese learners through the utilization of poetry in Japanese L1 literacy practices and that this could account for interest and positive disposition towards poetry in the tertiary setting.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS, RESEARCH DESIGN AND MATERIALS

4.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters aimed to show that poetry has the potential to engage and interest L2 learners. In Chapter 3, the focus was on education in Japan and how it contributes to a background understanding of poetry. The current chapter describes the methods, participants, research design and materials used in all stages of this investigation. Selected details about the materials (poems) are given, including the lexical features, which are discussed in the light of potential difficulty for students. The aim of this chapter is to explain each stage of the research procedure as a series of steps and to explain each step as part of one process. Each section of this chapter provides information about the stages of the research procedure with an explanation of how the study developed over time. The whole project described in this thesis used a mixed methodology with analysis of learner-produced corpora. The chapter ends with some considerations related to the data collection methods and how future projects could proceed.

4.2 Setting

The setting for the study was a private languages university near Tokyo, Japan. The participants were all fluent Japanese speakers taking an English communication undergraduate degree. At the time of the study, I taught one second year course called ‘Advanced Reading’ which met twice a week for 90 minutes. My full teaching load was four classes and the other three of those were elective courses. The elective courses were taken by students in the third and fourth year, and the students had all studied English as a foreign language for at least eight years (three years of junior high, three years in high school and two years in university). Students self-reported their TOEIC scores which shows their range of English proficiencies (estimated to be between B1 and C2 on the CEFR bands).

The program of study has Korean, Chinese, Portuguese and Thai as other language options. The gender split in the courses I taught was usually 80/20 in favour of female students. Many students aspire to use English in the workplace when they graduate, hoping to work in tourism, retail or management. A small number of students would study abroad during their university years, with the majority of students staying in Japan and taking short trips overseas using English while sightseeing. What this means for the investigation is that the students were sometimes

focused on their lives in Japan, their future careers and personal lives as they projected them to be with Japan as their home base, and that English goals were not always well-defined. Some students had specific careers in mind and were preparing for tests, but many were not. A small number of these students had travelled abroad or lived abroad before

The context of the current study was an elective poetry class which I created in 2012 and taught for four years, entitled “Creativity in poetry and song” (see Figure 4.1). The course goals and objectives were based around weekly interactions with different kinds of poetry, including song lyrics, borrowing some teaching methods from the L1 poetry classes I was familiar with from high school teaching, along with some of the teaching ideas from the L2 literature. The course followed the university’s expectation that the course should promote student-talk, making maximum use of the target language (Barrette, Paesani and Vinall, 2010). The course was also designed to encourage group work and make ample time for learner interaction in English. In the orientation session at the start of the year, teachers were asked specifically to try and make class activities which would maximize student interaction, and that lecture-style classes were not suitable. The course materials were entirely up to the teacher to create and distribute, and there were never any classroom observations of teaching methods to check on the university expectations, but the message was delivered initially that these should be interactive classes which supported learner development by allowing for speaking activities primarily (writing was expected also, but the suggested amount was small, at only 150 words per lesson). The elective classes met twice per week for 90 minutes each and each course lasted 15 weeks. The choice of poetry as a topic was done in part to help support learners of mixed proficiency levels.

The university did not use mixed-level classes for the four-year degree, but instead used a different approach in the first two years and then changed to the mixed-level classes in the third and fourth years. The university used an in-house test to stream classes in the first year, and then at the end of the first year the test was taken again, and the result of the streaming created their courses in the second, compulsory year of English classes. Compulsory English classes in the first and second year were held for between nine and twelve hours per week and all classes were taught by full-time instructors. As well as the compulsory English classes, there was a well-resourced self-access centre and library providing additional English support, workshops, individual consultations and feedback on assignments. By the time that students took elective courses in the third and fourth year of study, testing was not used to stream the classes and the resulting mix of students represented a range of English proficiencies. While teachers may be accustomed to some degree of mixed level teaching, the students themselves had not been used

to this range of English proficiency in their classes, and the mixing of students meant that sometimes in pair work or group work there could be communication difficulties, reticence, and even silence. Students who were more proficient might tend to over-compensate for this lack of balance and try to do most of the talking, while students from the lower level classes could be seen to struggle (with speaking and listening, as well as the reading activities and written work). I could tell from observing the group dynamics that there were necessary adaptations which would help to support greater success for all students in the class.

The problem of working with mixed proficiency levels can be dealt with in different ways, including materials design, classroom activities and group dynamics. The solution I found was that I attempted to make the courses more accessible to all learners by modifying content and to integrate peer-to-peer activities during class time. I had taught several different elective courses in previous years at the same university, utilising such topics as combining global issues and literature, and had found that the reading lists I prepared were difficult for some students in the course. I gave short stories with a few pages to read as homework, but that was still too difficult for some students. The students were usually job hunting, a process in Japan which begins in the third year of university and occupies a significant amount of time and energy. On talking with students to hear about their work schedules, it seemed to be very common that they were working part time jobs at this stage in their studies. Lack of time, lack of English proficiency, low confidence speaking English in front of their peers, or other reasons for non-completion of preparation materials affected their interest and engagement with classroom activities. After several semesters developing different topics for these elective classes, I decided to try out a poetry class initially to deal with the difficulties described. Apart from the reasons for choosing poetry as outlined in Chapters 1-3, the very practical reason why I selected poetry in this case was because most short poems can be taught in one lesson and usually a poem can fit on one page.

When I conducted this investigation, I had already been teaching the course for four previous semesters (see Figure 4.1 for weekly plan of the course) and had developed a selection of workshop-like activities which balanced writing and speaking activities in small groups. Some poems were more successful than others, but each new semester brought new ideas from students themselves or from additional reading and teaching ideas I found out and about. In each 90-minute session, we would begin by talking about the theme of the class and we would use a short poem as a warm-up activity for discussion. Sometimes I asked the students to bring in their own choice of poems for that part of the class.

Creativity in Poetry and Songs: Course schedule	
Week 1	Welcome. Introductions. Course aims. Individual survey, writing, and results.
Week 2	What is poetry? Sharing current knowledge. Reading about definitions of poetry Where is poetry? Looking for poetry and finding it in different places.
Week 3	<i>Unit 1: Introduction to poetic creativity.</i> Writing a poem with the class. Definitions and discussion.
Week 4	Listen to the beat: rhythm, stress and iambic pentameter. Writing to the beat: songs, sounds and poetry.
Week 5	Onomatopoeia, aural images and atmosphere. Writing about sounds in poetry and songs.
Week 6	Sounds from the language of everyday English: Examples and writing responses. Nature poems.
Week 7	<i>Unit 2: Feeling and seeing poetry.</i>
Week 8	Writing using metaphors. Writing using colour, shape and texture. Comparisons of poems about youth and age.
Week 9	<i>Unit 3: Experiencing poetry by looking at Japanese writing.</i> The great <i>haiku</i> masters. Multimedia Japanese poetry: Aida Mitsuo and Sakamura Shinmin.
Week 10	Teach a poem to someone. Submission of report.
Week 11	<i>Unit 4: Finding poetry in everyday life</i> Poetry and student life as a visual journey. Writing workshop using everyday language as poetry.
Week 12	Experiencing the texture of poetry. Applications of poetry in life.
Week 13	Preparation for presentations. Poemography.
Week 14	Presentations
Week 15	Final class presentations. Wrap up. Farewells.

Figure 4.1 Weekly progression of activities in the elective poetry course

Next, the example poems would be introduced in some kind of way to encourage reading aloud, and some language points may be illustrated by showing information about the poems on the board. Sometimes we did the workshoping in the class under timed conditions, sometimes a writing frame or starter activity would be used, and at other times I would ask the students to prepare an example poem, given a reasonably structured example. One successful poem which always provoked thoughtful discussions was “The door” by Miroslav Holub, which is easy to read and easy to understand. The poem was useful to encourage a discussion about real-world poetry reading, as the poem appears in a collection of poems given to all graduating medical doctors in Scotland and produced by the Scottish Poetry Library. A follow-up activity was to write poems in the same style or to write a poem for a different profession. In a week looking at Japanese poetry, we did a workshop activity using *haiku* writing in the style of the great

masters, and then a second lesson using 20th century poets and their work. We used English translations from different sources and also experimented by writing poems in English and in Japanese. Those two lessons were popular and resulted in some surprising and creative work. Although many students would initially say that they were not confident talking about Japanese poetry, it was highly familiar to them. The use of season words, *kigo*, such as a type of flower to show spring or a breeze to depict summer, seemed to me to be an untapped resource in the English language classroom. The Japanese poetry writing sessions reminded me that background knowledge of literature, particularly indigenous forms of poetry such as *haiku*, was something I would like to research. The main idea of these activities was to get students talking about accessible poems which of course had some poetic features or interesting content.

The classroom was not suitably sized for projector use from week to week, and so I made handouts and used the blackboard to write spontaneous answers and to bring together student's responses. There was usually group work with 3-4 students, and 26-30 students in the class, the maximum allowed in quite a small room. Sometimes I asked the students to make the discussion questions for the class.

Overall, spending time on reading and talking about poems was a way to focus attention behaviourally and cognitively, through careful, intensive reading and then in looking closely for meaning and looking more deeply at the language in a text. I found out that a number of the students were training to be English teachers, so sometimes the homework was to prepare a poem to 'teach' to each other, individually or as pairs. From that format of lessons, the ideas for the thesis began to emerge as I noticed that in every session the students would earnestly check their poems and make notes, use their dictionaries intensively, and that the length of the discussions about poems would be extensive. In many ways, given the freedom to choose the materials, no limitations on choice of topics, ample time and interested students, this was an engaging and interesting opportunity to teach with poems.

4.3 Data collection

The following section contains the details of stages in the research procedure, beginning with an overview of the three data collection stages. The first of these is a questionnaire, the results of which are presented in Chapter 5. The second is a report on spoken responses to poetry, which is explained in Chapter 6. The third type of data collected were written responses to poems and the results are presented in Chapter 7.

The investigation was conducted from September 2013-July 2014 over two semesters. Each semester was 15 weeks. Study 1 was conducted in the autumn semester of 2013, and Study 2 was conducted in spring, 2014, with different students. The data collection included paired discussions, follow-up interviews, and learner writing. The data collection can provide data triangulation, with the aim of seeing the problem and the subject from different perspectives. Triangulation is important as there may be subjectivity. Although some impartiality may be inevitable when researching a class while teaching those students, through analysis of the data using a variety of methods it was expected that the influence of subjectivity could be minimized. This mixed-methods approach (Terrell, 2012), in which the researcher combines qualitative and quantitative research techniques or concepts, can help to provide various perspectives on the research process through triangulation of data.

The method of data collection using paired conversations was appealing for several reasons. First, discussing a poem in a conversation is a natural communicative activity which creates opportunities for speaking practice. A discussion about poetry could be related to discussions which students have experienced in the language classroom. Second, this design had links to the personal response or reader response perspective. Finally, the use of spoken output was in keeping with the aims of the course being taught, that of using language productively. From experience of working with Japanese students, I was concerned that asking the students to report individually on poems could cause them problems because they tend to believe that understanding literature relies on the teacher, and alternative answers are not encouraged.

Hanauer (2001a) suggests that using other methods such as TOL (think out loud) would be too cognitively demanding in the second language (Hanauer, 2001a, p.299). TOL procedures typically use the L1 as the language of use in the thinking-aloud process, which in this case would have meant Japanese. This usually includes some kind of demonstration and instructional language provided and is more commonly used in L1 studies. As reported in Vassallo (2016), however, as this skill must be practiced, it may never be natural, and for the purpose of this study, Hall (2015, p.249) suggests that thinking with literature may be a particular challenge for second language learners.

4.3.1 Background experiences questionnaire (BEQ)

This stage of the research procedure was a background experiences questionnaire (BEQ), available in Appendix A. Students in the elective poetry course (N:63) completed the

questionnaire in the spring of 2014. The questions are typical questions from the start of a course of study and the questionnaire contains 7 questions. The questionnaire was given in English and Japanese, and the results revealed that all students in the class had some background in reading poetry in Japanese, but limited experience speaking about poetry in English. The results of the questionnaire are discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3.2 Study 1: Spoken responses to poetry

Study 1 used a group discussion framework, as outlined by Hanauer (2001a) in his investigation of poetry reading. The main features of this method are that advanced learners are shown a text they have not studied before and have a conversation together about the meaning of the text. Pairs of learners read poems that they had not seen before, check for understanding using a dictionary and then talked together about the poems. The conversations were video-recorded, and I conducted follow-up interviews with the pairs of students one week later.

A speaking activity was created with the instruction that learners ‘Give a personal response to each poem. Say what you liked or didn’t like about the poem’ (Appendix C). Bilingual dictionaries were permitted, and the recording included individual reading and note-taking time. The instruction was that they could have up to 15 minutes to talk about each poem, but they could finish early. The participants were instructed to read the poems individually and use the dictionary if they needed. In this study there were two parts equally asking students 1) to talk about meaning and 2) to say what they liked or did not like about the poem. Through these developments, the aim was to build on previous research and record discussion which could show evidence for co-constructed meaning-making using the poems.

Participants took 30 minutes on the activity and were video recorded. All instructions were given in English although the students had access to their bilingual dictionaries. Participants had follow-up interviews with the researcher one week later, in which they read over the transcriptions of their conversations and were given the opportunity to talk further about the poems. They were reimbursed for their time using the university research funds. This post-session discussion aimed to answer any lingering questions that the students may have had about the activity and the poem (questions for these interviews are in Appendix B) and the session was video recorded and transcribed using NVivo. Each follow-up interview lasted between 6-10 minutes. To conclude the follow-up interviews, participants in the research were given another opportunity to withdraw from the project and none chose to do so. Details of the data collection

procedure for Study 2 are given in Figure 4.2 and the results and discussion of Study 1 are in Chapter 6.

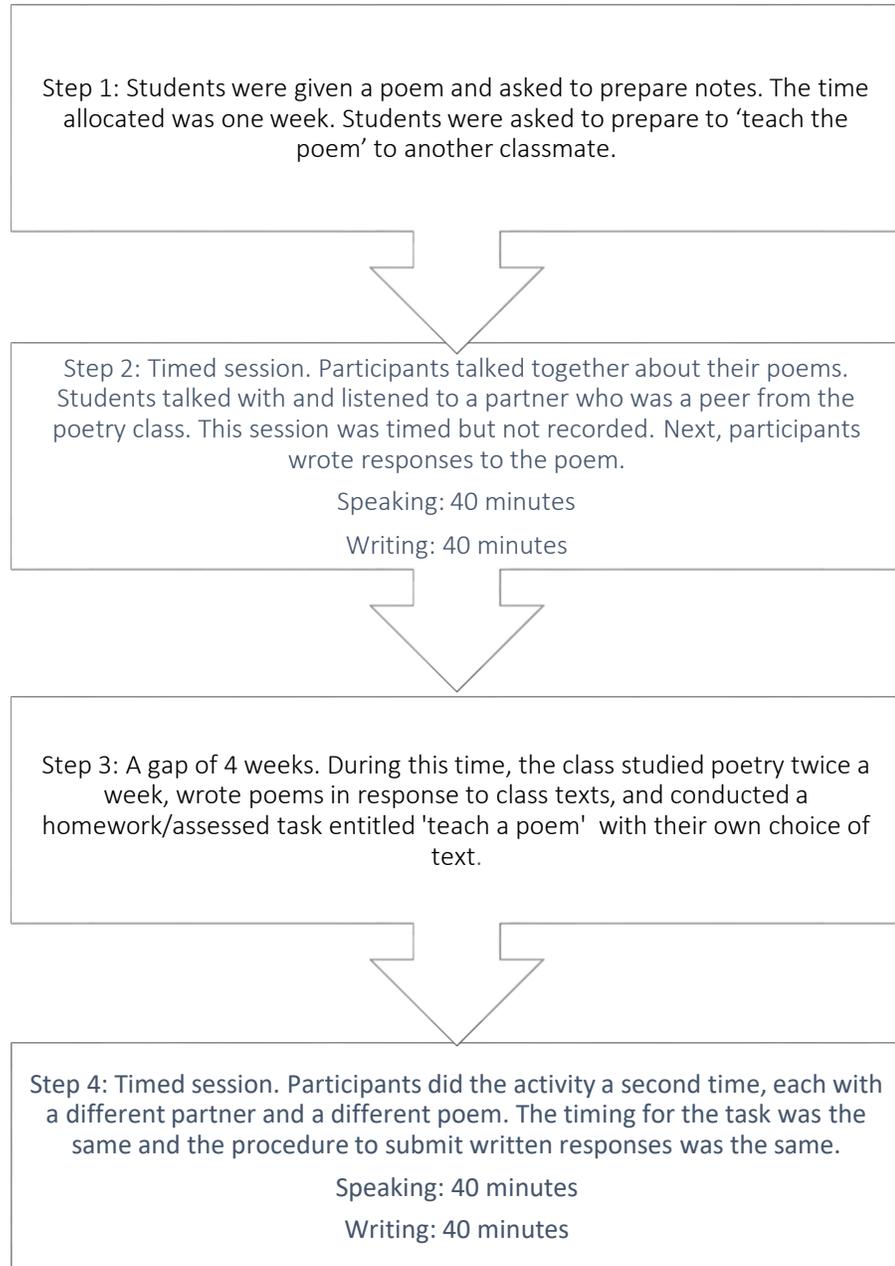


Figure 4.2 Data collection procedure for Study 2

4.3.3 Study 2: Written responses to poetry

Study 2 included a written activity which was used to analyse L2 poetic engagement in response to poetry. Participants were asked to take a poem for one week and make notes about the poem at home (Appendix C, instruction sheet) in preparation. On the day of the activity, students were paired with other classmates who had read different poems and asked to ‘teach the poem’ using their notes and any additional background reading (see Figure 4.2 for the stages of Study 2). The results and discussion of Study 1 are in Chapter 7.

In each session there were 25-28 students completing the activity at the same time and so for practical reasons the sessions were not video recorded. I felt that recording these sessions would have been difficult to transcribe and also difficult to follow. An additional consideration was whether or not the transcripts of the conversations would be more useful than the written data, and in this case, I decided to focus on written data only. After their conversations, students spent 40 minutes writing a response to the poem. The activity was completed outside of class time and grades for the work were not given. All writing was hand-written and submitted on the same day. The activity was related to a real-world activity which the students would do as part of the course (Appendix D, explain a poem presentation) and the final activity (Appendix D, “poemography”) where learners had to select their own choice of poems or song lyrics, or their own original work, and present them to the class. The results of Study 2 are presented in Chapter 7.

4.4 Participants

The course aims (Appendix D) described course activities which aimed to develop skills related to reading and writing using poems. The first course aim was to *show an understanding of language used in poetry in English*. To do this, students practiced reading and identifying language features of poems using a range of examples selected by the teacher in guided-reading sessions and then through self-selection of poems for an assignment which required reference to poetic terms such as use of figurative language. The assessment of this was also done using an activity in which students had to choose a poem and teach it to their classmate or a relative. The second course aim was to *show an understanding of experiences reading poetry* in which students would be able to reflect on the process of reading and describe their reading experiences. This was done through submission of personal reflection of poetry activities at the end of lessons and in the final assignment and term paper. The third course

aim was to *apply creative methods to write and respond to poetry* in which students wrote their own poems in the style of poems selected by the teacher and also as homework activities. Written responses to poems were also considered to be part of this aspect of the course, where value was placed on individual readings and not the teacher's interpretation. This point was emphasized in classroom activities to try and encourage individual expression. In the final assignment, students had the choice of whether or not to include their own poems. Evaluation was done using self-assessment and teacher-assessment.

Before participating in the research, student participants were presented with the consent forms and details of the study, including information about how the research would not make use of their names and that participation would not be related to their grade for the course. The permission form in English and Japanese was given to participants before the activity was conducted and students could refuse participation without penalty. On the instruction sheet it was made clear that students could volunteer to meet with the researcher to discuss the research up to six months after the completion of the data collection and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequence. The project gained ethical approval from the University of Birmingham (application ERN_12-1407) and from the Japanese institution's English Language Institute which provided the template for the consent forms. Participants in both Study 1 and Study 2 completed consent forms in English and Japanese (Appendix A). The students were reimbursed for their time, in Study 1 and Study 2. The rate for reimbursement was set by the Japanese university to be 750 yen per hour. The money used for this purpose was the researcher's research budget and an institutional research budget.

4.4.1 Participants in the BEQ

The students who participated in the BEQ (N:63) were all third- and fourth-year students at the university and were taking the elective poetry class. The questionnaire was completed on the first day of classes as part of diagnostic data collection. Students submitted their work via a Google form.

4.4.2 Study 1

The participants (Female:5, Male:3) in Study 1 were all third- and fourth-year students aged between 20-22 at the time of the study. All were native Japanese speakers and they volunteered to complete the poetry reading activity and a follow-up interview. The number of years of

learning English (six in school, followed by university) and relatively similar educational backgrounds meant that they shared L1 literacy backgrounds and, to some extent, their L2 English learning backgrounds. All the participants were native Japanese speakers, but two had dual nationality (see student data Appendix B). All names used are pseudonyms.

Students who took part in Study 1 were also taking the elective poetry course (see Appendix D course documents). The participants were randomly allocated pairs. Participants self-reported their total TOEIC scores (reading and listening); the mean and standard deviation were 737.5 and 63.19, respectively. The TOEIC scores do not give a complete picture of their ability in English, being measured using receptive skills. The participants can be considered mixed-level with estimated Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001) bands of B2-C1, using their TOEIC scores as a guide. Learners at this level can interact with a degree of spontaneity, although some weaknesses occur in their use of technical and academic language. A discussion with a peer would be a suitable activity for students at the B2 level and above, as it would seem to be manageable and yet provide appropriate challenge. All students volunteered for the conversation activity and follow-up interview conducted outside of class time which did not affect their grade for the course.

4.4.3 Study 2

Study 2 was completed by 77 undergraduate student-participants (15 male, 62 female). They were mainly aged between 21 and 23 during the time of the study, with one mature student (female) who had returned to studying after some experience working (age 27). The students were in three different classes, all taking the same course of study, an elective class on poetry. The majority of students identified as Japanese, with the exception of two Korean female students who were also fluent in Japanese and had lived in Japan since high school. One student was of Chinese/Japanese descent, identifying as Japanese. All students had completed their post-elementary schooling in Japanese. Participant data is available in Appendix C. Results of the background experiences questionnaire were also from the same participants who participated in Study 2.

Participants were informed that the information would not identify them personally or affect their grade for the course overall, as stated on the information sheet (Appendix B). The students were mixed level and mixed grade/ages. An estimate of their CEFR scores was done using suggested guidelines for comparison of international English proficiency scores, using their

TOEIC scores (Tannenbaum and Wylie, 2008). The TOEIC scores are only a guide for proficiency, since they are based on the receptive skills of listening and reading. It is sometimes the case that a student with a high TOEIC score does not have balanced skills in speaking and writing, but for the purposes of allocating a CEFR band for the purpose of discussing their general proficiency, the conversion of TOEIC scores seemed to be appropriate. As in Study 1, students were reimbursed for their participation including time spent on the submission of their writing via a Google form.

4.5 Selection of poems

As with other aspects of course design, the use of texts for discussion required careful consideration. With potentially serious themes and topics, as is the case with poetry, the selection of the text becomes more important and should be carefully considered. Poems condense feelings and emotions into strongly felt works of creative art, and some topics in poetry can be intimidating or overwhelming. The type of texts for use in class should be chosen carefully since the text choice affects achievement and language learning, and choices which are too difficult, or too distant may not work well. Examples of the challenging aspects of poetry are seen in how the reader deals with the use of sound devices, along with metaphor and repetition of semantically related words, creating theme and atmosphere in a creative text.

Previous research has shown that short stories and some kinds of poetry cause difficulty for readers who encounter problems with reading poetic texts, because of the use of idiosyncratic language, vague language or unusual uses of grammar and tense (Hanauer, 1998; Hoffstaedter, 1987; Miall and Kuiken, 1994; van Peer, 1986). It is worth mentioning at this stage that difficulty in poetry, whether it is perceived by the reader, meant by the poet, or thought to be the case by the critic, is not simple either. Building on the work of Yaron (2002, 2008), who used difficult poems as content for a research project, the recent project by Castiglione (2017 and 2019) looked closely at the concept of difficulty itself. Castiglione found a number of aspects in reading which make poems difficult. Castiglione's approach also looked at what made a poem relatively easy to read, finding that the poems which were easy to read were also the most enjoyable, according to his study (2019, p.212). With easy poems the connection was narrativity and sympathy (understanding the perspective of the poem's speaker or character), along with concreteness and imageability. As the current investigation was not looking for aspects of difficulty to make the

reading of poems more challenging for L2 readers, the characteristics of easy poems appeal as attractive features for potential poems in this investigation.

The first approach in selecting poems was from the selection of texts for L2 reading classes. Day (1994) suggested specific criteria for selecting class texts, which includes reading texts such as newspaper articles as well as stories and other types of writing and not poetry specifically. The current project employed these guidelines for the selection of texts, used as a kind of process for selection. What this meant in practical terms was that texts were selected mainly for interest in the first instance, and then the other criteria were used as points to consider and then a poem was accepted or rejected based on overall suitability.

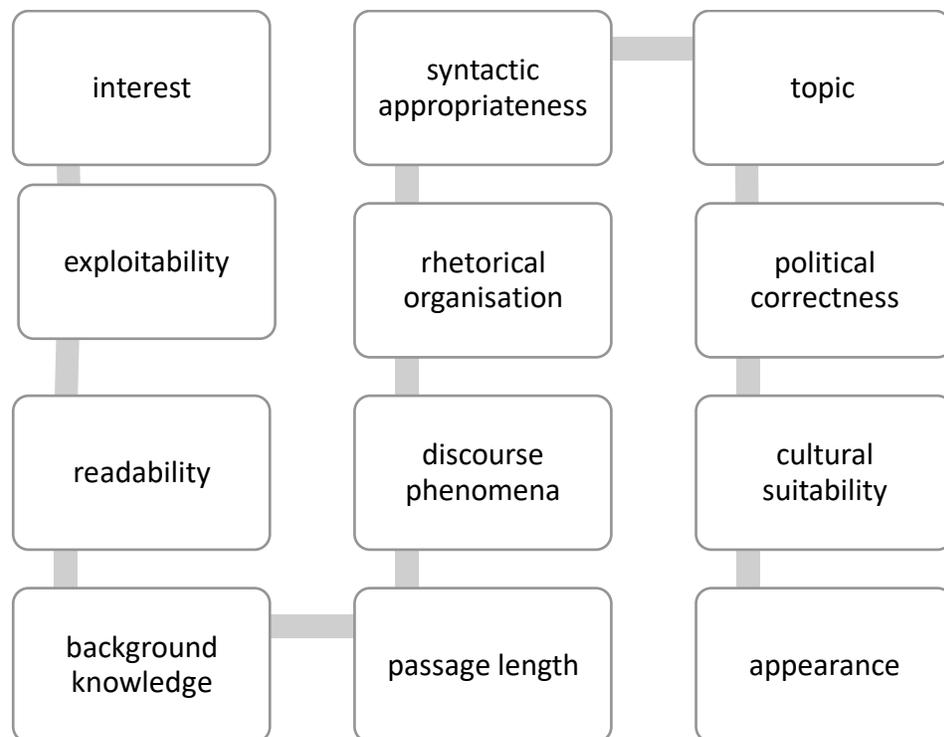


Figure 4.3 Day’s criteria for selection of EFL reading texts

Day suggests that the most important of these factors is *interest*, and that the list is in order of relative importance. What this means for the current study is that *exploitability* (the various ways the resource can be used) and *readability* (difficulty level or learning burden) are also priorities. The fourth point, *background knowledge*, is also useful to consider from the perspective of the knowledge of the topics in the text as well as the form of the text (poetry). Day did have one more category, *copyright*, which was more of a practical suggestion, and is one which should

certainly be considered when creating classroom materials. While other studies may use more difficult poems, or in a different context it may be suitable to choose longer, more challenging poems, the primary criteria of interest, with the particular students in mind, was used in this case.

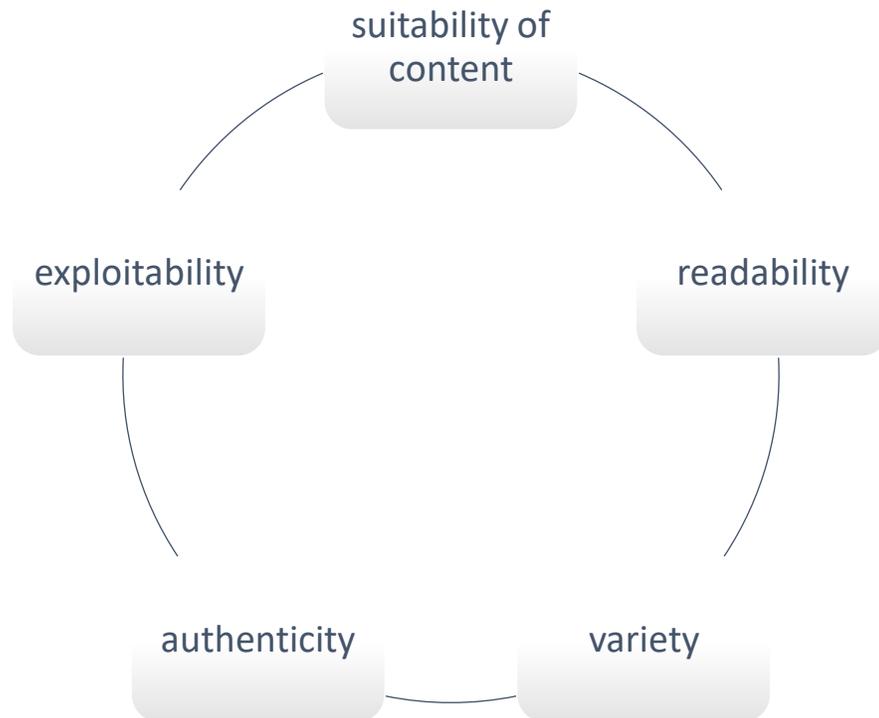


Figure 4.4 Nuttall’s criteria for systematic selection of L2 reading materials

Exploitability is the second of the criteria which appear in the lists by both Day and Nuttall. The term relates to the degree to which a reader or teacher could work with the text in some different ways. In Study 2, learners were asked to “teach” the poem to another student, so the idea of potential *exploitability* could also be interpreted to mean that the poem creates an imaginative response in the reader which could be varied and creative. Anthologized poems, novels, short stories and other art forms such as film and TV are authentic in that they have been created for a real audience instead of being made only for research or teaching purposes.

Authenticity is a part of text selection which can help to justify choices and decisions using a systematic method. Nuttall’s (1996) sense of authenticity is related to the idea that the poems and texts exist outside the classroom and have not been created specifically for the classroom. Along with criticisms of manipulated language in textbooks and classroom materials, there have

also been criticisms of research which uses texts which have been created only for the learning environment. Nuttall refers to authenticity, which can be interpreted to mean that texts exist in real-world contexts (songs, novels and poems are examples of highly authentic materials). Authenticity is also a term which refers to the reading experience itself. In the case of reading materials, textbooks and their contents usually have low authenticity in the sense that they have been created by the publishers for the purpose of teaching. To increase the level of authenticity, stories and other texts by established authors or publications can help to make the reading of such texts more worthwhile. In this study, the Nuttall's criteria are applied in the case of poetry for famous poets whose work have high authenticity and who are known to have been read by many others, as is the case for the poems in this study.

Both lists suggest prioritising interest and content, which could be interpreted to mean that the selection of materials considers the most useful content for language classes or have some targeted academic relevance. Many poems are related to death and other related topics, which may make students feel uncomfortable. Talking about serious topics may be meaningful for some students but stressful for others, and there is no effective way of predicting if a particular text may cause a negative response from a student. To avoid death at all, when dealing with poetry would be impossible, and to some extent there may be an expectation that a poem could have reference to life/death. Japanese poems also frequently mention death, if not the death of a person, then the death of a flower, animal or other symbol, and so it is not possible to avoid the topic altogether.

After checking these lists, I looked in anthologies of English poems to select poems, prioritising what I thought of to be “interest” and looking for other factors including poem length and suitability. In the next section of this chapter we consider readability, and lexical features which could predict difficulty. None of the poems has intricate political or historical details which might suggest specific background knowledge being required to understand the poems. The selection of poems for the study was done with careful consideration and it was hoped that the poems would be readable and interesting enough to encourage engagement. In the next section we look closely at the selection of the poems and towards the end of this chapter, discuss some differences between the poems.

4.4.1 Two poems in Study 1

The Japanese poem was “雨ニモマケズ／Ame ni mo makezu” [Neither giving in to rain] by Kenji Miyazawa (1933/2007). The poem appears in anthologized collections, for example, an

English/Japanese collection of Japanese literature, in a chapter entitled “Heart and soul” (Sakai 2010, p.222-25). The Miyazawa poem is thirty-five lines long, and in it the poet expresses the concept of an ideal person, thinking about how to conduct a good life. The suitability of content is related to the poem’s recognition and fame as it appears in the elementary school textbook for grade six students (age 11-12). The message of the poem connects with what Cave (2007) refers to as “self-discipline and the *seishin* tradition”, where *seishin* (spirit) appears when an individual demonstrates strength of character through commitment to a worthy cause. Along with interdependence, spirit is a discourse which is strongly emphasized in Japanese school life (ibid, p.40) and the discourse of the autonomous self (p.42). The parts of the text which may draw attention of the reader are elements such as the repetition of the title, use of words connected to the central theme (LIFE IS A STRUGGLE).

Miyazawa’s work appears in textbooks and is familiar for students who have attended Japanese public schools. Cave (2007) reports in detail about the use of this poem in a Japanese elementary school *kokugo* (Japanese language) class, which culminated in a choral recitation of the poem as part of the sixth-grade graduation performances. In addition, the poem was used in a final calligraphy exercise “to be written out as beautifully as possible on specially marbled paper and perhaps kept as a memento of primary school” (Cave, 2007:79). The poem was famous and selected because of its potential familiarity to learners.

Additional considerations of the poem’s appearance became apparent when the students read the Japanese version alongside the English version. This poem was originally written in *katakana* (one of two phonetic writing systems). Usually in Japanese writing *kanji* (Chinese characters) carry meaning because they are pictorial and can be identified in part by their relation to other connected words, while *katakana* does not carry meaning and can result in ambiguity. In modern orthography, *katakana* is usually used when writing foreign loan words, but at the time of writing (1933), the use of *katakana* was more common. The absence of *kanji* may be seen as his way of writing in a simple style, or it could be that he was writing a draft of a poem which he did not realise would become a published work someday. This poem was not written using many *kanji*, and can be read simply on the surface level, but the absence of *kanji* creates some ambiguity for Japanese readers. Overall, this poem has cultural depth and meaning for students which goes beyond the text itself, which may explain in some way their strong reactions to it.

The second poem selected was the English poem “Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas (1951). The poem is made up of mainly short, one-syllable words which are

high-frequency words. The form of the poem is a villanelle, with five three-line stanzas and a final four-line one. Lines 1 and 3 of the first tercet repeat alternately, until both are repeated at the end of the final quatrain. It contains obvious manipulation of language using rhyme, repetition, and rhythm for effect. The meaning of the poem hinges in part on its play on the meaning of the keyword “rage”, which is repeated throughout the poem and appears eight times. Although it is a short poem, its meaning does contain some perplexing complexity and it presents difficulties on first reading. It resists understanding in part since uses of oppositional words such as light/dark suggest conflicting feelings. The suitability of interest with this poem is in the relationship between the individual and a sense of internal struggle. This poem was unknown to the students and was expected to be challenging. The poems had not been pre-taught but with dictionaries available and the short length of the poems it was expected that the activity would be within the students’ language abilities.

4.4.2 Four poems in Study 2

The poems in Study 2 were “The Tyger” by William Blake, “I wandered lonely as a cloud” (hereafter “Daffodils”) by William Wordsworth, “The Song of Wandering Aengus” by Y.B. Yeats and “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost. Concerning anticipated difficulty, the oldest poem (Blake, 1794) would possibly be more problematic than the Wordsworth (1807), with the other two poems (Yeats, 1899 and Frost, 1915) possibly being most readable and requiring the least background knowledge on religion or historical setting. The poems were from different periods, but they often appear together in books of English poetry, have all been anthologized, and are considered famous or popular poems in English which might appear together in an “Introduction to English poetry” class in a university EFL setting. It was possible to research all four poems online and the author’s biographical details could be retrieved through simple online searching.

Participants were given one week to prepare notes for the poem and were instructed that they would try to “teach the poem” to a partner. The idea of teaching a poem to a partner was familiar since it was part of the course and was used as another classroom activity (Appendix D, teach a poem).

4.5 Lexical features of the poems

Readability is affected by a range of aspects which can be predicted through lexical analysis of the poems. These aspects include the number of low-frequency words and the type-token ratio which reveals how many words appear only once in a text, increasing difficulty. There are some established ways to show the variety and measure linguistic complexity in poetry including lexical diversity, measured by type/token ratio. The higher the ratio, the more complex the text since the greater number of unique and diverse tokens appear in the text. As Simonton (1989) found, there is variety within poetry by individual authors, and using Shakespeare's sonnets as examples, showed that the more successful, famous poems had more unique words. Presenting the lexical features of the poems can be useful and interesting in the current study because it can help reveal differences between the poems and predict factors affecting engagement, such as levels of difficulty and potential interest. In Chapter 7, below, by comparing the poems and the responses which students gave to them, examples of high and low engagement and interest are found with the learners who read the most and least challenging poems. Nevertheless, through using these data to predict difficulty and barriers to comprehension, the different poems can be compared.

4.5.1 Evaluating poem choice using lexical features

The lexical frequency profile (LFP) of the poems is discussed in this section, using the methodology of Laufer and Nation (1995) and Nation (2001). LFP can also show how many difficult and academic words appear in a text using Vocabprofile (Cobb, 2018 available at <http://lxtutor.ca>). The analysis uses the word and word stem lists in the most frequently used words in English, counting K1000 and K2000 as high-frequency words. The words up to the K2000 level are high frequency because they repeatedly appear in texts across disciplines (Coxhead, 2000; Nation, 2001) and these words are likely to have been encountered before for students who have studied English for many years. Academic words (Coxhead, 2000) are usually highlighted in yellow, but in this poem, there are none. Academic words are not discussed in Study 2 because the course was not explicitly teaching academic writing and appeared rarely in the poems themselves.

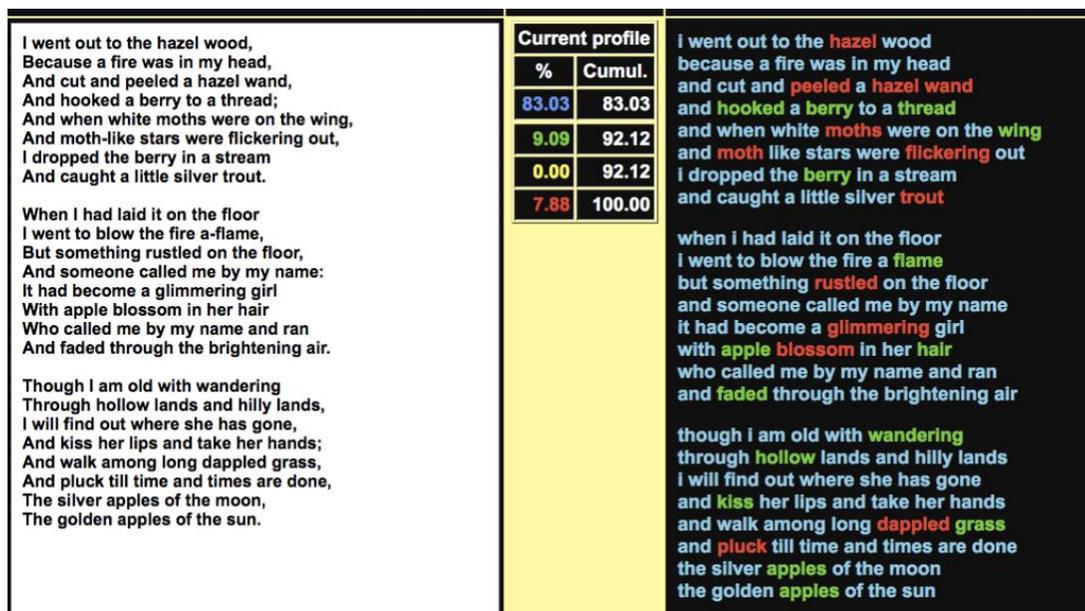


Figure 4.5 LFP of “The song of wandering Aengus” with K1000, K2000 and Off-list words

In Figure 4.5, the words “wood” and “head” are from the K1000 level, “berry” and “thread” are from the K2000 and are also high frequency, and words in red are off-list, and less likely to be known. What is key here is that these high-frequency words are likely to be known by Japanese university students who are at least working at the B2 CEFR level (Council of Europe, 2001).

LFP is used in evaluating the difficulty of texts, learning burden and readability. Figure 4.3 shows the LFP of the Yeats poem, “The Song of Wandering Aengus” and Table 4.1 shows the lexical features of all six poems. Token count is the total number of running words in the poem. Types refers to the number of different words, counting words of the same stem as individual types. What this means is that in the Yeats poem, the word “apple” and “apples” is counted as one type. Lexical density is calculated by dividing the number of content words by the total token count, although with such short texts of different lengths, the lexical density is not a strong measure of comparison.

Assuming that the poetic line is the basic unit of measuring a poem, the number of lines in the poems is worth noting. The Miyazawa poem was the longest, at 35 lines, and the Thomas poem the shortest at 19 lines (as seen in Table 4.1). One student commented that she was not used to punctuation in a poem, and the Miyazawa poem is translated in one, long sentence in English. The punctuation, such as frequent use of questions in the Blake poem, along with

sentence length (Wordsworth and Yeats having the longest sentences) could create difficulty for learners of English.

Alternatively, it could provide an opportunity to talk about punctuation, or consider the way that ideas are constructed, or discussion on the differences between Japanese and English poems. As Figure 4.5 shows, the Yeats poem contains three long sentences with use of semi-colons, commas and long sentences. The long sentences require careful reading and re-reading, encouraging time spent on the poem.

The following discussion assumes that difficulty is a barrier to engagement and interest, although the opposite could also be true in that poems which look more difficult could produce more thoughtful discussion and interpretation. There are of course more dimensions to the difficulty of a poem (see Yaron, 2008; Castiglione, 2017), but vocabulary profile is useful as a beginning guide. Overall, lexical density for these short texts helps to illustrate the possible difficulty caused by repetition, although the short length of the text makes this value difficult to compare with other text types. Some details from Table 4.1 are discussed in the following section.

Table 4.6 Lexical features of the poems used in Study 1 and Study 2

poem	No. of lines	No. of sentences (average)	Tokens	Lexical density	K1000 (%)	K2000 and AWL	Low-frequency /off-list words (%)
1	35	1 (240)	240	0.53	85.0%	10.4%	attentively, blockhead, dither, exhausted, miso, pine, robust, shedding, thatched, triviality, vegetables (4.5%)
2	19	8 (8.1)	168	0.58	83.3%	7.2%	blaze, forked, frail, grieved, height, lightning, meteors, rage, rave (9.5%)
3	24	15 (9.4)	124	0.59	69.7%	9.9%	anvil, aspire, clasp, deadly, deeps, dread, furnace, grasp, immortal, lamb, sinews, spears, symmetry, terrors, thee, thine, thy, tyger (20.4%)
4	24	3 (50.3)	153	0.49	76.2%	9.7%	bliss, breeze, couch, daffodils, o'er, fluttering, gazed, glance, glee, jocund, mood, oft, pensive, solitude, sparkling, sprightly, tossing, twinkle, vacant, vales (14.2%)
5	24	3 (54.3)	165	0.46	83.0%	9.1%	blossom, dappled, flickering, glimmering, hazel, moth, peeled, pluck, rustled, trout, wand (7.9%)
6	20	4 (36)	144	0.49	92.4%	3.5%	diverged, sigh, traveler, trodden, undergrowth (4.1%)

The poems were “Ame ni mo makezu” by Kenji Miyazawa (1933), “Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas (1953), “The Tyger” by William Blake (1794), “I wandered lonely as a cloud” (also known as “Daffodils”) by William Wordsworth (1807), “The song of wandering Aengus” by W.B. Yeats (1899) and “The road not taken” by Robert Frost (1915).

4.5.2 Lexical frequency profiles of the poems in Study 1 and Study 2

Beginning with the Japanese poem, Table 4.6 shows that the number of tokens was highest of all six poems, at 240, with the Miyazawa poem also having the largest number of types (142). This means that the poem had relatively low repetition of words. The Miyazawa poem had over 95% high frequency words at the K1000 and K2000 levels which would suggest that the text would present little difficulty in reading. The Miyazawa poem has words such as “miso”, “pine” and “thatched”, but familiarity with Japanese rural life would reduce the linguistic barrier, and students received the Japanese version of the poem to read also. It was not predicted that the vocabulary level or content of the Miyazawa poem would be difficult for this group of students.

By looking at the vocabulary profile of the Thomas poem it is possible to predict its difficulty for L2 readers. Most of the vocabulary in the poem is not difficult for advanced learners in terms of reading and pronunciation. The vocabulary is simple, with use of short, high-frequency words. The poem is made up of 90.4% high-frequency words, with 168 tokens and 98 different word types (type/token ratio: 0.58). In this poem, high-frequency words from the first 1000-word level include “age”, “dying”, “eyes”, “night” (83.3% of the words in the poem). There are 7.2% of words from the K2000 list of most commonly used words, and examples are “burn”, “light”, “wild” and “wise”. Adding these two together, 90.5% is still too low for the text to be read comfortably without a dictionary (Laufer and Nation 1995), and in the activity itself, several students worked with the dictionaries quite closely, annotating the poem using translations of the words. This reading behaviour suggested that the words themselves were not difficult, but that the poem as a text presented difficulty. One off-list word, “rage”, is repeated throughout the poem and appears eight times (accounting for 4.8% of the poem’s total running words). That is to say, the high-frequency K1000 and K2000 lists (90.5%) and the single word “rage” (4.8%) accounted for over 95% of the running words of the poem. Difficulty in reading a poem goes beyond the word level, but the vocabulary profile suggests that the poem would be suitable for this activity as long as dictionaries could be used.

The lexical analysis of the Blake poem reveals that the poem had the lowest number of individual types (74) out of 124 running words in the poem. What this indicates is that the poem features relatively high repetition, which is not surprising when considering that the first and last stanza are the same, except for one word. The repetition of words affects the lexical density score (0.59), with content words such as “tyger”, “immortal” and “dread”, all of which appear more than once through the poem. The repetition of the words can be helpful for readers who

understand key words and have a clear impression of why they are being used repeatedly. However, the opposite feeling, one of unease, could result in the reader having an unclear sense of understanding the repeated words, and the repetition may feed into this problematic lack of comprehension. There are 8 sentences in the poem, with frequent use of wh- questions. Some students were put off by the spelling of tiger as “tyger”, and archaic uses of pronouns such as “thy”, which they could not account for.

In a study of the language of Blake’s poems, comparing poems from the “Innocence” collection with the “Experience” collection, the aesthetic scores for pleasantness, activation and imagery was compared (Whissell, 2005). The “Tyger” poem was found to be the least pleasant of all poems, where pleasantness would signal the use of positively associated words such as “beauty” and “peace” and in the poem, references to “fear” and “dread” brought the score down overall. The “Tyger” poem was more emotional than the reference corpus used in the study, causing Whissell to conclude that emotional words were used in many Blake poems, contrasting good and evil in the less pleasant ones and that “Tyger” contains use of these extreme emotional words. She concludes that “Blake's writing is saturated, not only with imagery but with words of high emotional impact” (Whissell, 2005, p.465). In Study 2, learners were able to use dictionaries and research the poems before the day of the activity, and so the difficulty of reading the poems and understanding them would be reduced, but it could accumulate in a difficult poem and result in less confident or detailed responses.

The next poem, “Daffodils”, is a 24-line poem made up of three long sentences, with 153 tokens and 105 types. There are a high number of words appearing only once, such as “solitude”, and “sprightly” and a low number of repeated words, as shown by the token per type score (1.46). This would be likely to result in slow reading, difficulty in making progress in understanding, or extensive dictionary use. The word “daffodils” is included in the off-list words. 14.2% of the words in the poem are off-list, including some highly unusual words such as “pensive” and “blissful”. However, it should also be mentioned that these four poems are all so short that their token counts, even with relatively high type/token ratios, still result in fewer dictionary checks than an intensive-reading newspaper article. Despite the high number of new, novel or unusual words in some of these poems, none of the students in the study gave up reading or reported any frustration with the sheer volume of words to look up. Observing students reading and glossing the unknown words in a poem showed focused attention to the activity. This poem is also one of the most famous poems and was easily researchable online.

“The song of wandering Aengus” by W.B. Yeats is also made up of three long sentences, which are the length of the stanzas. The token count is 165, with 98 types or unique words. The lexical density is 0.46 and the lowest of the six poems, suggesting that the poem would present the least resistance to reading, assuming that higher lexical density presents more difficulty. As Figure 4.5 shows, the K1000 and K2000 words of the poem make up 92% of the poem, leaving some off-list words such as “blossom” and “moth” which might require dictionary work. The off-list words are mainly related to the natural world, with several verbs: “peeled”, “rustled” and “pluck”. These could all be translated without difficulty and the poem was not predicted to present difficulty from its lexical profile.

The last poem of the six, “The road not taken”, contains 144 running words and 94 tokens. The vocabulary of the poem is mainly from the high frequency K1000 (92.4%) and K2000 (3.5%) lists, with only 4.1% of the words being off-list (low frequency). Assuming that the LFP can help predict difficulty which could also affect engagement with the poem, the Frost poem would seem to present the least barrier to understanding.

To sum up this section, the LFP of the poems helps predict the difficulty of the poems on first reading, by considering the amount of dictionary use which would be required to read and understand the poems. The oldest poem by Blake was potentially the one with the greatest barrier to reading because of its high proportion of off-list words (20.4%). As the poems become more recent, they have fewer outdated or difficult words, with the Frost poem only having five such words, including “diverged” which is repeated twice in the poem (4.1% off-list). Whether or not the higher number of difficult words could be related to lower levels of engagement and successful interpretation of the poems is investigated in the following chapters. It may be predicted that the Blake poem stands out amongst these four as the one which presents potentially the most problems for learners.

4.6 Data categorization

This section describes the data categorization procedures for Study 1 and Study 2.

4.6.1 Study 1

Data categorization of the conversations in Study 1 was done in three steps. In the first step, the data were prepared and organised; second, an adapted coding system was established; and the third step confirmed coding reliability. The steps were:

1. *Preparing the dataset.* All of the conversations were transcribed using a broad transcription with the focus on what was said and not focusing on details such as pauses, intonation, or non-verbal communication. Pseudonyms were used for all the subjects in the transcription. I transcribed the conversations word for word without making grammar corrections. I conducted a running word count for each of the protocols to establish the amount of conversational input each participant had. To help decide on how to separate the conversations into items to be coded, I used the Flower and Hayes (1981) approach of using sections of discourse instead of using sentences. The resulting units for coding were of a variety of lengths. The transcriptions were uploaded to NVivo as text files and the video files were also added to NVivo and used when looking at points in the data where non-verbal communication occurred, such as pointing at the dictionary definition or nodding. I read through the data, carefully considering contributions made by the participants such as questions, lengthy quotations from the poems, and references to reported affect.

2. *Adapting a coding system.* The protocols were analysed initially by using an adapted version of the coding system created by Hanauer (2001a) in his poetry reading study. The simplified version of the coding was to look for categories of *noticing*, *questioning*, *interpretative hypothesis/elaboration*, *world knowledge* and *integrating world knowledge*. The first category, *noticing*, includes quoting or paraphrasing of words or phrases, noticing repetition and other literary features and noticing idiosyncratic uses of language. The second category is *questioning*, which is when a speaker asks a question directly relating to part of the poem. *Interpretative hypothesis* means explaining a section or part of the poem which could be in answer to a question from the partner. In the current study, this category combines with *elaborative statement*, which occurs when using a paraphrase of the original text. The fourth code is *world knowledge*, which means general knowledge and presents as a response to a question or interpretation. The fifth code is *integrating knowledge*, which occurs when two interpretive comments are linked. In the Hanauer study there was no code for feelings of

like/dislike, so those were additionally coded in this study and are referred to as the code *emotional responses* (positive or negative).

3. *Evaluating the reliability of the coding system.* The conversations were coded and then a second rater helped to confirm the coding system. The rater was an experienced university teacher at the same institution. The rater had experience working with poetry and teaching academic reading. This coder was minimally trained to independently identify the codes and agree or disagree with the coding of individual items. After discussing several codes which were possible to categorize more than once, agreement was high between raters. Twenty percent of the data were used to confirm the coding system, and the method was to provide the second rater with lists of coded data and ask them to confirm which of the codes could be suitable for each item. Some differences of opinion were resolved through discussion, and the reliability of the coding was found to be 93%. Through discussion with the rater, it was agreed that some items were found to be difficult to code. For example, some short expressions of agreement or other minimal utterances were not possible to code with the Hanauer codes alone. Hanauer (2001a) reports coding every part of the conversations in his study, although this was not possible with the data in the current study. This was resolved by creating the *emotional responses* code and using that where necessary, which was agreed by both raters to be a workable solution.

In the next section, we consider the processes of data categorization for the second study.

4.6.2 Study 2

Data categorization in Study 2 was conducted over a longer period. In the first step, the data were prepared, and some automatic counting and searching were done using computer software. The next step included an adapted coding scheme to identify features of the learners' writing; and third, as with Study 1, raters evaluated learners' writing. The results of this study are in Chapter 7. Details of these three steps are as follows:

1. *Preparing the dataset.* The writing was prepared for analysis by organising and allocating individual numbers for each writing. The texts were organised according to poem and the individual student. All responses were hand-written and then typed into a Google form by individual students. Before they were typed, they were submitted and all of the hand-written poetry responses were scanned to ensure that they would be accurately recorded. Spelling errors were corrected for this analysis because it involved type and token counts which would be affected by misspellings, but other grammar and errors were left as is. I checked each typed

version of the writing with the paper original which I scanned on the day of the activity. I read through the texts and got a general understanding of the type of answers which were being given. The homework was completed with varying levels of detail, with some students writing detailed notes and drawing images from the poem to help their explanations. I made notes about any pictures drawn and looked for completion of the final (optional) space on the instruction sheet which suggested that students could write their own poem in response to their reading. Only a small number of students did write poems, and it was not enough to compare the poems, so they were not included in the analysis but the scores for engagement with the homework were noted and are available for each participant along with their TOEIC scores and the length of the responses they produced.

2. *Adapting a coding system.* The poetry responses were initially analysed using automatic counting software. The software coded for lexical content including verb sophistication and lexical density. A separate analysis found words which showed L2 poetic engagement. The quantitative analysis was done in some detail to compare the two times that the students took the same poem (pre- and post-) and to compare the responses of the four different poems. To score cognitive engagement with the preparation materials, the homework was evaluated using a scoring system, and the results are presented in Chapter 7.

3. *Evaluating the reliability of the coding system.* Three colleagues familiar with writing classes and literature scored a selection of the responses (25% of the total) using holistic scoring. They received minimal training and instructions on the criteria for evaluating responses (Appendix F). Using the results of the rating for engagement, the final part of the analysis was to compare some responses which were rated 'high' engagement with the scores on the automatic coding. The results to Study 2 are reported in Chapter 7.

The next three chapters present results, beginning with the background experiences questionnaire. Following that is the chapter reporting on poetry conversations (Study 1). The poetry activity was then adapted to include preparation time (one week at home) and a writing activity. The third results chapter presents the results of the written responses activity (Study 2).

CHAPTER 5: POETRY EXPERIENCES OF JAPANESE LEARNERS

5.1. Introduction

Poetry is an affair of the heart and I learned that people can change their thinking by reading it (詩はここで感じ、読む人によって印象が変わる詩があることを学びました). (Student 326)

As discussed in Chapter 2, poetic engagement is understood in this thesis to mean either cognitive engagement, emotional engagement or social engagement with poems. The current chapter looks at how learners had previously interacted with poetry as part of their L1 literacy practices. That is to say, the current chapter reports on how L2 learners recall their L1 encounters with poetry from their early experiences reading and writing using poems in school. The elements of L1 poetic engagement may be understood through learners' recollections of learning experiences, which may have been memorable, meaningful, or otherwise. The current chapter reports responses to a poetry experiences questionnaire with the aim of exploring learners' attention (cognitive engagement) with poetry, their feelings (emotional engagement) and also their comments about their social interactions (with teachers, classmates or with the poems they read). As we will see with the answers to a poetry experiences questionnaire, attention to detail about poetry can include aspects such as discussion of poet or the speaker in the poem, expressing a personal view in response to a poem, referring to the social context or details about a poem's writing, or using personal pronouns to signal personal connection with the poems. What is interesting in these answers is the degree of detail, which is provided about poetry encountered in elementary school, i.e. from age six to twelve. The results suggest that when Japanese learners recalled their early experiences with poetry, that many of these encounters were memorable and emotionally engaging.

Building on the general research question for the thesis (i.e. *How do Japanese university-level learners of English engage with poetry in English?*), the research question for this chapter is: *How do extant poetry-reading experiences of Japanese students affect their engagement with poetry in English?* The approach is to try and learn more about the background of the students and to use that information to discuss how Japanese learners may have engaged with poetry in their earlier experiences encounters with poems. As we saw in Chapter 3, L1 literacy practices in Japan feature poetry in Japanese and classical Chinese, and poetry is used to assist

with learning about culture as well as language. Literary experiences continue throughout a person's life, from early language development and into adulthood (Miall and Kuiken, 1994). Personal reading histories can be diverse but also individual reading histories may reveal similarities or themes. Sections 5.2, and 5.3 present selected results of the questionnaire. Implications for L2 poetic engagement are discussed in part 5.4 of this chapter.

From these answers I expected to find connections between poetry experience and prior language learning, as well as hoping to identify gaps in understanding. In earlier research looking at the interrelation between foregrounding and complexity, Zyngier, van Peer and Hakemulder (2007) asked simple questions about poems i.e. 'Is this an example of good literature?' and 'Did you enjoy reading this story?' (p.667), reporting on a variety of results. Similarly, the aim here was to allow for open answers and honest replies. It was hoped that the use of an open-ended questionnaire would help to illuminate the topic in greater detail and identify aspects of engagement with poetry.

5.2 Experiences with poetry

The Background Experiences Questionnaire (BEQ) asked about learners' poetry understanding and backgrounds. In this chapter, the focus is on how each question relates to L2 poetic engagement. The participant data which includes the student numbers used in this chapter are available in Appendix C. The questionnaire has 7 questions, and students could submit their answers in English or Japanese. In looking closely at literacy and poetry, I borrow the term "poetic literacy" (Peskin, 1998, 2010) to refer to the school learning which features poetry in Japanese L1 literacy practices. This chapter also considers the idea of "poetic inquiry" (Prendergast, 2009), which is related to reflective practice (Farrell, 2007) in that learning about the background of the learners inevitably leads to increased learning about teaching practices and teacher reflection. The in results in this chapter suggest that students have had a variety of experiences reading poetry in Japanese, but that these experiences were mainly limited to reading aloud in Japanese language classes.

The questionnaire (see Figure 5.1) was given to all students in the elective poetry class at the start of the semester in the first lesson. Out of 78 students who started the semester (one dropped out of the course), 63 completed the questionnaire (8 male, 55 female), despite receiving an email reminder from me after week two of the course. The form could be completed using

Japanese or English. The questionnaire was completed as an out-of-class activity and was not worth any part of the grade for the course. All students agreed to allow their answers to be used for research purposes at the beginning of the course, which included this homework activity. Several comments from the answers were used in the following classes in a warm-up speaking activity.

Questions about experiences reading and writing poetry

(Answers in English or Japanese are OK) 英語でも日本語でも良いので答えて下さい。

About poetry/詩について

1 What is your experience of learning about poetry before taking this class? 今まで行ってきた詩の学習についての経験を教えてください。

2 Do you know any famous poets? Write some details. 有名な詩人や俳人を知っていますか？その人物のことで知っていることをできるだけ細かく教えてください。

3 Do you know any quotes from poems or poets? 詩や詩人から好きな言葉がありますか？

4 Have you ever taken a creative writing class before? Yes or No. 今までクリエイティブライティングのクラスを受講したことがありますか？もしあるのであれば、できるだけ細かく教えてください。

5 What kind of writing have you done in your spare time before? Diary 日記 Poetry 詩や俳句 自分の自由な時間に今までどのようなものを自主的に書いたことがありますか？

Song lyrics 歌の詩 Other その他あればなるべく細かく

6 What would you like to learn from this class? Tick all that apply. このクラスで何を学習したいですか？あてはまるものすべてチェックして下さい。

- Learn about famous poets 有名な詩人について
- Learn about poets from other countries 他国の詩人について
- Write poems 詩を書くこと
- Discuss poems with classmates 詩についての意見をクラスメイトとディスカッション
- Read poems with classmates 様々な詩をクラスメイトと読む
- Use songs and music 歌や音楽を使っての学習
- Learn about poets` lives 詩人の人生について Other....

7 Write what you think poetry is. Opinion and individual ideas are OK. 「詩は、」で始まる段落を書いて下さい。自分の意見やアイディアを書いてくれても OK で。Poetry is....詩は...

Figure 5.1 Background Experiences Questionnaire (BEQ)

All the Japanese answers in the questionnaire were checked by a native speaker of Japanese and the translations were completed including discussion about the answers. The survey was not anonymized since all students used their student email accounts to access and answer the Google form. Although the Google form allowed for the answers to be collated quickly and easily, looking back it may have been easier to ask students to complete a paper-based questionnaire at the start of the semester instead as this could have produced a more successful proportion of students completing the activities.

From a wider cultural perspective, the implication of the focus on poetry in L1 literacy practices is that EFL learners in Japan have already had the beginning of “literary awareness” (Zyngier, Fiahlo and Rios, 2007) from the perspective of experiential reading. They have started to pay attention to the role that feelings play in literary response, although those feelings have in part been shaped by the classroom experience and are not entirely autonomous. The teacher’s influence in developing perspectives on a text has meant that encounters with poetry in school settings have been to some degree “manufactured” (Giovanelli and Mason, 2015, p.42). In the next section, we look at selected answers from each of the questions 1-7.

5.3 Selected results: “About poetry.... 詩について “

1. About poetry... What is your experience of learning about poetry before taking this class? (詩について今まで行ってきた詩の学習についての経験を教えてください。)

As we have seen in the earlier chapters of this thesis, poetic engagement is understood to mean cognitive, social and emotional engagement with poetry. In the L1 this may occur in early encounters with poems, and in the L2 classroom, poetic engagement will take place when learning with poetry and poetic language. In the next part of this chapter, we look at selected responses to the BEQ, and discuss their possible implications for L2 poetic engagement. Most of the answers to question 1 referred to poetry experiences in elementary school or junior high school, and the poetry was from *kokugo* (Japanese language) class. Where the student wrote in Japanese originally, the Japanese answer is also given, and the translations are my own. The Japanese and English have been kept as they were written i.e. grammatical errors were not changed or corrected.

Although the question does not explicitly ask for answers related to elementary school, many answers referred back to that stage of education. Elementary school was mentioned by 14 students, junior high by 19 and high school by 12 in either English or Japanese. Several comments about elementary school are included, such as “When I was elementary student, I read poems again and again in class, and home” (Student 110), referring to the practice or reading aloud from the textbook to help reading fluency, or “when I was in elementary school and junior high, I learned about poetry in Japanese class” (Student 319) connecting poetry with all levels of schooling from elementary onwards.

There is almost no learning about poetry. If we studied with learning a few poems, I remember the most famous poets such as Kaneko Misuzu, Kobeyashi Issa in elementary school. Other than that, I thought about something like tanka and haiku as homework in the summer holiday at junior high school. (詩についての学習はほぼ皆無です。数少ない詩の学習で行ったものとすれば、小学生の時に学ぶ金子みすず,小林一茶など有名な詩人の一番有名な詩を習って来ました。その他には短歌や俳句といったものは中学生まで毎夏の長期休暇の課題として考えたことがあります。)

Figure 5.2 Student 306 describes elementary school poetry experiences

In Figure 5.2 we have a comment from student 306, who did not seem to have clear memories of reading learning activities but did mention poetry writing as part of their experiences. Student 306 mentioned the famous poet, Misuzu Kaneko, whose work is read in elementary school and the *haiku* poet Kobeyashi Issa whose work described daily scenes of nature. The *natsuyasumi* (summer holiday) homework that this student mentioned is an important feature of the school year and is typically repeated every summer. Writing poetry about summer experiences is a common homework activity which includes poetry writing, appropriate for the requirement that *haiku* has a season word, so summer can be remembered according to its tastes, sights and sounds.

In contrast to Student 306’s comment, several students recalled poetry tasks in more detail. There were several recollections which included activities, e.g. “I read the poem of Kaneko Misuzu when I was elementary school. I remember I read it and draw a picture what I impression I got from the poem” (Student 324). While this recollection is not in itself a detailed comment, it does seem to be significant that the student has remembered the learning activity (drawing an

impression) which went along with the activity. An activity which would take a single lesson, or a portion of a lesson at elementary school more than ten years ago, is in a particular way significant. Relating this to cognitive engagement, attention on a particular learning activity is noteworthy here.

In high school, literature learning appears to have become more reliant on the teacher's interpretation of the text. One student explained the feelings of difficulty which emerged from this experience:

I just heard that the teacher explained the background of the work and the author. The things I felt when I read the work and the things, I wanted of the work explained by the teacher were often different, I thought the poem was difficult. Therefore, I do not feel that I had much fun. However, I liked reading poetry freely regardless of the author's intention. (作品や作者の背景を先生が説明するのをただただ聞いていました。私が作品を読んで感じたことと、先生が説明する作品のいいたいことが度々異なり、詩は難しいと思っていました。そのため、あまり楽しかったという印象はありません。しかし、作者の意図に関係なく自由に詩を読むことは好きでした。)

Figure 5.3 Student 314 describes secondary school poetry experiences

The answer in Figure 5.3, describes a typical classroom experience as reported by other students, with a teacher's explanation of meaning and authorial intention. Although the question did not ask them to comment positively or negatively, several comments suggested that their previous experiences did not involve them in the co-construction of meaning, i.e. the lessons were largely teacher centred. The classes in high school were often done with the exams in mind and used teacher-led approaches to poetry teaching. There were some comments from students which directly or indirectly referred to poetry as either tedious or difficult. The description matches what researchers have reported about experiences with large classes and traditional teaching styles in Japan (Cave, 2007; Sato, 2004). The problem of teacher knowledge given to students in traditional classrooms is not only a problem in Japan, however. As discussed in Chapter 1, literature classes problematically contain a knowledge gap between the teacher and student because the students are reading the text for the first time while the teachers has set answers to

deliver, usually for testing purposes. The resulting expert/novice dynamic can be frustrating for learners. The English translation of the original comment by the student expresses a feeling we can interpret as related to low autonomy in the learning environment because of the teacher's control of the content, and problems in understanding i.e. "I thought the poem was difficult". The experience described here would suggest negative emotional experiences, and even confusion. As a lasting memory of an interaction with poems, this type of recollection could bring resistance to new poems. Nevertheless, the student finishes the comment by saying that reading poems was enjoyable, which is perhaps surprising, but is certainly encouraging.

In high school, the focus on teacher explanations is more focused on the National Center Test for University Admissions (requiring correct answers in multi-choice tests) and teachers must prepare students for the test. Student 308 wrote about secondary school: "I was junior high school student, I learned about one poem which is wrote [sic] by Japanese poet in class" before going on to say that "in that time, I just read aloud to the point with my classmate, and then learned about its mean (sic) in shallow. So, it was very boring for me". As we saw in Chapter 2, emotional engagement may be positive or negative, and feelings of frustration or boredom are associated with negative emotional engagement. Student 308 can recall the poem and learning activities, but there is a sense that the interaction with a classmate did not include original interpretation, only drilling the name of poet and retelling the acceptable interpretations they had already been told.

Several other students commented openly about or hinted at their negative emotional engagement or lack of enjoyment of poetry classes: "I have studied about Japanese poetry in junior high school and high school. However, the study was only reading" (Student 321) and "teacher taught us many history and structures of the poetry but most of those were just memorization. As a matter of fact it was not so funny" (Student 301). Student 301 is being polite but expresses lingering feelings of negative cognitive emotion related to poetry experiences. As it turned out, Student 301 was one of the most diligent and hard-working students in the group, so his earlier experiences of memorization did not seem to have put him off studying poems completely. Other students mentioned their current learning with song lyrics and though their interests in music trying to understand poems e.g. "部活でバンドを組んでいるため詩に触れる機会があった/Since I formed a band as a club activity, I had the opportunity to touch poetry." (Student 115). However, overall, there were very few references to outside learning with poetry.

From the answers to question 1, it can be inferred that learning with poetry was a memorable experience for Japanese students and these were classroom experiences which they could relate to their current knowledge and learning. Students looking back at their school days are certainly reminded of the hard work it takes to remember difficult texts for exams and classroom grades. Their L1 encounters with poetry were cognitively engaging in the sense that they had been memorable (and perhaps meaningful), while the emotional engagement with poetry learning was seen through positive and negative comments about the poems.

Overall, reading the comments from all students was encouraging, e.g. “I have never learned about poetry, so I’m looking forward to taking this class in this semester” (Student 105). Overall, in answer to question 1, many students wrote about their feelings and experiences openly, suggesting recollections of cognitive and emotional engagement with poetry.

2. Do you know any famous poets? Write some details. (有名な詩人や俳人を知っていますか？その人物のことで知っていることをできるだけ細かく教えて下さい。)

The answers to this question revealed further recollections of encounters with poetry. The most frequently mentioned poets in question two were Kaneko Misuzu (18), Aida Mitsuo (14), Shuntaro Tanikawa (8), Matsuo Basho (6), Akiko Yosano (5) and Kenji Miyazawa (4).

Several answers written in English were about famous poets they had learned about in school. The answers were brief, containing basic biographical details. For example: “Matsuo: His important work is “Okuno hosomichi.” [The narrow road to the deep north]. He is famous in Edo era.” (Student 117). The information given was brief and reflects the style of learning basic information about a range of texts.

Students also connected their reading to other aspects of classroom learning, such as war history and the role of translation in bringing literature to a Japanese audience. Cognitive engagement, including attention towards the social context of writing, may be seen in the following example:

I know about Akiko Yosano, whose brother went to war. She wrote a poem about her leaving brother. Its title is "Kimi shini taou kotonakare". It is in the book "Midaregami" and this made her the pioneer of poet of women. I also love the Masuji Ibuse's translation of "Kanshu", the famous Chinese poem. (Student 104)

There were several comments about female poets in particular. Kaneko Misuzu was identified as a poet whose work was memorable, i.e. “she is one of the famous Japanese woman poet. Her poetry shows feeling of something that doesn’t have word [sic]. Nature, snow, fish, flower, field etc... She wrote over 200 poetry however she died young. She lived near the harbor” (Student 303). Misuzu’s poems are short and sound like children’s songs or nursery rhymes. Her poems are usually used in elementary schools and her work is well known for that reason. Students knew Misuzu’s most famous work and explained their choices: “I like “Minna Chigatte Minna Ii.” It means “everyone is different, but everyone is good” (Student 317).

As discussed in Chapter 2, attention and focus are indicators of cognitive engagement, e.g. “I know Misuzu Kaneko, she is one of most famous Japanese female poet. She died at 26 years, but her poems are loved by many Japanese people, and poems are used in TV commercial of AC.... I like *kodamadeshouka* [Is it an echo?]. This is written by Kaneko Misuzu.” (Student 107). One additional reason why students may have thought of her work when asked about quotations is that the poem about an echo was used in public broadcasts immediately after the Great East Japan earthquake of 2011. Instead of the usual advertisements at that time, the poem was used, repeated several times per hour. The wide availability of poetry in public life is another reason why Japanese learners are familiar with poems from their cultural context, and Misuzu’s work is one which may be familiar from school learning and also outside encounters. A later follow up activity which we did in the poetry course was a homework task to investigate poetry in the linguistic landscape.

As well as discussing famous Japanese poets, students expressed familiarity with English poems from a previous course they had taken at the university entitled ‘Introduction to British Literature’. The course was taught in Japanese and was an elective course. The main reference was Shakespeare, with other students mentioning William Wordsworth, Robert Frost and William Blake, e.g. “Alfred Tennyson wrote “break break break” (Student 126) and “William Blake was born in London, and famous as a painter and a poet. “The songs of Innocence and Experience” is a typical of his work.” (Student 217). Internationally famous poets were also mentioned in this section. For example: “William Shakespeare is very famous poet. I don't know much about him, but he made a lot of great poems. I heard his was written in a difficult and unique English” (Student 310).

It seemed logical that background knowledge would help participants to engage with the poems because they knew about the poet. For example:

I know a famous poet whose name is Kenji Miyazawa. He is from Iwate prefecture where my grandparents are. He is good at writing about fiction world and his expression of nature is wonderful. Sometimes he writes about nature of Iwate. I love his affection for hometown. (Student 126)

Several students had remembered biographical knowledge of the poet and remembered details about his life. In the questionnaire (Chapter 5) one student wrote in answer to question two "Kenji Miyazawa. He was born on rich family, but those days, most people were poor. Therefore, Kenji tried to cheer them up by telling his story (poets or books)" (Student 321). Students wrote their knowledge of his famous poem Miyazawa and his most famous poem: "I don't know about poets in foreign country, but Japanese poets, I know Kenji Miyazawa. His famous poem is "Amenimomakezu" [Don't be defeated by the rain]" (Student 110). Miyazawa's work was well known to students, which is one reason why it was selected for use in Study 1.

3. Do you know any quotes from poems or poets? 詩や詩人から好きな言葉がありますか？

In answer to this question, a number of students wrote that they did not know or left the section blank. Other quotations came from, variously, John Lennon, Bob Marley, "The Little Prince" and other famous creative artists. None of these works could be categorized as related to school learning as they would not have been on the Japanese literature curriculum. The inclusion of song lyrics in these answers seems to suggest more background reading and understanding of poetry. Students wrote about their favourite lines from songs, for example: "I'm not sure whether this is a poem, may be a song lyric. Always look on the bright side of life is my favourite one" (Student 221). A number of students wrote that they did not know any quotes or have a favourite one. Twenty-one students out of sixty-three wrote that they did not know any quotes or skipped the question. This could mean that they were simply not interested in poems, or songs, but it might also indicate that they had difficulty in choosing a favourite text or were not clear about their own opinions.

4. Have you ever taken a creative writing class before? (今までクリエイティブライティングのクラスを受講したことがありますか？もしあるのであれば、できるだけ細かく教えて下さい。)

No student reported ever taking a creative writing course before. This was expected, since I had taught the same class previously and had not met any students yet who had done creative writing in any of their courses. However, if they had participated in another class at the university or in high school which they considered to fit the description, it would be helpful to know. It was useful to have this information to understand the position of learners and understanding that they had not before had what they recognised to be creative writing experiences.

5. *What kind of writing have you done in your spare time before?* (自分の自由な時間に今までどのようなものを自主的に書いたことがありますか?) *Diary* 日記 *Poetry* 詩や俳句 *Song lyrics* 歌の詩 *Other* その他あればなるべく細かく)

In answer to question 5, the main information that several students gave was that they had experiences writing diaries in their childhood. Out of 63 responses, the most common answer was “Nothing” “No” or similar. Only 7 students reported writing in their spare time. However, because of the previous focus on school memories, students wrote about their homework instead of writing about anything more recent. In any case, the numbers of students who reported doing any kind of writing for enjoyment, even in their L1, was very low. This is significant in developing an impression of the background experiences with poetry, particularly in the sense that any learning using poetry had only been briefly done, in school, and was not recognised as a strong feature of their choice of activities outside the classroom. Exceptions to this would be students who refer to writing their own songs and of sometimes even writing their own poetry. In my experience with the poetry course, usually in a class of 25 there is at least one person who loves music, is in a band, and can share that type of writing experience.

Poetic literacy means that reading poetry over time in education settings brings particular expectations, during which time the reader grasps the notion that there will be a message of significance along with recognition of language devices, including metaphor and idiosyncratic language. None of the students had ever taken a creative writing class before (question 4) and most experiences with writing about poems had been through diaries and writing *haiku* or *tanka*, two short forms of Japanese poetry. Cave (2007, p.103) also found that sixth-grade elementary students had similar writing experiences; he also reported that learners writing diaries was a kind of expressive writing.

6. *What would you like to learn from this class?* このクラスで何を学習したいですか？
あてはまるものすべてチェックして下さい。

Learn about famous poets 有名な詩人について

Learn about poets from other countries 他国の詩人について

Write poems 詩を書くこと

Discuss poems with classmates 詩についての意見をクラスメイトとディス
カッション

Read poems with classmates 様々な詩をクラスメイトと読む

Use songs and music 歌や音楽を使つての学習

Learn about poets' lives 詩人の人生について

From the answers given to question 6, the most popular topic to learn about in the class was “Use songs and music” (59) and then “Learn about poets from other countries” (52) and then “Discuss poems with classmates” (46) and “Read poems with classmates” (42). Thirty-three students wrote that they would like to “Learn about poets’ lives” and thirty-one were interested in learning about famous poets. The lowest numbers were to “write poems” with only four students aiming to do that out of the group.

7. *Write what you think poetry is. Opinion and individual ideas are OK.* 「詩は、」で始まる段落を書いて下さい。自分の意見やアイデアを書いてくれても OK で。
Poetry is…詩は…

In question 7, students explained their current understanding of poetry which revealed thoughtful insights. English comments have been left as is (English translations are my own and were checked by a native speaker of Japanese). One emerging theme from the comments about poetry was that poetry is concerned with emotions, thoughts and feelings, and that as a result of learning with poetry, it may be possible to change our feelings. For example, one student wrote:

Poetry expresses the agility of the heart with words, and those who read thoughts with words can also feel those thoughts. (詩は、心の機敏さを言葉で形容し、その言葉にのせられた想いを読む者は汲み取りそして感じる).
(Student 304)

From this example, it is clear that a degree of background knowledge of poetry is known to the student. 心の機敏さ/*kokoronokibinsa*, “the agility of the heart” can also be translated at “mental agility”. In this sense, the student has made an interesting connection between poetry and the development of mental toughness, perhaps in relation to dealing with difficulties in life. There is a clear purpose for poetry. Student 304 has made sure to connect the experience of poetry with meaning outside of any lesson. As mentioned in the opening chapters of this thesis, poetry in Japan can mean wider experiences such as viewing the full moon or cherry blossoms, listening to an old story or proverb, or writing calligraphy. Cognitive engagement can be demonstrated when language provides evidence for these processes. Examples are “I think”, uses of questions and so on. The sense is that poetry is a personal experience but is universal. In the next example, Student 326 goes further to suggest that poetry can influence and change thinking.

Poetry is an affair of the heart, and I learned that people can change their thinking by reading it (詩はこころで感じ、読む人によって印象が変わる詩があることを学びました).
(Student 326)

Uta wa kokoro de kanji (詩はこころで感じ) translates to mean that a poem is closely related to feelings and how the heart (*kokoro*) is affected. This comment describes the idea that poetry can change thinking or change understanding. The notion of individuality (*kosei*) is implicit here, as issues related to feelings and the heart are usually personal. The expression *inshō ga kawaru* (印象が変わる) has a nuance of a first encounter, in the same way that we might use the expression “first impressions” in English. Cognitive engagement with the activity of talking about poems in an exploratory way may be seen in Student 326’s creative answer.

The next example, written in English, gave an explanation not only of reading experience, but also linked the experience to the process of reading and response to a poem:

I think poetry is escaping from reality. While I reading poetry or lyrics, I depart adventure in imagination world. When I come back to real world, I can feel something hot in my heart.
(Student 126)

This student explains the benefits of poetry to help build an imaginary defence against reality. Instead of hearing that fiction or movies can result in a kind of trading transportation (Gerrig, 1993), for this student the experience of poetry seems to do so. The end result is a lingering effect of reading, “something hot in my heart”. Student 216’s comment also has a link to the

notion of the personal growth model of literature teaching from Carter and Long (1991) and encourages further investigation of the topic of cognitive and emotional engagement.

Several of the comments in English were memorable and show cognitive engagement with the questions and the topic. One example of a comment with a positive impression of poetry is “Poetry is one of the most beautiful ways to describe feelings and minds in our hearts” (Student 320), and related to emotions, one student stated that “Poetry is free, we can express what we see, what we hear and what we feel” (Student 217). Some students were interested in the wider purpose of poetry, which included national identity. For example, student 301 wrote “poetry is one of the fundamentals of literature. There for, sometimes poetry show us national characters and great poetry transmit from generation to generation”. One student wrote an answer which was poetic in itself:

Poetry is part of a human body. What we're made of. Just not sentences. Music is part of a human body. What we're made of. Just not sounds. Poetry and music are parts of me. What I'm made of. I think that poetry is a way to express myself.
(Student 119)

Of course, it is unlikely that students who are just beginning an elective course in a topic they have selected will have negative feelings about poetry, and it is natural that there would be a sense of positive expectation about the beginning of the course or wanting to please the teacher. In the English comments in particular, there was a well-meaning intention to think about poems which left an impression on me and further added to the initial feelings that I had about how poetry was suited to this particular group of learners.

While a number of students were unable to remember quotes or poets, there was no one who left question 7 without an answer. All of the group could give a definition of poetry, even those who were unsure which poets or what poems they had read before. This seems to suggest that even though this group of learners were limited in their confidence to recall and quote poetic knowledge openly, they had a positive disposition from which to talk together about poems.

5.4 Implications for L2 poetic engagement

Poetry makes me think (詩は考えさせられる) (Student 106)

In this thesis, L2 poetic engagement is viewed as a combination of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and social engagement, observable when learners interact with poetry. The results of this questionnaire can be interpreted to support the view that poetic engagement occurs when learners are cognitively and emotionally engaged with reading poetry. The answers given revealed what these Japanese learners recalled about poetic engagement in their L1 learning, in early encounters with poetry. In this section, we consider what the results mean for the overall thesis and L2 poetic engagement. As explained in Chapter 2, we are concerned with focused, reflective interaction with poetry, and the questionnaire revealed aspects of learners' previous encounters with poetry in their L1 literacy practices. As we saw from the answers in this chapter, previous experiences of learning with poetry in the L1 which were memorable could indicate how much and in what ways that cognitive engagement (focused, reflective interaction and attention), social engagement and emotional engagement (curiosity, anxiety or other emotions) occurred in the L1 and how it could develop in the L2 learning context. While some previous experiences with learning poems (through memorisation for example) could support the view that poetry is difficult, many of the experiences recalled tended towards a positive inclination and appreciation of poetry.

As outlined in Chapter 2, cognitive engagement can be seen when learners use reflection, as it is used when thinking carefully and using sustained attention on a topic. It can be seen in the use of phrases such as “I think”, or through agreement and questioning. From the answers to the background experiences questionnaire, it is clear that these Japanese learners have already had L1 educational experiences with poetry and have a schemata for poetry. Japanese learners have background knowledge about poetry, and they are already able to show awareness of the genre of poetry. In my experience, the students did not require lengthy explanations of metaphor or other literary devices. Peskin called this “poetic literacy” (1998). Reading schemata exist for different types of text (such as narratives), and experienced readers have existing knowledge to draw on when they approach any given text. Several students also had early experiences writing short poems or reading translations of classical works from Chinese. A variety of poets were mentioned, suggesting that different types of poems have been memorable in a variety of ways.

Japanese readers seem to approach poetry with some of the same strategies as they would with information or expository texts. In a recent reader-centred study, Nishihara (2016) analysed Japanese university students' poetry reading strategies using Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by woods on a snowy evening". The students had not received training in literary response and were classified as having "limited experience of poetry reading" (p.163) and were a very mixed-level group with a variety of English proficiency scores. Nishihara's method was to use lesson time to give a class of students a poem to read and then ask them to complete an awareness-raising activity. Learners were asked to write their understanding of the poem, while also underlining up to three parts of the poem which "may have caught your attention" (p.156). Reflections were written in Japanese and no discussion between students occurred. The underlined sections were used to evaluate reading strategies, indicating that they are using similar strategies for both types of text. For example, learners were interested in repetitions in the text, just as repetition in an expository text would indicate importance or main points but could not explain literary features or understand poetry's sound-meaning related to repetition, alliteration or assonance. One interesting aspect of the reading strategies study was that Nishihara found that there was some background knowledge involved in the L2 reading. He concluded that the learners were over-reliant on expository reading strategies, and that more research into the topic would be helpful. He also found that "learners seemed to know the importance of literary language without being taught" (p.164), which could be interpreted to mean that they have some background knowledge about literature and bring a positive disposition to the reading of a poem, despite its difficulty.

From the perspective of L2 poetic engagement, it is clear from these answers that many of the students have had poetry reading experiences as part of their L1 literacy development. There appeared to be interest and enjoyment of poetry, but low confidence and only minimal evidence of independent poetry reading. Most poetry reading was done with the close guidance of the teacher, in a group setting, with textbook materials in class. The situation for *juken* preparation was more troublesome, meaning that most positive memories of poetry were from earlier, in elementary school. Finding out these points from students at the beginning of the class was useful for classroom activity planning, as well as consideration for the overall study. All of the group could define poetry, even those who were unsure who or what poems they had read before. The results seem to suggest that even though this group of learners was limited in their confidence to recall and quote poetic knowledge openly, they had a positive disposition from which to start talking about poems.

In this chapter, I have argued that in this case there are reasons why the cultural background of students has been useful in approaching poetry in English in Japan in the tertiary setting, and in this case, the topic of poetry in L1 literacy practices should also be seen to affect how tertiary-level students approach poems.

5.5 Conclusions

The current chapter reported the results of a questionnaire which sought to find out about background learning experiences with poetry. The main research question for this thesis is *How do Japanese university-level learners of English engage with poetry in English?*, and the research question for this chapter is: *How do extant poetry-reading experiences of Japanese students affect their engagement with poetry in English?* Through recollections and comments about school learning with poetry, learners' previous experiences appeared to affect their inclination towards poetry. On reflection, many learners described activities or poets favourably, even if the poetry lessons themselves used traditional teaching approaches or the learning methods were not active. The chapter discussed recollections of poetry learning with reference to cognitive engagement (focused, reflective learning), social engagement (interactions with peers or discussion of social contexts around poems, as well as personalising reading) and emotional engagement (which could be positive or negative).

Selected results of the questionnaire showed that all students were at least familiar with the idea of poetry, suggesting that they have existing schemata for understanding poetry, which could be opened and more fully recognised in their language learning classes. Not all students could name specific poets or poems, although many of the students could name at least one Japanese poet. From some comments about elementary school, it appears that poetry in elementary school was considered memorable, and some poems from junior high were also recalled in some detail. In elementary classes, some students remembered using post-reading activities such as writing their own poems or drawing pictures to show their understanding of poems. Students identified junior high and high school as the time when they had opportunities to read and understand poems, usually with the guidance of a teacher's interpretation. A minority of students only briefly mentioned outside learning of poetry.

Frequent references to elementary school and the choice of poems/poets mentioned indicated that most of these memories were from their early childhood and L1 literacy practices. While a number of comments about school experiences mentioned that the reading of poetry was tedious

or boring for them at the time, overall the questionnaire showed a favourable disposition to poetry and enthusiasm for the beginning of the course. While there is variation in the experiences which students report, and between primary education and university enough time has passed that details of poems may not be reliably recalled, there appears to be a degree of convergence and similarities between the observed experiences of Japanese learners in relation to poems. The shared understanding of class texts, the relative importance of poetic forms such as *haiku* and *tanka*, along with the strong use of textbooks as a key learning material, all lead to joint understandings of poems as a kind of built-in poetic schemata which could be understood and utilised in their English classes.

CHAPTER 6: SPOKEN RESPONSES TO POEMS

6.1 Introduction

As we saw in Chapter 2, engagement in this thesis means cognitive engagement (focused, reflective learning with own knowledge construction), social engagement (interaction, co-constructed meaning-making) and emotional engagement (either positive or negative). Here we focus specifically on conversations from pairs of language learners when talking together about poetry. From the results of the conversations, it was then possible to discuss aspects of the student talk in relation to L2 poetic engagement, looking for cognitive engagement, social engagement and emotional engagement.

One of the aims of this thesis is to bring together theories of education related to L2 engagement and see how they can apply to L2 learners' interactions with poetry. The current chapter uses codes and five categories from Hanauer's 2001 study and a sixth category to identify feelings as an emotional element of L2 poetic engagement. The category *emotional response* was used to try and account for the feelings expressed in the conversations, using the methods of previous studies of literary reading and emotional response (Eva-Wood, 2004a, 2004b; Zyngier and Fiahlo, 2010).

Following this, we apply the L2 poetic engagement framework to selected examples from the data. First, we consider cognitive engagement and focused attention (noticing, questioning, and so on) using the coded data. Social engagement appears when learners make comments about society such as those in the *world knowledge* category. Following that we discuss emotional responses which could be considered as emotional engagement. The chapter finishes with details about the method of data collection was adapted for Study 2.

6.2 Aims of Study 1

One of the aims of this thesis is to identify features of L2 poetic engagement from the perspective of sociocultural theory and through the lens of engagement. The aim of Study 1 was to trial the data collection method of using pairs of learners to talk together about poems, using coding from a previous study by Hanauer (2001a) and to discuss the results in light of L2 poetic engagement. The study also aimed to discuss how these findings could apply in the

Japanese university context and how they could be evaluated in terms of cognitive engagement, social engagement and emotional engagement, observable when these learners interacted with poetry in their paired conversations.

The current results chapter is in two parts and is guided by two research questions:

RQ3: What identifiable differences are there between the conversations that Japanese learners have about a famous Japanese poem and conversations that they have about an English poem and which of these types of poem results in greater L2 poetic engagement?

RQ4: What can Japanese learners' spoken responses to poems reveal about L2 poetic engagement and what are some pedagogical implications of the findings?

RQ3 is answered quantitatively by using a coding system to identify poetry reading features and discussing the differences between the conversations about the two poems. The chapter uses an existing coding system to analyse the responses. The second part of the current chapter addresses the link between the conversations and pedagogical implications. This question is answered qualitatively using selected examples from the pair-talk protocols, identifying sections of the talk between students which could be identified as showing L2 poetic engagement.

The details about the participants, procedures, and setting have already been provided in Chapter 4. Learners were asked to talk together to “try and understand what the poem is about” and also to talk about what they “liked or didn’t like” about the poem. The coding was done using NVivo software and the coding was additionally coded by a second rater. The poems used in this study were “雨ニモマケズ／Ame ni mo makezu” [Neither giving in to rain] by Kenji Miyazawa (1896-1933) from an anthologised collection (Sakai 2010, p.224-225) and “Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas (Thomas 1951), available in Appendix B. In sections 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7 we discuss these findings and then go on to look at how Study 2 was developed as a result of this investigation. Further discussion of the pedagogical implications of this chapter is presented in Chapter 8.

6.3 Descriptive results of poetry conversations

The results section of this chapter begins with describing the time spent on reading the poems and the running word counts for the protocols. The conversations were analysed by creating transcriptions of the conversations, as discussed in Chapter 4. To answer the first question concerned with differences between the conversations that the learners had about a famous Japanese poem and the conversations they had about an English poem, the length of protocols and running word counts show difference in amount of language produced. The learners spent less time reading the Japanese poem, but they had longer conversations about the Japanese poem.

6.3.1 Length of protocols

Four pairs of student participants read the poems using the instruction sheet and printed versions of the poems (Appendix C). The students had up to 15 minutes on each poem if needed, some of which time was spent on reading and glossing the unknown words using a dictionary. As for the time spent on each poem, the two poems were different. The Kenji Miyazawa poem did not require much time spent glossing words and pairs started talking together after an average of 3m27s. The Japanese version of the Miyazawa poem was also provided to students, and the students tended to read the Japanese one briefly first before looking at the English poem. The Miyazawa poems did not require much glossing, since the Japanese version was available for them to read on the same page, although it was written in a slightly archaic style. The conversations about the Japanese poem were longer, at an average of 9m47s, including one long conversation of 13m25s.

The students approached the Thomas poem by reading it closely and making notes on the page. The process was to translate words individually, conducting *yakudoku* (translating and reading), using glossing. Pairs spent on average 4m40s reading the poem carefully and writing in the words which they checked with their dictionaries before they started to speak. Students submitted their note papers at the end of the session and the Thomas poem had been annotated closely with Japanese translations of words written above or around the English poem. As Hino (1998) and Nault (2006) observed, and as Chapter 3 discussed, close reading skills are commonly associated with literature reading and are used by Japanese students in Japan. Underlining and circling were used when reading and talking together about this poem which challenges the reader and requires multiple revisits. When speaking together, however, the

conversations about the Thomas poem were shorter overall, with the time spent reading on average as 7m40s approximately. From this data, the Miyazawa poem appeared to provoke the quickest reading with little need for dictionary support, but longer conversations, and the Thomas poem required longer reading and glossing, with shorter conversations about the poem on average.

6.3.2 Running word counts

The conversations were transcribed using broad transcription and the NVivo qualitative analysis software. Mean word counts for the conversations for the Miyazawa poem were higher ($M = 275$, $SD = 143.4$) than the Thomas poem ($M = 178.2$, $SD = 27.9$). The running word counts do provide a snapshot of how the poems were received, although this does not reveal detail about the interest that the speakers had in the poems. For example, while the first poem seemed to have the most running words, the high SD reveals this was a variation which was due to the lengthy conversation of one of the groups only (pair 2). Their conversation got somewhat side-tracked and they started discussing what food they both liked to eat, which was conversational, but did not really mean that their conversation was deeper in analysis. None of the pairs had higher than 500 running words for their conversation about any poem. Even accounting for time to read and gloss the difficult words of the poem using a dictionary, the time spent talking and the amount of running words produced in the protocols were both short. In the next section, we identify some features of the conversations which the students had about the poems, comparing the answers to the two poems.

6.4 Coded categories of the poetry conversations

As we saw in sections 6.1 and 6.2, the chapter reports on paired conversations of Japanese learners' spoken interactions with poetry. The next section presents results from a coded analysis of protocols based on categories developed by Hanauer (2001a) using task-based principles (Skehan, 1996). According to Skehan, a task is an activity in which meaning is primary, there is a problem to solve, there is a relationship to real-world activities, task completion has some priority and the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome (Skehan, 1996, p.38).

Using Skehan's task-based approach as a framework for analysis, Hanauer's overall aim was to learn about the processes used when talking together about poetry so that he could help to design language learning syllabi, while hoping that his results would help others make courses which are "pedagogically meaningful" (2001a, p.297). This included quoting or paraphrasing of words or phrases, referring to repetition and other literary features and noticing idiosyncratic uses of language. *Noticing* is defined here as attention and awareness together, as it is used in the Hanauer categories. According to Hanauer, *noticing* is "direct evidence of close textual reading" (Hanauer 2001a, p.303) and occurs frequently when speaking about poems. As is the case with other linguistic terms, use of the word *noticing* means different things to different researchers and in different contexts. *Noticing* can be considered evidence of metalinguistic awareness (Gutierrez, 2008). The *noticing* category here is according to Hanauer's definition and not understood to be synonymous with the noticing hypothesis by Schmidt (1990). This important distinction indicates that the two terms are not interchangeable and Hanauer's definition is not meant to suggest that the Hanauer study uses Schmidt's hypothesis. From Svalberg's EWL framework, *noticing* is part of cognitive engagement in that it is focused attention. Students tended to use phrases from the poems directly or talk about individual lexical items.

From Table 6.1 we can see that the different categories of codes were found at varying frequencies in the protocols. Noticing, questioning and interpreting hypothesis were more frequent with the Japanese poem, while integrating knowledge was more frequently counted with the English poem. World knowledge and emotional responses were also more frequent with the Japanese poem. These results are to be expected since we know that learners spent more time on preparation for the discussion of the English poem, and because they had not seen the English poem before, it was new to all of them. In the next section we consider selected responses to the coding, using the EWL and L2 poetic engagement framework from Chapter 2.

Table 6.1 Coding of poetry conversations

Code	Poetry reading codes (adapted from Hanauer, 2001a)	Examples in responses to Japanese poem (frequency)	Examples in responses to the English poem (frequency)
1. Noticing	Directing attention to a particular aspect of a text. Includes quoting, noting words or phrases, repetitions, grammar and literary features.	“Neither giving in to rain nor giving in to wind” “Always keeping calm, never getting angry” “Eating one and a half bowls of brown rice” (26)	Every first sentence in each paragraph is “night” “right” “bright” “flight” and in the next sentence is “day” “they” “bay” “way” (17)
2. Questioning	Speaker asks a question directly relating to part of the poem.	Did you understand? How about you? (21)	Old people should rave and burn? Do not go gently into that good night? (17)
3. Interpretative hypothesis/ Elaborative statement	Interpreting a section or part of the poem. “direct evidence of the participant’s process of construction of meaning” (Hanauer, 2001a, p.304).	When I read this poem, I thought that this poem conveys the difficulty of life. For me, it’s difficult for me to be like this man because this man is always keeping calm (33)	This means don’t be gentle. Rage is angry. So, it means people want to live. So, people should express more “we want to live”. (9)
4. Integrating knowledge	Two interpretive comments are linked. i.e. when two interpretative hypotheses are linked or when one is linked to a statement of world knowledge.	It’s interesting way to show living, but it’s a little bit strict for us, I think. I think almost all people want to be like this person, but actually this is difficult to be like this person. (7)	The writer’s father can go to heaven. This is describing the anger against God, and also it is describing the fear of death through the experience of his father’s death, I think. (13)
5. World knowledge	General knowledge is presented as response to a question or interpretation. Does not involve direct analysis of content of the poem.	I know it’s famous, but I never seen this poem before. I think almost all Japanese people know all sentences. (16)	I think he is describing the fear of death between Christians and atheists. Dying means going to heaven. (8)
6. Emotional responses (positive or negative)	Emotional responses could be positive or negative, and they show emotional engagement with the poem through thoughts and feelings.	I just don’t like that kind of long poem and it’s kind of complicated. I hate this sentence: “Never getting angry. Always keeping a calm face” (20)	It’s a little difficult but we can enjoy the rhythm and the shape. And I felt a little serious and scary because “near death”. (6)

6.4.1 Cognitive engagement

As we have previously discussed, cognitive engagement is focused attention, shown through use of elaboration and own knowledge construction. In this section, we look at the categories from the coded responses which may be interpreted to be evidence for cognitive engagement. From there we can answer the research question for the chapter which is concerned with finding out which type of poem results in greater poetic engagement.

From the category of *noticing*, it is clear that the Japanese poem prompted more examples of noticing (26) compared with the English poem (17). Quoting, paraphrasing or drawing attention to the text is related to attention and can be understood as being evidence for cognitive engagement.

In the next category of *questioning*, there were different types of questions. Eva-Wood (2004a) noted that questions in discussions seemed to differ in their level of sophistication and she categorized the types of questions into three groups: 1) procedural 2) understanding and 3) interpreting questions. The first of these, procedural, do not relate directly to the text, and instead asking about classroom instructions or the materials. The second type, questions of understanding, were questions to do with the meaning of the poem overall and were used when students were part of the engaged reading strategies employed by learners but were not necessarily telling of student learning. The third type of question, interpreting questions, were “text-based - fundamental to further analysis of the poem discussed” (ibid, p.184). These questions and the different uses of the types of questions used by different learners can “indicate a greater level of engagement with the text and a more sophisticated analytical orientation” (ibid, p.184).

Understanding questions are described as “simple questions of meaning” such as “What does this word mean?” etc. In this data set there were some questions like this, and the category was expanded to also include questions asking for clarification such as “really?” or requesting information “did you like this poem?”. The results were procedural (6), understanding and requesting information (27) and interpreting (5). These were:

When does he think about himself?
Old people should rave and burn?
Dying of light is right?

Dark is correct?

Do not go gently into that good night?

Four out of five of these interpreting questions were from the Dylan Thomas poem. The poem seemed to raise questions for the students, showing interest and persistence with the poem, and also willingness to show gaps in understanding. Some of the questions for the Japanese poem were related to personal response such as “What did you like in this poem?” and “Which sentence do you like the most?”. According to Eva-Wood (2004a), interpreting questions are evidence of more sophisticated understanding. The questions were sometimes also quoting from the poems e.g. “Dark is correct?” and so they had to be coded as *noticing* also. The use of these codes was a useful first stage in analysing the data and the coding system did require some flexibility in application, as there were instances where some phrases and sections of the conversations had to be coded with more than one category. Nevertheless, it was useful to see that in this case, the more difficult English poem did result in frequent use of questions for both poems, and the questions had the effect of helping the discussions progress and co-constructed meaning to develop. From this, it can be interpreted that the English poem encouraged greater curiosity and co-construction of ideas since the frequent questions were related directly to interpretation and meaning of the poem, and therefore this category does offer some tentative evidence to suggest that L2 interactions with poetry, even difficult or new texts, could stimulate cognitively engaging interactions.

Maki:	<i>When I read this poem, I thought that this poem conveys the difficulty of life.</i>
Takako:	<i>For me, it's difficult for me to be like this man because this man is always keeping calm, he doesn't get angry. Which sentence do you like the most? I like here: "The person like this is what I want to be".</i>
Maki:	<i>Why?</i>
Takako:	<i>Why? I like this sentence also in the Japanese one.</i>
Maki:	<i>I like "Neither giving in to rain nor giving in to wind" because in the Japanese poem, I know only this.</i>
Takako:	<i>It's very catchy. And has impact.</i>
Maki:	<i>Yes.</i>

Figure 6.1 Cognitive engagement discussing the Japanese poem

The next category is *interpretative hypothesis* and *elaborative statement* which was two separate codes in the Hanauer study i.e. “direct evidence of the participant’s process of construction of meaning” (Hanauer 2001a, p.304). These two occurred frequently when talking about the Miyazawa poem (33) in comparison with the Thomas poem (9). Familiarity with the poem appeared to mean that topics, recurrent themes, and connections with experience resulted in more interpretation. One example of this was the comment from Figure 6.1 “When I read this poem, I thought that this poem conveys the difficulty of life” (Maki). Maki’s example can be understood as evidence for cognitive engagement because she is attempting some knowledge construction and is giving focused attention to the meaning of the poem.

The conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A STRUGGLE is clear in her summary of the poem’s message. Takako’s understanding of the poem is affected by her idea that the man is describing an ideal life, one which she can’t identify with because “he doesn’t get angry”. Takako makes a contradictory statement by saying that she likes the final line, while she has already said: “it’s difficult for me to be like this man.” Maki explains her choice of poem also by using previous learning and uses that to justify her choice. Students Takako and Maki appear to reach a consensus about the interpretation and agree with each other about their choices. In the follow-up interview, both admitted that they did not care for the poem very much, thus limiting their depth of interest in it.

The responses to the Thomas poem also had some interpretative hypothesis statements, but the explanations were attempted but were simple i.e. “this means don’t be gentle” and “dying means going to heaven”. There does seem to be a difference in the two poems related to encouraging detailed elaborations, with the Japanese poem resulting more lengthy elaborations. What this could mean for the current investigation is that with this particular English poem at least, conversations did not prompt detailed elaborations. It might be that other choices of English poems could be better at bringing about longer or more detailed elaborations and cognitive engagement.

Integrating knowledge, which is when two ideas are combined, and is evidence of cognitive engagement and focused attention. This category occurs in both of the conversations, with the Thomas poem (13) prompting more than the Miyazawa poem (7). For the Thomas poem, *integrating knowledge* was necessary since the poem is being understood for the first time and present challenges. “The writer’s father can go to heaven” is a combination of two ideas that the student has worked out, first that the poem is about the poet’s father, and next, that there is a sense of closure about the poem which symbolizes heaven. One student, Hiro, seemed intrigued

by the religious element of the poem (according to his perspective) and explained his ideas in the following way: “This is describing the anger against God, and also it is describing the fear of death through the experience of his father’s death, I think”.

6.4.2 Social engagement

As we saw in Chapter 2, social engagement, when positive, means interaction, negotiation, and co-constructed meaning-making. Social engagement could also mean disagreement, reluctance to interact or rejecting another person’s opinion. In the next brief section, we consider social engagement, beginning with a focus on the category world knowledge, and then considering other aspects of the protocol which have a social aspect.

World knowledge appears to be similar to the moment in literary awareness which Zyngier identified as “awareness” or understanding, which is necessary on the way to the stage of textual interpretation. Zyngier and Fiahlo’s interest in the “experiential” reading which occurs with poetry and affects the personal development of the reader is also related to this code. *World knowledge* was coded 16 times for the Japanese poem and 8 times for the English poem.

Figure 6.2 includes examples of *world knowledge* which has been used to move the conversation forward. Figure 6.2, in answer to the question “This is famous, right?” Hiro states: “I know it’s famous, but I’ve never seen this poem before” at the beginning of the conversation with Katsuhiko. Appel and Lantolf (1994) discuss this kind of externalising as evidence for textual processing, in this case taking a position which considers individual opinion of the poem. The pair have to get past a different level of understanding of the poem, and the fact that Hiro has not read this famous poem before. The two speakers go on to reach an agreement to some degree, even once they have navigated through their different background understanding of the poem. There is some work on both sides to help the conversation work fluently, for example when Katsuhiko asks “Really?” and then agrees “Absolutely”. The poem’s message, as interpreted by Hiro to be advice for living, was not shared by the two speakers, but they agreed that they have a different perspective from the poet. This could be expected, as Miyazawa was from a different generation, writing in the pre-WW2 period. The conversation seems to allow Hiro and Katsuhiko to share their understanding of the poem while rejecting its message.

Hiro knew the poem but did not recall reading it before (Hiro spent some of his childhood overseas and may not in fact have encountered it). Hiro explains what he thinks and feels about the poem, using some background knowledge of the poem’s status as being famous. Katsuhiko

agrees to his suggestion using some *world knowledge* in stating that “the ideal of man, or humankind” is to be humble and not show off wealth “don’t be rich” and that it is “a little bit strict for us.” Both students use the text carefully to justify their answers. Hiro and Katsuhiko both agreed that the message of the poem seemed to be an old-style way of thinking and that they did not feel that the text appealed to young readers.

Katsuhiko: *Let’s start with Kenji Miyazawa. This is famous, right?
What is the question? [looks at instruction sheet]*

Hiro: *I know it’s famous, but I’ve never seen this poem before.*

Katsuhiko: *Really?*

Hiro: *To be honest with this poem, I don’t like that kind of poem.*

Katsuhiko: *Really? Why?*

Hiro: *I just don’t like that kind of long poem and it’s kind of complicated. It’s based on that lifestyle. You know. I don’t know how to explain but “eating one and a half bowls of brown rice” and some vegetables every day. I don’t like that kind of stuff.*

Katsuhiko: *Absolutely. Yes, yes, yes. This is the ideal of man, or humankind. So those things. How can I say? Don’t be rich.*

Hiro: *I know.*

Katsuhiko: *It’s interesting way to show living, but it’s a little bit strict for us, I think. “The person like this is what I want to be” I don’t want to be like this.*

Figure 6.2 Social engagement discussing the Japanese poem

From the perspective of social engagement, we can use the references to personal pronouns as evidence of involvement and co-constructed meaning-making. With the section of conversation from Figure 6.2, it could be interpreted that making decisions about texts and expressing ideas by saying “I think” or “I thought”, “I like” or “I don’t like” is part of negotiating and “can” “find”, “believe” and “think” and reaching conclusions help to show the social side of reading the poem together. From the above example, both Hiro and Katsuhiko show some autonomy in their conversation in that Hiro states clearly “I don’t like that kind of poem”, and later Katsuhiko agrees “it’s a little bit strict for us” and “I don’t want to be like this”.

In the follow-up interview, Katsuhiko also talked about the poet a little more, explaining that Miyazawa was from Northern Japan (where he was also from), and his thinking was related to that fact. Hiro had looked online to find out more about the Thomas poem, as he was interested in the poet's life and the possible meanings of the poem. The Miyazawa poem provided a useful practice opportunity for students to talk about their feelings, expressing their opinions and talking together about their background knowledge of what they have read.

We have seen how social engagement occurs when learners are talking together about complex or difficult topics. When helping each other to reach an agreement about understandings emerging from the poem, engagement is seen through negotiation, agreement /disagreement and an urge to reach a shared goal of understanding and connection. In the next section we look at examples from the data which show emotional engagement.

6.4.3 Emotional engagement

Next we move on to consider some of the *emotional responses* which came from the conversations, which are considered to be evidence of L2 poetic engagement.

Takako: Do you like? I didn't like this length. It's hard to memorize. A little long.
Maki: I also don't like this poem because this content of poem is not good.
Takako: laughs
Maki: I hate this sentence: "Never getting angry. Always keeping a calm face" It is good thing, but if I must be this thing...
Takako: It's not good. And eating one and a half pints of brown rice every day. It's not enough for me.

Figure 6.3 Emotional engagement with the Japanese poem

In Figure 6.3, Maki went so far as to say that she hated a part of the poem. Both Maki and Takako seemed to think that the poem was telling them what to do, not merely talking about the poet's own life. The two students knew each other well and were relaxed in their conversations, which could account for their openness and willingness to share feelings.

In contrast to this, with the Dylan Thomas poem, responses moved towards a positive interpretation, even when students accepted that the poem was difficult and that the subject was death/dying. As we can see from Figure 6.4, the conversation about whether or not the students liked the poem is centred on an overall feeling whether the poem's meaning is positive, or not.

Noteworthy for this pair is that language proficiency levels were different (Eika: TOEIC 625/Yukino: TOEIC 790) indicating corresponding CEFR levels of B2 (Tannenbaum and Wylie, 2008) but with Yukino as the stronger of the two. In this protocol, Yukino and Eika help each other reach a shared understanding that “This is a poem for his father”.

Yukino: *Do you like this poem?*
Eika: *No. Because I can't understand this poem. Perhaps his or her father is dying. This is a poem for his father.*
Yukino: *Also, his father is likely to die. Or almost dying. Or already dying.*
Eika: *Almost dying.*
Yukino: *So, you feel sad?*
Eika: *I think it's positive.*
Yukino: *Positive? Positive?*
Eika: *“That good night” sentence means that dying people can be better.*
Yukino: *I know! Dying means, going to heaven.*
Eika: *Heaven.*
Yukino: *Like this [points to translation in dictionary]. So the writer is relieved. The writer's father can go to heaven.*

Figure 6.4 Emotional engagement with the Dylan Thomas poem

In Figure 6.4, we can see that the two students construct their understanding through the use of a key phrase, “that good night” and its associations. Eika suggested her interpretation “I think it's positive” and assists Yukino in seeing and grasping the positive aspects of the text. If “good” means “heaven”, then they can infer a positive meaning throughout. Through expressing their emotional responses, using “sad”, “like” and “relieved” the students were able to reach an interpretation of the poem which they gathered through talking through the meaning together. In the follow-up interview, both suggested that they liked the poem and were interested in knowing more about its background.

The final example of emotional engagement with the Thomas poem is from Aya and Taka, with Aya asking the question “What does it mean? Do not go gentle into that good night?” Taka answered:

This is a father who is dying, or almost dying. If people are dying, they can't move or say nothing, so before this moment they should, or father should, express his

emotion. Like that. So, human must die. This can't be changed. So, before death you should express what you feel. Even you are dying, when you are, before you are dying, you should get anger [sic] about dying.

Taka's answer shows a lengthy interpretation and elaborative comment. Even though Taka has only read the poem for the first time, his understanding includes the emotional response "before death you should express what you feel," elaborating on his initial ideas. Aya is not actively responding at this point and in the video of the conversation it looked as though she was thinking about the conversation but did not look ready to contribute to the discussion. In the rest of the conversation, the two discussed the positive and negative feelings they had about getting old, working too hard and feeling stress. They seemed to use the poem as a way into another, related conversation about feelings. Aya and Taka were the only male-female pairing, and their conversation overall was somewhat surprisingly open about feelings. In the follow-up conversation one week later, both expressed interest in reading further poems about emotions and feelings, particularly in poems written in English.

The next section of this chapter considers some implication of these results, finishing with the development of the methodology for Study 2.

6.5 Discussion

Speaking in English and being flexible enough to deal with the demands during a conversation requires competent 'online' language use. Productive knowledge of vocabulary, for example, demands fluent use of known language, while receptive knowledge for reading purposes and for listening may be larger than overall productive ability (Laufer and Nation, 1995). If receptive knowledge is not balanced with opportunities to speak and write in the target language, then productive use of the L2 cannot develop effectively, and the gap between the two remains substantial. Working with students who have these particular needs requires a specific approach to tackle the problem of over-reliance on receptive knowledge, to activate greater productive use of language. Encouraging discussion in a literature reading class can create "room for genuine and natural dialogue...where students become independent readers, thinkers and agents in their own world" (Zyngier and Fiahlo 2010, p.20). Poetry and related, creative texts such as advertising contain what McRae calls representational language (1991/2008), which can be understood in different ways and is open to interpretation.

Through conducting this conversation study with students, it was intriguing to know what caused the critical response to the Japanese poem. The emotional engagement was negative, but it may have been closer to an authentic reading than the manufactured way in which they may have experienced the poem before. “Ame ni mo makezu” is famous to students from school, but their previous reading of the poem had been guided by their teachers and so they had not encountered it individually before. It may also be that they had not read the entire poem before, or had only remembered the first few lines along with the biographical information about the poet. None of the students commented specifically of the time of its writing, or the form of the poem being more like a free verse or diary entry. The circumstances of writing were unusual, in that the poet Kenji Miyazawa was sick when he wrote the notebook entry that would become this poem. It was published posthumously and has been recognised as a work which captures the feeling of his message or style. The format of the poem itself reads very much like a creatively-expressed feeling. It is not polished or brief like other Japanese poetic forms such as *haiku* or *tanka*, and in the sense that it was originally a notebook entry there could be some discussion about how poetic the language of it really is. Students commented about Miyazawa as a writer who expressed his love of his hometown (considered to be a virtue in Japan), but once they read the poem without the influence of a teacher telling them what to think about the poem, their evaluation of the poem became more nuanced. None of the speakers expressed anything like a complete support of his worldview, and some comments were negative. The positive responses to the Thomas poem, despite its difficulty, were also somewhat surprising in that speculation and discussion were attempted. In considering future projects using poetry, uplifting and heart-warming topics could certainly be recommended to teachers.

Related to scaffolding the activity for learners, the speaking task was broken into two parts for consideration of their level and ability. In a practical sense, this view of how activities work in the language classroom is that the gap between current knowledge and new knowledge can be bridged and this can lead to potential development (Vygotsky, 1978), particularly as they learn with more capable peers and are able to collaborate successfully on meaning making (Swain and Lapkin, 2000). The texts were chosen to present challenge but not to be beyond their reach, and the time to read the poems was sufficient for a beginning understanding of the poems. What was unpredictable in the pairing of the students was how much background knowledge they brought to the poem, and how much that influenced the success of their conversations. For example, the Miyazawa poem was well-known, but not particularly well-liked, once students had a chance to talk frankly about the poem. The message of the poem, and the lifestyle it seemed

to promote, seemed distant and strict. One way to adapt the activity further to allow for individual differences and preferences is to ask students to bring in their own poems. However, the main drawback with such an open-ended activity can be that some students who are less confident in choosing a poem (or song) can be disadvantaged. For the purpose of planning the next activity for data collection in this thesis, I decided to select the poems again myself, but to make the activity easier by giving them a week of preparation time to find out about the poem and the poet. Each student would have the same amount of time, and the poems would all be famous and easily investigated online. Those steps were taken for Study 2 to continue to provide appropriate scaffolding.

Next, it is possible to examine this co-constructed meaning through the use of language-related episodes (LREs). LREs occur when learners talk about the language they are producing and may correct themselves or others as they are talking together (Swain and Lapkin, 1995). LREs may also lead to learners questioning their language use or the language of the text or their interlocutor. In the case of poetry reading, this would be more likely to occur if learners noticed unusual linguistic forms in the poetry and were able to question these forms using their understanding of the language employed in the poems.

In all paired conversations there were periods of quiet, of questioning related to individual lexical items, and repeated use of phrases to express misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the text. Taken together, these problems in comprehension meant that a significant amount of time was spent explaining basic meaning or working very much at surface level comprehension. Working with a partner did not seem to offer support for the beginning, unsure steps students were making towards understanding the poems. Instead, the idea of presenting something new and being at risk of making a mistake may have resulted in a cautious approach for the students.

Poetry could be helpful to understand others' feelings, with the poem providing a convenient level of distance between speakers. For Japanese students who may favour indirect language or find emotional expression to be difficult in English, a poem could provide opportunities for practicing the use of using common discourse markers, requests for clarification and strategies of hedging and using vague language when appropriate. While the present findings are necessarily tentative due to the small sample size, the current research could guide future studies. Poetry which is familiar could result in more use of conversation strategies overall, since the familiarity assists in engagement with the poem. Development of expertise in speaking and second language use involves incremental steps towards language proficiency which could be supported by this type of opportunity.

In answer to the first research question about different ways in which the learners approached the different poems, it would seem that from this small sample that both types of poems prompted various types of interpretation, and that the difficult poem did result in frequent use of questions and noticing, providing opportunities for speculation. There was some use of what Appel and Lantolf (1994) referred to as metacomments, that is the externalising of thinking while reading.

Although this study was designed using an existing coding system from Hanauer (2001a), the results were not as clear as the ones he reported. This study seemed to be less successful than Hanauer's study in getting a lengthy and detailed response from pairs of learners, as there were some shorter conversations. Japanese learners, who can be reticent or hesitate to comment unfamiliar with task formats such as discussions, may not be accustomed to this type of task which could account for some of the difference in the outcome. This study used a relatively familiar Japanese poem and an unfamiliar poem in English to try and engage learners in a discussion. The majority of the comments related to meaning were exploratory, and students tended to make tentative moves towards understanding the main points of the poem. Nevertheless, rather than discounting the students' "plain sense" readings, it is useful to consider the engagement and speaking practice they showed during the learning activity. Even though the interpretations were sometimes critical of the poem, pairs of students made positive efforts to add comments and questions which were intentional, and these constructive contributions showed "agentic" engagement (according to Reeve, 2012, p.151).

The questions (about the text, the poet or the meaning) are purposeful and show a willingness to persist with investigating understanding and expressing feeling. In classes where students tend to expect teacher guidance and teacher-led understanding of the class text, pair work using poetry could be used to break the expected transfer of information which usually occurs. What Giovanelli and Masson (2015) understand to be authentic reading, that is "for a student to engage in authentic reading, they must have space to interpret the text, to experience it for themselves" (p.42). The current study also found that poetry reading was done with use of strategies such as elaboration, questioning and noticing, and that these allowed for a meaning-construction process during the conversations. However, more than that, the current study illustrates that use of language such as noticing may occur with both types of poem, Japanese and English poems.

6.6 Adapting the methodology for Study 2

As a result of Study 1, I decided to adapt the study to build in homework time, an extended writing activity and also to remove Japanese poems. I decided against using poems which use themes which are considered dark (such as death and dying) or illness, upsetting personal histories or negative topics in Study 2. Although many poems have some connection or reference to such themes, some have more of an uplifting or positive feeling, a focus on nature and love, and contain messages about life which university students may be able to identify with. I added a discussion-to-writing element to the task which would then form the protocols for use in the next stage of the thesis. An additional reason for this shift was the belief that by using a more controlled, structured written task that more useful and more student-led interpretations could be found.

The use of conversation dyads in this particular context could contain the risk of highlighting students' weaknesses to their peers. In this sense the study design had a weak connection to the overall goals of the course 1) developing the speaking skills in a second language and 2) providing scaffolded and appropriate content which assisted learners suitably during various stages of learner development. The other class activities in the semester were related to the current activity in that students were being evaluated on three types of responses to poetry: 1) a teach a poem task, 2) explain a poem or collection of poems, which was a presentation activity and 3) write and reflect on your own choice of poems in a "poemography" (Appendix D). For this main reason, the current study related to the real-world activities of the students and the context of their course of study.

From a pedagogical perspective, presenting students with difficult poems they have never seen before can be risky in that some students may feel intimidated by the poem, or feel that they are not adequately prepared to complete the activity successfully. Even when the teacher explicitly states that the awareness-raising activity is not part of the grade, students may feel that their classroom time is being taken up with a research activity which is not part of the curriculum and in that case, they may not feel that they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research.

There were several issues related to the coding system which emerged during the coding of the data. First, the data was not easy to code fully, especially when considering the role that feelings played in the responses. Laughter, pausing, gesture and other aspects of communication would require a different coding system and different focus. The adapted coding system was

limited in picking up on the nuanced aspects of creating meaning from reading and appreciating fully the comments which students made about the poems.

Second, some of the conversations were brief and the data collected was not as detailed as it was hoped. It was not anticipated to be possible to do a second, more extensive analysis of functions in the way that Hanauer had done, because of the limited numbers of codes in each category.

Thirdly, the study revealed that the idea of asking students to read poems which they had not seen before did bring about use of (and arguably, the practice) of speaking skills, their gaps in knowledge of the poems did not aide their interpretations. In the following section, we consider each of these limitations in turn. Students were not given enough time to develop ideas independently before talking together, and this resulted in some surface-level interpretations. One possible reason for the quiet responses from some students was the language proficiency of learners, related to their speaking proficiency and ability to express feelings in English. Another possibility was that the activity may have created an impression that they had to find a correct or single right answer to the question of meaning, through their own experiences in other literature classes, or reading classes. A low tolerance for ambiguity in texts can result in low confidence when deciding on how to proceed with textual interpretation, a difficulty that occurs reading poetry in any language. Japanese learners, in particular, can be reluctant to share opinions and have had limited opportunities to contribute in learner-centred classrooms. Despite this, the results still showed that learners used *noticing*, *questioning* and other strategies frequently when talking about the poems

In the next section, we consider these points and how they influenced the second study (reported in Chapter 7).

6.7 Conclusions

Reading, usually a solitary activity, can become more socially situated when pairs or groups of learners are working together. Creating space for such discussions with a text such as a poem can lead to the reading experience of sharing interpretations, co-constructing meaning or working to explain and justify their own ideas in relation to a text. One aim of Study 1 was to trial an existing coding system and evaluate its effectiveness. After utilising the Hanauer (2001a) codes with the data from Study 1, it appeared that these codes could not adequately describe

what we discuss in this thesis to be L2 poetic engagement, and this led to a re-evaluation of the project plan. I felt it was necessary to make some changes to the plan for Study 2 and also the type of poem use. Study 2 also contains some changes in the task design, the most significant being the move from collecting spoken to written data. The following chapter presents results of Study 2. Study 1 resulted in careful consideration of poems to use in the next part of the project, Study 2. By looking at features of the selected poems used in this study and considering them as examples of popular, anthologized poems, it may be possible to reveal their strengths and weaknesses, as well as predict their usefulness for classroom contexts such as the one in this study.

Even for the Japanese students, reading the Kenji Miyazawa poem challenged their ability to describe the context of the writing. Even though it is a 20th century poem, it was written in the 1930s, which seemed to be difficult for these students to imagine and describe. One student commented that she thought the poem had some connection to World War 2 but was unsure of the connection (it does not).

The findings of Study 1 show that the use of the coding method for these conversations was partially successful in providing evidence to support the findings. The Japanese poem did result in more use of the main categories investigated, including noticing and emotional responses (both positive and negative). The only category which had more coded items for the English poem was *integrating knowledge*, which indicates that the English poem required more detailed explanations or a greater need for focused attention. Overall, the two poems prompted different levels of engagement in the quantity of the student-talk, but the coding system was not nuanced enough to really identify finer points between the conversations.

Although it is arguably true that the reading of poems on can appear in many types of situations, the idea of a paired interview during which two people talk about their personal responses to such texts is itself a synthetic activity. The poetry reading activity was adapted have a better alignment with classroom goals such as nurturing autonomy through individual response, giving time to research the poem before the task, and creating a real-world task design which helped learners to develop skills of explanation and description.

CHAPTER 7: WRITTEN RESPONSES TO POEMS

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the written responses to poetry (WRP) and discuss what they reveal about L2 poetic engagement. As we saw in the previous chapter, results of Study 1 showed that spoken responses could be evaluated according to students' use of strategies such as elaboration and questioning and their relationship to L2 poetic engagement. The previous chapter also showed that asking learners to talk together spontaneously about poems resulted in reluctance to elaborate on ideas, due to perceived difficulty, or lack of time to carefully consider the poems, or both. As we saw in Chapter 2, Engagement with Language (EWL) is a useful framework which can be used to identify engagement in second language contexts and is of particular interest because of its connection to sociocultural theories of education. EWL includes aspects of cognitive engagement (focused attention), emotional engagement (purposeful autonomous interaction) and social engagement (doing), all of which will be discussed in this chapter with reference to learners' interactions with poetry in English.

The approach taken in this chapter is to use corpus tools to look for patterns and features of the writing which may be interpreted as L2 poetic engagement. One reason for choosing corpus tools is that they can reveal patterns of language which may otherwise be missed. Using automatic counting tools and comparing the learner language in response to poetry with other examples of language in use should reveal a clearer description of how language is being used in response to poetry. This, in turn, can help to develop understanding of how and in what ways (cognitive, emotional and social) that Japanese L2 learners engage with poetry in English.

After describing the materials and organisation of Study 2, the results of the study are presented. Initially we see descriptive results of the written responses, with a discussion of response length (text size), the lexical frequency profile (LFP) and the lexical content. LFP is counting of different categories of words according to their frequency in general use, which can indicate difficulty as well as relevance for language study. LFP is used in different ways, including classifying reading materials and in testing English proficiency. The written responses to poetry (WRP) were then analysed for their word count and mean sentence length. The standard deviation between responses is then calculated to show differences between the first and second set of responses (pre- and post- activity). Next, the analysis made use of the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC, 2015) software to identify and analyse linguistic

and grammatical categories such as use of pronouns and verbs in the writing, all quantified as percentages in the data. The primary reason for approaching the responses in this way was to look for patterns and features of the data which would help to describe the data in an objective way. The main benefit of the use of software to sort and organise the data is that it draws attention to features of writing which can then be further investigated with a close-up approach. Overall, automatic categorising and searching revealed characteristics of the data which helped to describe the set of data in an objective way. Automatic counting allowed for a degree of objectivity which allows discussion of selected points from the data. The final stage of this chapter reports on how independent raters helped evaluate responses using a holistic engagement score. The focus on using quantitative tools along with qualitative analysis was to provide empirical evidence from which to base future poetry-based inquiries. The last section of this chapter presents three independent raters evaluated 25% of the written responses to rank the responses from most to least successful L2 engagement with poetry. The chapter finishes with a discussion of what the results mean for understanding L2 poetic engagement.

7.2 Aims of Study 2

Students were given instructions which began “You are going to teach a poem to a partner. The aim is to help you and your partner understand the language and the poem”. Additional instructions required students to think about their notetaking and their opinion about the poem, i.e., “You should also prepare notes on your personal response to the poem. Be prepared to say what you liked or didn’t like about the poem. Use examples from the poem” (Appendix C). The general research question for this chapter is RQ5: *What can Japanese learners’ written responses to poems reveal about L2 poetic engagement and what are some pedagogical implications of the findings?* This led to the following sub-questions:

RQ5a: Is there an increase, over the intervention period, in the participants’ quality and quantity of writing after trying a poetry reading activity twice?

RQ5b: What are some differences in the ways that Japanese learners of English engage with different poems?

RQ5c: Is it possible to identify written responses to poetry which show high engagement, using holistic scoring?

7.3 Materials and organisation of Study 2

As we saw in Chapter 4, poems in this thesis were all anthologised poems which were easy to research online. The four poems used in Study 2 (Appendix C) were selected because of their potential readability and interest, and because of their manageable length and suitability. The poems were “The Tyger” by William Blake, “Daffodils” by William Wordsworth, “The Song of Wandering Aengus” by W.B. Yeats and “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost. Details of their selection is discussed in Chapter 4 along with lexical features of the poems and their readability. In terms of anticipated difficulty, the oldest poem (Blake, first published in 1794) had the potential to be more problematic than the Wordsworth (composed in 1804 and first published in 1807) or the Yeats (published in 1899) or the Frost (written in 1915).

One reason for the difficulty of Blake’s “Tyger” is the high frequency of off-list or difficult, archaic words. Off-list words are all low-frequency words, and as such they may only appear once in a large reference corpus. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Frost and the Thomas poems from Study 1 were the most readable, according to their lexical profiles. The poems are from different time periods, but they often appear together in books of English poetry, have all been anthologized, and are considered famous or popular poems in English which might appear together in an “Introduction to English poetry” class in a university EFL setting. All four poems were easily researchable online.

There are arguments in favour of using famous poems with second language learners. One point about famous poems is that they are often easy to research and can be familiar to students. While fame may not mean that the poem is particularly well liked (as was the case in Chapter 6 for several students), the memorable first lines of famous poetry could be a reason why a poem becomes interesting for learners. Forsyth (2000) and Kao and Jurafsky (2015) used computational methods to analyse poems from anthologies and those from amateur, or lesser-known poets. Forsyth found that anthologized poems over the past 400 years had opening lines which use simple, short words and fewer syllables per word, and were more likely to have opening lines with words of only one syllable. Dalzean (2013) summarizes his finding related to line length as follows: “It was also found that successful poems had a lower number of letters per word, used more common words, and had simpler syntax. Thus, contrary to what we might expect, the more successful poems used simpler language” (Dalzean, 2013, p.7). In the current study, many students commented on the beginning lines of the poems and appeared to be interested in the beginning lines of the poems, despite their newness or difficulty.

What several of the responses have in common is that they look beyond the poem simply, and instead they are looking at the message or theme. Vassallo (2016) refers to “everyday creativity” (Carter, 2004) and explains that in responses to literature, the learner-readers are “demonstrating their ability to make novel connections...ability to read with imagination...and explain foregrounded features in an unusual way” (p. 97). It would be possible to report on the creativity in advertisements or newspaper headlines, or to commonly-used alliterative phrases (see Boers, Lindstromberg and Webb, 2014). In the next section we consider the uses of vocabulary in the responses to the poems, and what these can also show about engagement, including the use of ideas.

Participants (N:77) in the activity were given one week to prepare notes on a poem which was randomly allocated out of the four selected for this activity and were instructed that they would be asked to try to “teach the poem” to a partner (Appendix C). The participants did the same activity twice, resulting in 154 responses. The idea of teaching a poem to a partner was familiar since it was part of the course and was used as another classroom activity. Each of the responses was tagged using a code. The first three numbers identify the student and the class, and the last number identifies the activity (1 or 2) to refer to the first or second time they attempted the activity. For example: 106-1 (Class 1, student 6, activity 1); 222-2 (Class 2, student 22, activity 2) and so on. To refer to an individual student, the activity number is removed, i.e. student 116 and student 222 from the above examples.

Written response 1				
Student	Poem 1	Poem 2	Poem 3	Poem 4
A	X	Y		
B	Y	X		
C			X	Y
D			Y	X

Written response 2				
Student	Poem 1	Poem 2	Poem 3	Poem 4
A			X	Y
B			Y	X
C	X	Y		
D	Y	X		

X = Taught the poem.
Y = Was taught the poem.

Figure 7.1 Details of organising the writing activity in Study 2

Figure 7.1 shows that each student read two different poems and was “taught” two different poems. Through this arrangement, students were exposed to four different poems. After reading through the poetry responses and considering different approaches to evaluating the writing, I decided on a number of steps in analysis, beginning with quantitative analysis. Details of how the data were prepared are provided in Chapter 4. The methodological framework for analysing a short corpus of learner writing is adapted from Hanauer (2010). The WRP data consists of 154 responses written by 77 participants (78 participants started the course; one student did not complete the second writing activity so her first submission was also removed from the data analysis). Each response was written in text-like conditions in one session lasting 90 minutes (40 minutes speaking, 40 minutes writing and 10 minutes preparation time). After receiving all of the submissions from participants via a Google form, the individual responses were available in an excel sheet. All responses were carefully checked against the hand-written responses. Each response was given an individual number for the analysis. Since the responses were typed by students from their hand-written writing, mistakes emerged in the typing and were corrected by comparing the two versions.

7.4 Descriptive results of written responses

The research question for this section was:

RQ5a: Is there an increase, over the intervention period, in the participants' quality and quantity of writing after trying a poetry reading activity twice?

7.4.1 The characteristics of the writing from a lexical frequency perspective

As we discussed in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 6, proxies for engagement include indications that learners spent more effort on the activity through writing longer responses, using more complex sentences and using a greater variety of words to express their understandings of the poems. It is possible to infer that longer responses correspond to greater engagement, whether cognitive, emotional/affective or social. Table 7.1 shows that for the first response the total number of tokens was 17,090 and for the second response it was 20,308 which is an increase of 3,761 or 21.48%. The mean number of tokens was 216.3 for the first response and 263.7 for the second. This demonstrates that there was an increase in the quantity of the responses. The majority of participants wrote more in the second response i.e. 60 out of 77 students wrote more in their second response. The lowest token count was 77 in the first response and the highest was 367. We are aiming to identify features of the data which show focused attention (cognitive engagement) and the automatic counting tools enable that analysis. In this case, this can be seen because more language is being produced by the learners in their responses to the poems.

Table 7.1 Mean and standard deviation of textual features in the pre- and post-tests

	<i>pre-test</i>	<i>post-test</i>
<i>Total tokens</i>	17,090	20,761
<i>Word count</i>	Mean (S.D) 220.2 (60.5)	Mean (S.D.) 268.1 (76.2)
<i>Minimum tokens</i>	77	118
<i>Maximum tokens</i>	367	467

In the second response, the lowest token count was 118 and the highest was 467. The S.D. Increased from 60.5 to 76.2 which means that the amount of variation increased in the second

activity. A closer look at these data reveals that the shorter and longer responses were unusual, with the highest token count for both first and second responses was from the same student, (Student 312). The findings suggest that in answer to the research question, there was an increase in the length or quantity of the writing.

Examining the WRP as a small corpus reveals that a lot of the writing included words from the poems. One way of identifying cognitive engagement with the poems is to look at how much the learners referred to the poems or the poets in their responses. They used details to provide background about the poem, the poet and the context of writing, along with writing about their own interpretations. As we saw in Chapter 6, elaboration was a kind of strategy which revealed focused attention, and through examination of the poetry responses as a small corpus, it is possible to see which lexical items were frequently used by learners. Also, as we saw in Chapter 2, L2 poetic engagement occurs when learners interact with poetry in a variety of ways. Through analysis of their writing, it is possible to see how this interaction occurs. The top 20 most frequently occurring words in the responses are listed in Table 7.2. A token is an individual running word where a family is when a word is used in different forms i.e. poem, poetry and poems would belong to a single family, but would be three separate tokens.

There are several reasons why learners might tend towards more detailed and more lengthy responses the second time they approach an activity. One of these is familiarity. Learners become more comfortable with the activity and the requirements of the activity, while at the same time meeting in class twice a week to talk about poetry, and familiarity with the activity means that they would become more able to write at greater length during their second attempt. Another reason for the improved quantity of output in the same activity could be that it shows the engagement in literary analysis through becoming more comfortable with the activity itself. A third reason why learners might feel more able to “elaborate more openly” (Earthman, 1992, quoted in Eva-Wood, 2004: 186) is their greater sense of completing the work.

The words are listed in order of *keyness*, in that they appear more frequently than they would be expected to appear in a reference corpus (usually made up of a large number of texts). *Keyness* is calculated according to frequency per million words. The reference corpus, the TenTen15 corpus, has a high number overall of “poem”, but across the whole corpus the score is much lower than the poetry corpus, as we would expect. The TenTen15 corpus is a large corpus of general English across a range of disciplines and is not likely to have many references to poem overall. As a reference corpus it provides significant coverage of contemporary English in use. The combination of the frequency count and the comparison of the small poetry corpus

with the TenTen15 corpus simply serves to highlight which words are appearing most, and which words are appearing more than we might expect.

Table 7.2 Most frequently occurring words in the corpus of poetry responses

rank		Frequency in small corpus	Frequency per million	TenTen15 frequency	Frequency per million
1	poem	789	20683.7	267,715	14.6
2	daffodils	209	5478.9	7,854	0.4
3	tyger	166	4351.7	1,532	0.1
4	poet	175	4587.6	254,768	13.9
5	tiger	133	3486.6	192,620	10.5
6	aengus	82	2149.6	1,533	0.1
7	line	201	5269.2	3,468,503	188.6
8	rhyme	67	1756.4	30,935	1.7
9	paragraph	76	1992.3	275,335	15
10	beautiful	147	3853.6	2,157,461	117.3
11	metaphor	69	1808.8	112,472	6.1
12	trout	60	1572.9	137,918	7.5
13	think	260	6815.9	6,643,402	361.3
14	god	201	5269.2	4,775,982	259.7
15	girl	92	2411.8	1,303,580	70.9
16	william	70	1835.1	945,247	51.4
17	words	113	2962.3	2,665,950	145
18	silver	57	1494.3	707,028	38.4
20	understand	106	2778.8	2,947,589	160.3

Next, we look at the list of most frequently occurring lexical items to see if they may reveal how learners have engaged with the poems, cognitively, affectively or socially. “Aengus” is a character in the Yeats poem, and “William” refers to William Wordsworth. Removing words from the poem or the poet’s name leaves the most frequently used words as “poem”, “poet”, “line”, “rhyme”, “paragraph”, “beautiful”, “metaphor”, “think”, “god”, “girl”, “words” and “understand”. These words could help in consideration of the cognitive engagement with the activity in the sense that they are linked to descriptions, or features of poetic structure and language. The word “beautiful” appears 147 times which is almost the same as the number of different responses (154). Some words are repeated across the small corpus which lead to

further investigation. The word “think” appears 260 times, meaning that there is more than one use of that item per student (on average). Several students stated “I don’t understand” or similar, showing an orientation to the activity and also showing self-awareness. The most unusual word in this top 20 might be “metaphor”, which stands out as the only term in the list which refers to the *poeticity* of the language. However, “metaphor”, along with “rhyme”, was given in the instruction sheet (Part 1, section 2: language in Appendix C). So, to look at this word list alone, the details of what students brought to the activity cannot be seen. It may be that the most interesting point about the list of frequently used words is number 13, i.e. “think”, which appeared 260 times. Think did also appear on the instruction sheet, which means that it was prompted by the instructions. To sum up this section, it seems that focused attention (seen through use of details from the poems) can be seen, and that words such as “think” and “understand” may also indicate some cognitive engagement with the poems. As a beginning step, this list does help to show some patterns in the data, but a closer look at language used will help to show in more detail how the learners are interacting with the poems in cognitively engaged ways. Later in this section we look more closely at examples of cognitive engagement, using “think” as a category of “insight”.

The next step is to look at the responses more closely using the lexical profile tool from Vocabprofile (Cobb, 2018) which counts the frequency according to word lists sorted by frequency in general language use. Table 7.3 presents the results of the analysis of all responses according to the two high-frequency levels of K1000 and K2000, as well as the academic word list (AWL) and low-frequency (off-list) words. Low-frequency means that the words are less likely to be known because they occur less often in general use. High-frequency words are those expected to be found regularly in speech and writing and are likely to be known words. The pre-test had 91.68% of high-frequency words, with the post-test having 92.27%. The high percentage of high-frequency words in the WRP corpus indicates that the activity was manageable for these students. The words from the academic word list (AWL) by Coxhead (2000) was low for both groups, at around 2%. The course was not an academic writing course, so the AWL figures are not the focus of the investigation. The number of off-list words was high, since words from the poems were not removed for this measure, with 1,085 tokens in the pre-test and 1,165 tokens in the post-test, which is a small increase in number if not percentage. This could mean that in the second set of writings, there are more uses of quotations, words from the poem, or use of difficult language, which can be investigated by removing the content words from the poems in the next analysis.

The type/token ratio (TTR) in Table 7.3 shows a difference between the two parts of the WRP corpus. TTR is the total number of unique words (types) divided by the number of words (tokens). The greater the TTR is to 1, the greater lexical richness of the language. In this case, the TTR is higher in the first corpus, at 0.10 and so the second time the students did the activity did not seem to increase the lexical richness. However, if we consider that the number of different or unique words increases from 1649 to 1760 while the total number in the token count also increased. What this means is that there does seem to be an increase in the lexical richness or variety of vocabulary used in the WRP the second time. It is likely that the small size of the corpus means that the TTR does not increase the second time.

From Table 7.3 we can also consider cognitive engagement and recycling of language. The important point here is the assumption that use of language from the poems is increasing as writing is becoming more detailed. As we are concerned with focused attention, what this means for the current investigation is that there is greater recycling of language from the poems. The higher number could suggest that more repetition or recycling of language occurred the second time that learners engaged with the more in more detail.

Table 7.3 Word frequency data for the pre- and post- test

	WRP corpus pre-		WRP corpus post-	
	Number of tokens	% coverage (cumulative)	Number of tokens	% coverage (cumulative)
K1000	14,513	84.92	17,803	85.75
K2000 And AWL	1,492	8.73 (93.65)	1,793	8.63 (94.38)
Off-List	1,085	6.35 (100)	1,165	5.61 (100)
Total Token Count	17,090		20,761	
Number of Different Words	1649		1760	
Type/Token Ratio	0.10		0.08	
Tokens Per Type	10.36		11.80	

As we have seen in the previous chapter, cognitive engagement with poetry is focused attention

and reflective learning with knowledge construction. More recycling of words could indicate several things for cognitive engagement. What we aim to identify in this chapter is how and in what ways the responses to poetry may have also achieved successful engagement with the poems while writing in English. In Chapter 6 we saw that use of the vocabulary from the poems occurred frequently when quoting words and phrases from the poems. Uses of the language in the poems led to elaborations, which are a kind of focused attention. However, taken together with the previous indication that the token count was higher the second time on average, it might be that there was more repetition of words.

Specific to the research question, it seems from these data that there was a difference between the amount written, and that there may be differences in the lexical richness of the responses. In the next section, using another analysis tool, it is possible to then look at the linguistic categories in the data.

7.4.2 Results of the preparation activity

In this chapter we are discussing how and in what ways that Japanese learners of English engaged with poems. In preparation for the speaking and writing activity, all students wrote notes. In Appendix C, the student instruction sheet shows various categories of notes. The results could indicate cognitive engagement with the activity related to preparation, because they are evidence of focused attention to the activity of reading and learning about the poem. Many students wrote detailed notes, although the quality and quantity of the notes varied. Using the notes from all participants, a score out of 20 was allocated to each set of preparation activity homework notes. The categories were worth four points each for: 1) background, in which students generally wrote about the author's life, the date of publication and similar details; 2) language in which students copied quotes from the poem or wrote out words and related words, sometimes with translations of words from the poem; 3) personal response in which students wrote short paragraphs, bullet pointed notes or key words; 4) picture, in which they drew images which they imagined to help describe the scene in the poem and 5) partner's poem, which was a space for writing questions for the partner or notes from the conversation itself. All of the notes were written at home except the last one, which was included because it showed a kind of engagement during the activity. All categories were marked 0-4 according to the amount of detail they provided, and the category for picture being marked as present (4) or absent (0).

The results for individual students were interesting in the sense that several students wrote very detailed preparation notes, while others did not. Results (pre/post) were background (2.68/2.85), language (2.76/2.63), personal response (2.99/2.89), picture (3.23/1.88) and partner's poem (3.23/3.14). There was a small increase overall in the background score, but the other categories were lower the second time. The number of students who drew pictures the second time was less than the first time. There could be reasons for this such as greater familiarity with the poem, ease of comprehension or other reasons.

7.4.3 Linguistic and grammatical categories of the WRP

As we have seen so far in this chapter, the focus is to investigate the WRP and try to answer the question *What can Japanese learners' written responses to poems reveal about L2 poetic engagement and what are some pedagogical implications of the findings?* This section presents the results of analysis of the learners' responses using corpus tools. The aim of the thesis overall is to investigate how and in what ways that Japanese learners of English interact with poetry, using cognitively, emotionally or socially engaged language. Next, we use the online LIWC software (Tausczik and Pennebaker, 2010; Pennebaker et al., 2015) to describe the data. The main reason why this particular software was useful for the current analysis is that it is able to identify quantify and sort categories. LIWC allows for linguistic category analysis, as well as psychological content analysis, indicating affect (positive, negative and related to strong emotions) and psychological processes. Studies of the methodology have shown the categories to be "valid across dozens of psychological domains" (2015, p.8). Of specific interest to this study are the categories of 'cognitive processes' and 'perception' because of their connection to engagement.

As we saw in Chapter 2, sociocultural theories of education and the Engagement with Language (EWL) framework can be used to show that learners engaged in activities which gain their focused attention (cognitive engagement) as well as their emotional/affective engagement are of particular use in this investigation. To do this we should describe features of the language used in the learners' responses to poems. Learners' interactions with poetry through writing is the focus of the current chapter, but the writing has relevance for the wider discussion of language development including linguistic awareness and linguistic agility when presented with poetry. The results of these two categories are also presented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Linguistic categories in the pre- and post- written responses to poetry

Linguistic Category	Example	Response 1	Response 2
Personal Pronouns	I, them, her	8.77	8.96
1 st Person Singular	I, me, mine	3.71	3.68
1 st Person Plural	We, us, our	1.11	1.08
2 nd Person	You, your, thou	0.24	0.41
3 rd Person Singular	She, her, him	3.36	3.47
3 rd Person Plural	They, their	0.35	0.32
Impersonal Pronouns	It, it's, those	6.95	6.75
Total Pronouns		15.75	15.72
Prepositions	To, with	11.13	11.54
Common Adverbs	Very, really	5.51	5.44
Negations	No, not, never	1.33	1.44
Common Verbs	Sit, dance	17.16	16.93
Common Adjectives	Happy	4.52	4.3
Interrogatives	When, how, what	1.47	1.56
Total Function Words		55.22	53.16
Insight	Think, know	5.45	5.04
Causality	Because, effect	2.88	2.37
Discrepancy	Should, would	1.66	1.88
Tentative	Maybe, perhaps	2.77	2.87
Certainty	Always, never	1.03	1.06
Difference	Hasn't, but, else	3.19	3.01
Total: Cognitive Processes		15.16	14.93
Seeing	View, see, seen	2.15	1.98
Hearing	Listen, hearing	0.40	0.50
Feeling	Feel, touch	0.87	0.99
Total: Perception		3.46	3.61

In Table 7.4 we are able to see details about the uses of grammatical categories in the learners' responses, as well as cognitive processes and words categorised as related to perception. Using the LIWC also allows comparison of the data between the first and second time that learners

wrote responses to poems. The data helps to show how language is being used by these learners in response to English poems. As can be seen from Table 7.4 of linguistic categories, function words made up most of the writing both times (55.22% and 53.16%). Common verbs were used making up 17.16% and 16.93% of the data. Underlined categories show that in the post-test there were increased percentages for personal pronouns, 2nd and 3rd person pronouns, prepositions, adverbs, negations and interrogatives. In general, there were only very small differences between the two sets of data. We can look particularly at pronouns as they relate to engagement in that social engagement is related to positioning of the self in the writing using “I” and social engagement is seen in uses of “we”, “us” or “our”. Later in the chapter we look more closely at pronouns which indicate personal involvement or social engagement with the poems.

Table 7.4 also shows results from the LIWC in the particular categories of cognitive processes and perception. Underlined sections show that in the post-test, categories “would” and “should” (discrepancy), “maybe”, “perhaps” (tentative) and “always” and “never” (certainty) were increased. The aspect of L2 poetic engagement which may be concerned with these uses of language is cognitive engagement (focused attention). When considering a poem, being ‘open’ when reading was something which Earthman (1992) found to be evidence of successful poetry responses. In the category of perception, the category increased from 3.46% to 3.61%, including small increases for hearing and feeling. From Table 7.4 we can see that there does seem to be small differences between the writing produced, for example in the proportion of personal pronouns, prepositions and several other categories. We can use the categories identified in this stage to help interpret the data from the next analysis. These small details could begin to show that cognitive attention, including spending time considering multiple interpretations, is an element of L2 poetic engagement. In the next section the WRP are compared with several other types of writing to further determine if there are differences between the writing types which can be discussed in the light of L2 engagement with poetry.

7.4.4 Features of the WRP: Comparing L1 and L2 writing

The results of this chapter so far have focused only the WRP, but in the next section we look at a comparison of the data with some other examples of writing. The aim of this section is to answer the question *RQ5b: What are some differences in the ways that Japanese learners of English engage with different poems?* To do this we compare the WRP with other corpora, and for this purpose the ICNALE (Japanese learner writing) corpus and LIWC (reference corpora)

were selected, with the aim of identifying if there are points about this writing which stands out as different from other types of writing. In the International Corpus Network of Asian Englishes (ICNALE, available from language.sakura.ne.jp/icnale/index), there is a data set of 120 Japanese responses to a short opinion essay topic (Ishikawa, 2018). The responses were written by learners who are classed at the B2 CEFR level. The aim of using this set of essays as a comparison was to look at how the WRP was different from other Japanese learners' writing. A second comparison can be done with other types of expressive writing (from the LIWC online tool). The LIWC has categories of writing, including 'expressive writing' which is made up of 6,179 files by 2510 authors and 2,526,709 running words of English. Samples of writing were taken from experiments where people were "randomly assigned to write either about deeply emotional topics (emotional writing) or about relatively trivial topics such as plans for the day (control writing) (LIWC, 2015, p.9). The other categories used in the creation of the LIWC online tool were blogs, novels, natural speech, the New York Times, and Twitter.

Getting back to the research question, we can see that there are distinctive features of the WRP writing emerging from the analysis, and there seem to be differences between the poetry responses and other types of writing. Looking at the results in Table 7.5, we can see that the categories making up cognitive processes, including insight and causality, amongst others, is higher overall in the WRP than in the LIWC expressive writing and the LIWC all categories. Insight, which includes "think", appears to be over-used in the WRP data. For causality, the WRP score of 2.63% is higher than the two categories of L1 writing and is closer to the ICNALE at 3.22. Causality includes the word "because" which is sometimes overused by Japanese learners. The categories positive emotion and negative emotion are different than the other types of writing also, with the category of affect (combination of positive and negative emotions) as highest in the four types of writing.

As can be seen from Table 7.5, the WRP corpus is similar to the expressive writing in the amount of words categorised with the code discrepancy ("should", "would") and tentative ("maybe", "perhaps"), as well as being close to the larger LIWC all categories for affect (including positive and negative emotion). The results also show that the WRP rates more highly than other types of writing for "insight", "perception" and "positive emotion" categories, which suggests cognitive engagement and focused attention. In the next section we look at those categories more closely with examples from the WRP. The next stage is to continue looking for differences between the responses, to find out which poems prompted the longer, more sophisticated or more lexically diverse responses.

Table 7.5 Percentage of cognitive processes and emotion categories in the WRP, ICNALE and LIWC

Cognitive Processes and Emotion Categories	WRP (mean of all responses)	ICNALE Japanese learner writing	LIWC- expressive writing	LIWC-all categories
Insight	5.25	3.83	2.66	2.61
Causality	2.63	3.22	1.65	1.4
Discrepancy	1.77	2.40	1.74	1.44
Tentative	2.82	3.60	2.89	2.52
Certainty	1.05	1.42	1.51	1.35
Difference	3.1	4.57	3.4	2.99
Total: Cognitive Processes	15.77	15.95	12.52	10.61
See	2.07	0.09	0.8	1.08
Hear	0.45	0.18	0.48	0.83
Feel	0.92	0.22	0.92	0.64
Total: Perception	3.54	1.10	2.38	2.70
Positive Emotion	4.12	3.54	2.57	3.67
Negative Emotion	1.55	1.93	2.12	1.84
Total: Emotion	5.71	5.47	4.77	5.57

To sum up what we have seen in this section, data from the categories of cognitive processes and emotional engagement can be interpreted to show that the L2 WRP has some distinctive features when compared to other types of Japanese learner writing and expressive writing. The categories are using as evidence for cognitive engagement, social engagement and emotional engagement. Insight is when we use words such as “think” and “know” which suggest cognitive engagement and focused attention in particular. In the next section, we consider the differences between the responses to the four poems and discuss those findings in light of L2 engagement with poetry and cognitive processes and affect.

7.5 Investigating differences between responses to the four poems

In the last section, the focus was on the linguistic categories and other characteristics of learner writing which could be relevant to the discussion of L2 poetic engagement. In this section we look at the differences between the responses to the four poems, and discuss answers to *RQ5b: What are some differences in the ways that Japanese learners of English engage with different poems?* This section leads to the third research question for this chapter, *RQ5c: Is it possible to identify written responses to poetry which show high engagement, using holistic scoring?* which is answered in 7.6. The aim of the thesis is to investigate how and in what ways that Japanese learners engaged with poems in English. The next section of this chapter begins with a comparison of the vocabulary used in response to four different poems and discusses the implications for L2 poetic engagement. The next section, 7.5.2, continues this comparison while investigating more closely the use of language from the poems themselves, which I refer to as recycling. Recycling of language from the poems in written responses is connected to the quoting and paraphrase we saw in Chapter 6, as it can be seen as evidence for focused attention and what we are calling cognitive engagement in this thesis. The last part of this section, 7.5.3 looks at how vocabulary variation and richness contribute to successful examples of L2 learners' written responses to poetry.

7.5.1 Lexical scores and L2 poetic engagement

First, looking at the length of responses, token count, lexical density and variation within the text. Second, discussing the differences between the responses related to the proportion of recycling and quoting or paraphrasing from the poems and, third, comparing the use of difficult words such as low-frequency words. With the combination of these three methods, we can see differences between the responses to the four poems. In order to identify any possible differences in the responses to the different poems, this section reports on using Lu's Lexical Complexity Analyzer (LCA) which is available at <http://aihaiyang.com/software/lca/> (Lu, 2012). This tool was selected because of its use of a number of categories of lexical complexity, including distinctions between parts of speech.

The intention was to find out if the responses to the poems look any different from an objective perspective. If they look different using this measure, it could mean that students tended to approach the poems differently, or that for pedagogical purposes the choice of poem

could be useful for particular types of teaching goals. For example, if one poem stands out as having a higher number of different words on average, and the further investigation shows that the poem appeared to prompt engagement with emotional words or use of elaborations, then the objective analysis could be helpful. The results of Table 7.6 indicate small differences between the poems.

Table 7.6 Mean lexical scores of written responses to poems arranged by poet

Poem	Token	Lexical Density	Lexical Sophistication	Verb Sophistication	No. of diff. words	Type-token ratio	Verb variation	Lexical variation
	TC	LD	LS1	VS1	NDW	TTR	VV1	LV
Blake	232	0.49	0.30	0.10	106.4	0.50	0.65	0.60
Wordsworth	231	0.48	0.32	0.07	110.0	0.48	0.71	0.65
Yeats	280	0.49	0.32	0.08	128.0	0.44	0.64	0.60
Frost	232	0.47	0.22	0.06	109.1	0.46	0.66	0.63

The Yeats poem “The song of wandering Aengus” prompted the highest average token count of 280 and also the average number of different words is highest in the Yeats poem. Correspondingly, the type/token ratio (TTR) is the lowest of the four, meaning that there was lower lexical variation. The lexical complexity of the responses relates to engagement in the sense that cognitive engagement is concerned with attention and focus, and social engagement is seen in greater use of personal pronouns and personalising the response. The Blake poem “The Tyger” has the highest verb sophistication and TTR, which indicates that the total number of unique words (types) divided by the number of words (tokens) resulted in a ratio score closest to 1. The higher the TTR score, the greater the lexical richness of the response which suggests that the Tyger poem prompted the more lexically varied responses. In the next section, we look more closely at the vocabulary in the WRP by comparing the results of an LFP with a focus on words which appear repeatedly or difficult words which only appear once.

7.5.2 Lexical recycling and implications for L2 poetic engagement

As we have seen in the previous sections in this chapter, lexical recycling is evidence that learners are taking details from the poems they have read and using them in their responses to help explain their interpretations. In Chapter 6 we saw how learners used quotes or paraphrase from the poems to question and to discuss points about the poems. The overarching aims of the

thesis are to see how and in what ways Japanese learners of English interact with poetry, and to investigate how poems may provide authentic and meaningful content. The recycled words are only one half of the story, however. Where some words have been taken from the poems themselves and recycled, an equally interesting set of words is the list of lexical items which have not come from the poems. The recycled words show one aspect of attention and focus, but the words from the learners' notes and from their writings. From the results of this chapter so far, we can see that some words emerged from the writing activity which were neither taught, nor were they from the poems. Like two sides of the same coin, the recycled and the unique, original words in the responses are both relevant to the discussion on how these learners engaged with poems in English.

In this chapter we have already seen that there are some differences in the ways in which learners of English engaged with four different poems. In order to look for the degree of recycling of language from the poems into the written responses, which could indicate cognitive engagement with the poems, I used Lextutor (Cobb, 2018) to find the degree of word repetition and the coverage of the poem in the responses. This was done by creating a technical list of the content words in each poem, using the Vocabprofile tool to automatically count the tokens, families and unique words, and then repeating the process for each of the four poems. The results aim to show how much of the poem was quoted in responses, through direct or indirect quotation or paraphrase. It is possible to list the words which appear in both texts (in this case the poem and the responses), the number which were recycled from the poem, and the number of new or original words which were used in the responses only. The technical list uses word stems and all forms of the word, which means that "dare" in the poem results in "dared", "daring" and "dares" from the list also. The words from the poem which appeared most in the responses (excluding the poet's name), in the case of Blake's "Tyger", could also indicate which parts of the poem were most interesting for students, i.e. "tyger" appeared 176 times, "lamb" was mentioned 34 times and "thy" was the third most frequently used word from the technical list which appeared in the responses. Through this discussion and the following section, which looks in detail at the difficult, off-list words in the responses, the aim is to find out which poem(s) prompted the more lexically rich, diverse responses.

Table 7.7 also shows a number of differences between the responses. There are differences between the type and range of lexical items used in the responses, and the ways in which they used the poems as source material or used words from their own vocabulary. The results show that the Frost poem prompted the highest overall token count amongst the four poems, a total of

10,620 running words. Many of the responses to that poem were linked to personal identification with the journey of the poem, and as it was the most recently written poem, it presented little difficulty in readability. The next-highest token count was for the Yeats poem, with 10,497 tokens. The Yeats poem has the lowest score for word families, suggesting that more recycling may have been done in the responses. The Wordsworth poem was the lowest for token count but had the highest number of word families. As mentioned in a previous section, the word families include all of the words which share the same root, with “interpret”, “interpretation” and “interprets” all in the same family, for example.

To find out if the different poems prompted different types of responses, we can see that in Table 7.7 the results show the breadth of words used in the responses, from shared words (appearing more than once) to unique words (appearing only once). The suggestion here is that in the word choices, the responses differ, perhaps owing to the difficulty of the topic, or the relative ease of discussing the poem. The Blake poem had the lowest number of shared words and correspondingly, the highest number of unique words. This could indicate that the Blake poem encouraged students to carefully consider their choice of words as they wrote about the poems, and as a result, there were more varied and diverse answers. A closer look at the word lists for the four separate poems is required for the next stage of the investigation. The recycling index (34.23%) was the lowest for the Blake poem.

Table 7.7 Tokens recycled in the responses and low frequency words separated by poem

	Tokens	Families	Shared words (tokens)	Unique words (tokens)	Recycling index (%) tokens	Low frequency words
Blake	9,001	780	3,081	5,920	34.23	14%
Wordsworth	8,980	789	4,339	4,641	48.32	11%
Yeats	10,497	733	4,703	5,794	44.8	12%
Frost	10,620	738	5,244	5,376	49.38	10%

There are several additional points to consider about Table 7.7 as the table also shows the difference between the number of shared words between the poem and the responses. What this means is that in the Blake poem, if the word “Tyger” was used in the response written by a student, then it would count as a shared word (shared between the writing and the poem). The Blake poem has the lowest number of shared words (tokens) at 3081 (34.23%) compared to the Frost poem which had 5244 tokens (49.38%). This indicates that the Blake responses made less use of the poem in their responses overall, either in direct quotation, or in paraphrase. There

must have been other lexical resources used in the responses, taken from the students' active lexicon, or written with the help of the dictionary and preparatory notes. Perhaps this is to be expected with the topic of the Tyger poem being tangible items which are not ambiguous enough to require explanation. Frost's poem "The road not taken", having the highest number of shared tokens, was used in the responses more than the others. As we discovered in chapter 4, the vocabulary in the Frost poem is 95% high frequency, e.g. words such as "way" and "travelled" would be known to students and easy for them to write about. Finally, in the last column of Table 7.7 the percentages of low-frequency, difficult words which were in the responses are presented. The scores for the four poems were Blake (14%), Wordsworth (11%), Yeats (12%) and Frost (10%). These scores are from the unique words, which excludes low-frequency words from the poems.

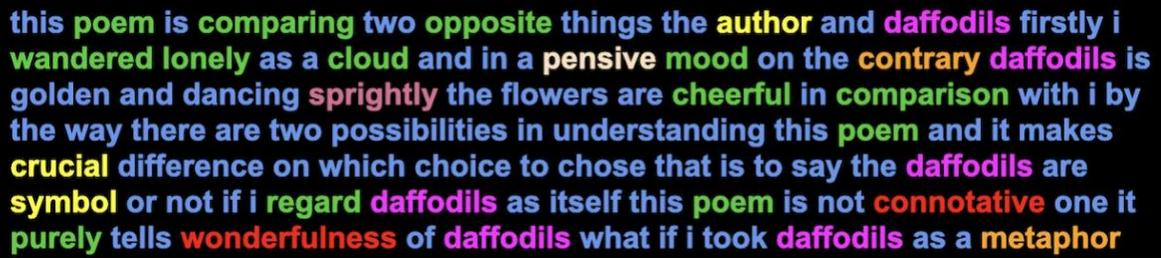
To sum up this section, the results showed that the different poems did seem to result in variety in the use of language. The first point appears to be that the Frost poem prompted the longest responses overall. The recycling index is high for the responses to the Frost poem, at nearly 50%, which indicates that there was careful consideration and discussion using aspects of the poem which we take as evidence for L2 poetic engagement. In the next section, we look specifically at the low-frequency words which were brought to the writing in the learner responses to the four different poems.

7.5.3 Vocabulary variation and L2 poetic engagement

As we have seen so far in this chapter, learners' writing and use of vocabulary varied between poems. The examples from the LFP and other corpus tools allow a broad view overall in the data, showing patterns and repeated language use at the word level. In the following section we look more closely at selected examples from the data which may help to illustrate how L2 poetic engagement occurred and developed in response to the poems.

Figure 7.2 shows an example of how Lextutor codes the low frequency words in a text. Looking for the words which are more difficult for learners could help to reveal what is understood to be cognitive engagement in this thesis. The use of more unusual words to describe feelings and ideas in the poem shows focused attention to the poem and may also be interpreted as evidence to suggest that using poetry for speaking and writing activities can lead to detailed and meaningful elaborations. This in turn could help to show that writing about poetry is an activity which could develop language skills. In this section of the chapter we look at several

examples from the data and discuss them in the light of L2 poetic engagement. Student 127 had a reported TOEIC score of 750 and wrote more in the second attempt (219 tokens and 240 tokens). The first time she read the Frost poem, and the second time was Wordsworth's "Daffodils". Her engagement with the preparation activity was higher in the first activity than the second (15/20 and 8/20).



this poem is comparing two opposite things the author and daffodils firstly i wandered lonely as a cloud and in a pensive mood on the contrary daffodils is golden and dancing sprightly the flowers are cheerful in comparison with i by the way there are two possibilities in understanding this poem and it makes crucial difference on which choice to chose that is to say the daffodils are symbol or not if i regard daffodils as itself this poem is not connotative one it purely tells wonderfulness of daffodils what if i took daffodils as a metaphor

Figure 7.2 Response 127-2 coded for K1000-K12000 words

In this example, K1000-K4000 words make up 90.2% of the excerpt (K1000 are in blue, and K2000 are in green, with K4000 in orange). The two words "contrary" and "metaphor" are in the K4000 list. In this case, "metaphor" is a term which counts as specialized language from the sub-field of poetry knowledge, in the sense that it was familiar to students in Japanese and frequently discussed with other poems. Although metaphor is a low-frequency word according to the K4000 lists created from the British National Corpus (BNC). The BNC was originally created by Oxford University press in the 1980s-1990s, contains 100 million words of spoken and written texts from different genres, and is considered to represent a wide variety of English in the late 20th century. The word metaphor was not low frequency in the context of the elective poetry class, however. As a possible future investigation, it could be useful and interesting to track the use of such terms, which are understood and used in the L1 and then become applied in the target language while discussing relevant texts.

A number of the unusual or difficult words which have been used merit further discussion. The choice of such words could be evidence for careful selection of vocabulary as well as cognitive engagement with the poems because they are less commonly used, may have been selected through some use of the translation dictionary, or may have been chosen carefully to express a particular emphasis or idea. For example, the words beyond the K4000 level are "daffodils" (K9000), which appears six times, and then the words "sprightly" and "pensive" are given (K11000 and K12000). All of these are from the poem, but the two remaining words,

“connotative” and “wonderfulness” are shaded red and are considered off-list. With relevance to the idea that students reading poetry are primed to try and respond in creative or novel ways, the choice of both unusual words is noteworthy. While it is entirely possible that the student had used her dictionary to find the word “connotative” when planning her response, it is also likely that she had not used the word in many other contexts before, if ever. The second unusual word, “wonderfulness” is a grammatically creative word which the student has found helps to express something intangible. “Wonderfulness” does appear five times in the online version of the BNC including the following phrases: “feel like a student all over again, wide-eyed at the wonderfulness of things” and “the more we will appreciate the sheer wonderfulness of it” (BYU-BNC Davies, 2004). According to the N-gram viewer, Google’s digital viewer to see the use of a term over time, “wonderfulness” was used throughout the 19th century when it was used more than in the present day. Walt Whitman’s poem “Miracles” writes about the “wonderfulness of insects in the air” and “the wonderfulness of the sundown” (1856/2019). The word is appropriately poetic, and in a sense shows a nuanced use of appropriate choice of language.

A corresponding Japanese word might be 不思議 (*fushigi*), which means mysterious, wonderful, curious, or even miraculous. The word is often used when trying to describe something natural but beyond our comprehension, like the beauty of a flower, the birth of a child or a natural wonder. *Fushigi* is sometimes even more difficult to comprehend, depending on the subject matter, as it can be used to refer to a reality which is beyond human understanding, ineffable, unthinkable. The student’s careful discussion of the poem continues as she discusses the idea of metaphor in the poem (metaphor is from the K4000 list).

What, if I took daffodils as a metaphor, what does this poem mean? As I mentioned before, both two are in opposite state. Nevertheless, 'I' join the dances with the daffodils. I think daffodils is a symbol of friend. The group of twinkle and sparkle to the eye of a lonely man. It is too bright and is like 'gold'. It does not stop dancing and man want to join this group. I thought this poem is really good because it tells us the goodness of joining the group of friends implicitly. The flower, daffodils is also a good example and symbolic thing of friends. When I regard daffodils as itself, it is still a good poem because I can feel the pulse of the daffodils. This poem describes the daffodils vividly, daffodils are alive as a human being.

Figure 7.3 Discussing the daffodils poem as a metaphor (Response 127-2)

As we can see from the focused attention given to explaining the daffodils poem, student 127 has used a number of strategies when writing about the poem. The cognitive engagement is seen in elaboration on the metaphor interpretation. What is additionally interesting about this example is that the student has focused the discussion around a contemplative interpretation of the meaning of 'I' in the poem. Personal positioning, and consideration of the individual in this case could be considered evidence for social engagement. In Figure 7.3, student 127 uses the word metaphor to pose a question about the poem, and then spends time discussing her answer. The idea that she has is related to two different interpretations she is considering, both of which are imaginative ideas (that the daffodils are real, or that they are metaphorical). Her explanation of her choices seems to include consideration of her central question about the daffodils as connotative. The conclusion she reaches is that both positions help her engage with the poem, since she states that she can "feel the pulse of the daffodils".

As previously discussed, the Blake poem resulted in responses using the most low-frequency words. As can be seen from Table 7.8, which has only selected words from each category (grammatical words and those related to language such as "dictionary" and "linguistic" were removed, to help simplify the discussion), in several categories from K4000-K8000, some of the words were related to emotions and feelings

We can also see creativity in the responses from the use of high-frequency words. Using the lists of words which appear in the WRP for each student and for each poem, it is possible to look at how the responses engaged creatively with the poems. For example, in response to the Tyger poem, the word "create" and associated stem words appeared various times (frequency in brackets): create [5], created [13], creates [2], creating [2], creation [4], creative [1], creativity [1] and creator [2]. The use of this word by various students is interesting because the word does not appear in the poem itself, but there is a clear link between the poem and the notion of creation. Similarly, the word emphasize is used by students in the various ways, emphasis [5], emphasize [3], emphasized [4], emphasizes [1] and emphasizing [2], throughout the response. In another response, one student was concerned with the topic of "the reality of the world which is unfair" in the Tyger poem. The word "unfair" appears 18 times in the WRP, including 5 times in this one response. The lamb and the tiger cannot be considered equal, and from this we should understand the inherent imbalance in the world. The response concludes that "differences must be important in this world. Because of differences which we may feel unfair, the system of the world may be able to exist. Overall, I think that this poem gives us a good chance to think about ourselves and teach us that we don't have to compare with others." (Response 319-2). Through

the use of the high-frequency words fair/unfair, the student has engaged with a message for personal understanding.

Table 7.8 Selected frequency of unique lexical items in the responses from K4000-K8000 levels

	K4000 [frequency]	K5000	K6000	K7000	K8000
Blake	aggression [4] astonish [1] divine [1] evoke [1] magnitude [1] metaphor [30] suppress [1] veiled [1]	awe [1] doom [1] extinct [2] jealous [1] signify [1] solemn [2]	asymmetrical [1] cherish [1] horrific [1] rhymes [13]	resolute [1]	devout [1] grandeur [1] malice [1] personify [1] Satan [1]
Wordsworth	conceal [1] despair [1] envy [1] galaxy [1] grief [1] implicit [1] indulge [1] invoke [1] metaphor [8] precious [1] pulse [1] trembling [2] vivid [1]	aloud [1] captive [1] fabulous [1] recollect [1] reminisce [3] sorrow [2] sway [1]	accord [1] awesome [1] cute [1] ignorant [1] mythology [2] rhyme [30] transient [1] yearn [1]	blight [1] brilliance [1] chime [1] nostalgic [1] pollen [1] tempo [2]	inversion [2] personification [5]
Yeats	disclose [1] divine [1] elegant [2] envy [1] illusion [1] impatient [1] longing [2] metaphor/s [23] romance [1] sentiment [1] tragic [1] vanish [1]	adore [1] anguish [1] eternal [10] mystical [4] quest [1] sorrow [1] stalk [1] stray [1] transparent1	empathize [1] eternity [1] mischief [2] mythology [14] rhyme [13] sensual [1] transience [1] vain [2]	covet [1] liken [1] phantom [3] utopia [1]	discord [1]
Frost	archive [1] contrary [2] intrigue [1] metaphor [32] pioneer [3] precious [1] superb [1]	masculine [1] spite [1] squash [1] worthwhile [1]	bliss [1] rhyme [34] rhymes [5] rhyming [4]	accentuate [1] coward [1] solitude [2]	clam [1] kindergarten [1]

As we can see from Table 7.8, the Blake poem prompted students to use difficult words to write about the poem. This could be considered a kind of pushed output in the sense that they worked to use their dictionaries and find specific terms to help explain their ideas. Words used to explain feelings were “aggression”, “awe”, “jealous” and “horrific”, all negative words. Several positive words were also used, i.e. “cherish”, “devout” and “divine”. It is assumed that these words were added to the students’ responses from dictionary use, meaning that they searched for the words in the dictionary, or used those words from their homework notes and then added them to their responses. Among the Blake words, metaphor appears 30 times and rhyme 13 times, indicating frequent reference to these language devices. The word “evoking” appeared in the sentence “The poem Tyger by William Blake is rhythmical including a lot of

very strong words evoking an image with strong edge” (response 101-1). In another response, one student used the off-list word “veiled” in the following way:

I felt how difficult to tell someone about my interpretation of a poem. In 'The Tyger', although I could find out many grammatical and poetic points individually, it takes long time to teach someone and share my own interpretation. Especially, this piece of works is veiled with mystery "Why did the God create the Tyger?", and we can never know the reason through the poem. (Response 301-1)

From the quote above, it is possible to infer that this student was working through conflicted feelings about the teaching activity. Student 301 had a TOEIC score of 760 (B2 CEFR) and was a serious student. He once told me that he spent hours writing his own version of the poem “Stopping by woods on a snowy evening” and showed me the result, which he was happy with and did appear to capture the poem’s style. His token count in the first response was 138 words, and in the second response it was 267. His engagement with the preparation activities as homework was high, with 15/20 and then 16/20. The only part he did not complete both times was a picture.

At first, I thought the poem were described about holy romance of God and fairy. Of course, there are many rhymes, metaphor and poetic expressions but I could not understand beyond surface of my interpretation. However, I could find out a possibility while I searched the career of the poet. The poet, W.B Yeats had a right woman, Maud Gonne, and he proposed to her many times, but Maud Gonne refused each proposal. Therefore, he tried to express his strong desire and passion for her through many of his poems. I think the poem “The Song of Wandering Aengus” is the same. The poet projected his passion upon Aengus in the poem. If I interpret the poem based on the hypothesis, I can empathize somewhat with him. He wanted to spend his life with Maud Gonne forever like Aengus finally did.

As far as I read the poem, I like last stanza (line 17-24). This is because I could feel strong hopes of Aengus or W.B Yeats. In particular, last two lines described immortal and eternity with word “moon” and “sun”, and I feel everlasting love through those two lines. I do not think that love can last forever as I could felt through “When You Are Old” by the same poet. However, “The Song of Wandering Aengus” gives me something different feeling.

Figure 7.4 Response to W.B. Yeats’ poem discussing mythology and empathy (Response 301-2)

In Figure 7.4 we can see that the low-frequency words in response 301-2 are “romance” and “metaphor” (K4000), although “romance” is likely to be known as a loan word in Japanese. From the K6000 level, “empathize”, “eternity”, “mythology” (which appeared 14 times in the WRP) and “rhyme” (13 times in the WRP). “Eternity” is interesting since an easier choice would have been to say “forever”, but instead this word appears and seems well-chosen for the interpretation he is explaining. It could be that student 301 uses the same kind of wide vocabulary when he speaks, but perhaps it is more likely that he would use words like “veiled” and the phrase “empathize somewhat” in writing. In looking at the low-frequency words in the responses and which do not appear in the poems, it is possible to understand learners’ perspectives and their engagement with the poems.

With the other three poems also, there are points to note related to the use of low-frequency words. The Wordsworth poem is the only one to refer to “personification” and includes words such as “nostalgic” and “reminisce”, suggesting emotional engagement. The Yeats poem prompts use of words related to “mystery”, such as “illusion”, “phantom” and “transience”. It is expected that these words were found using dictionaries or from background reading. The final point about this table is to say that the Frost poem had the lowest number of difficult words and looking at the table of words shows that a high proportion of those were from the words “metaphor” and “rhyme” (and words in the same family). As has already been discussed in this chapter, the Frost poem had the most running words out of the four poems, but from further investigation of the vocabulary used in the responses, it would seem that the Frost poem “The road not taken” resulted in use of high-frequency words more than the other poems. This chapter research aims to look at differences between the responses to the four poems, and in this case, there does seem to be a difference. For advanced learners who are engaged and interested readers, using new and novel ways to explain a poem could be a good chance to make use of dictionary skills and develop their vocabulary. In the next section we consider a specific example from the text, this time from the perspective of cognitive processes, positive and negative words and creativity.

An additional point about cognitive processes was that with several responses, the issue of difficulty and not liking the poem was a problem for students. Since the activity was a peer-to-peer speaking activity, several students commented on their role as the person explaining their poem. This is an example of social engagement since it involves interaction with the poem and with the partner in the class activity.

To sum up this section of the chapter, we have seen how engagement with poetry can lead to extended and open elaborations, using creative and unusual vocabulary. Bringing words from the poem into the written responses (i.e. recycling) and making use of unique words which were not in the poems (which were often creative or unusual words) were two ways in which learners created their responses. Some of the most detailed responses used both strategies, seeking to elaborate openly and with variety. Cognitive engagement is one part of the analysis here, while social and emotional engagement are also evident. In the next section, we look beyond automatic counting and searching in the responses to consider the ratings that the independent raters gave to the responses to poetry and at the end of the chapter we offer discussion of the pedagogical implications of the results.

7.6 Independent raters and “engagement with poetry”

In the last section, the focus was on describing the linguistic features of the learner writing in the WRP. In this section, a grading system was used to evaluate a selection of the written responses holistically and give them a score for engagement, using the research question *RQ5c: Is it possible to identify written responses to poetry which show high engagement, using holistic scoring?* Three independent raters read the responses and then gave each of them a score of engagement with poetry. The raters were not asked to use a checklist or detailed rubric for grading, so that they could have more naturalistic responses to the interpretation. The instructions for raters is given in Appendix D.

<i>1 low engagement:</i>	<i>basic response with simple generalizations</i>
<i>2 slight engagement:</i>	<i>limited response with some noticing of poetic/non-literal language</i>
<i>3 moderate engagement:</i>	<i>extended, detailed response with some elaboration on the poetic/non-literal language</i>
<i>4 high engagement:</i>	<i>focused response with attention to detail, exploration of non-literal language such as metaphor and knowledge creation</i>

Figure 7.5 Instructions for raters on low to high engagement with poetry

As can be seen from Figure 7.5, the raters were asked to evaluate engagement holistically, considering the response overall and not to pay attention to any grammar mistakes. All raters

were university teachers with advanced degrees and experience teaching academic writing. They were all familiar with the poem before completing the activity of rating. I used all of the responses for “The Road Not Taken” which is 25% of the total responses. The number of responses was 36, written by 36 different participants. The remainder were rated by me separately. The raters saw the responses using a Google form which did not reveal student identification numbers or whether the response was the first or second activity. I gave a printed copy of the poem to the raters and used Google forms to send the responses to the raters. The instructions were brief and aimed to be possible to understand quickly and complete the activity without further reading. Raters completed the rating in one sitting, all spending under 40 minutes total. Raters were minimally trained and did not receive any reimbursement for their time.

Table 7.9 Rater scores, frequencies and frequency distributions

score	Rater 1		Rater 2		Rater 3	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 low engagement	3	8.3	12	33.3	7	19.4
2 slight engagement	6	16.7	11	30.6	12	33.3
3 moderate engagement	21	58.3	6	16.7	14	38.9
4 high engagement	6	16.7	7	19.4	3	8.3
Mean	2.86		2.22		2.36	
S.D.	0.82		1.11		0.89	

From Table 7.9 we can see that the raters did not entirely agree with each other, as may be expected in this case. The raters were given only minimal instructions for the activity of rating and were not involved in any earlier part of the thesis project. The holistic scoring (Appendix F) could be interpreted differently by different raters, and in this case, it was typical to expect that the raters would vary in their responses. Rater 1 gave more scores of 3 and 4 (58.3% and 16.7%, respectively), showing a tendency to suggest the responses had moderate-high engagement with the poem. In contrast, Rater 2 gave the most scores of 1 and 2 (33.3% and 30.6%, respectively) which was the rating for low to minimal engagement. The third rater was more likely to award scores of 2 and 3 (33.3% and 38.9%, respectively), revealing that rater three was tending towards seeing most responses as between low and moderate engagement. Nevertheless, it was possible

with these scores to look at the individual responses and find which ones had received consistently high scores from all of the raters.

In the next section, several of those rated highly by all raters are presented for discussion. In the following examples, the responses were all rated 4 (high engagement) by two or three raters. The responses contain small grammatical errors which were not changed from the written work which was submitted by individual students.

The poem "The Road **Not** Taken" describes **choices** in our life. Firstly, "Two Roads divided in a **yellow** wood" **means** the way we have to **choose**. To go the **better** way, we **think** long time and compare two ways. **However, sometimes** it **looks** no **difference** and **makes** us more **harder** to **choose**. Then, we **often choose** the way which **attracts** us more. There is no **reason**, only **inspiration**, and many times the way is **harder than** the **other** one. In this poem, this situation is described in the expression "Then took the **other**, as just as **fair**, And having **perhaps** the **better** claim, **Because** it was grassy and **wanted** wear". And he **choose** the way it **looks harder**. After he chose and past the way, he **looks** back the days in the way. He **says** "I shall be telling this with a **sigh**". I **think** "**sigh**" has two **opposite meanings**. One is a **positive meaning**. He **remembers** the days which contains **good** things and also **bad** things (**trouble or sadness**) and he **satisfied** with his **choice**. The **other** one is a negative **meaning**. He **regrets** his **choice** and **wonder why** he did **not choose** the **other** way. And the last expression "And that has **made all** the **difference**" also has **positive** and negative **meanings**. **If** he **think** his **choice** was right, he **thinks** his **choice leads** him **better** life. So it has **made difference**. On the contrary, when he **regret** his **choice**, he **thinks** he **could** have **better** life. What I **think** from this **opposite meanings** is the **importance** of the way of **thinking**. We **cannot say** which way was **better because** we **cannot** through both ways. I **think** the **interest** of this poem is in the **difference** of **interpretations**. We can receive many **meanings** and it **changes** as time passes.

Figure 7.6 Response 320-1 coded for cognitive processes and affect

In Figure 7.6, the topic of the poem seems to prompt the discussion on meanings and several of the words labelled "insight". There is a consideration of possible interpretations which may vary, depending on the reader and looking closely at one word, "sigh" (the word "sigh" is categorised as negative emotion in the affect category). Overall, the student has used words categorised as cognitive processes frequently in this response. Elaborating openly, while considering various ideas does appear to result in focused attention and cognitive engagement.

In this poem, "roads" is a metaphor of people's lives, and we are "travelers" of the roads. As this poet wrote so, we are **wondering** and continuing to **choose** ways to go. It is **easy to choose** the way which **other** people had already chosen. **However, if** your mind talk to you so, you **should** go to a "grassy" way that have many **difficulties**. **Any other** people do **not know** the road, **but** it will bring you **great surprising** and **differences**. **I like** this poem **because I think** that we have to have a **courage** to walk another road from **other** people to follow your **voice** of heart. In addition, **I felt** that this poet **enjoyed** his own life so much. **I hope** I can talk with my future child about my life like him finally. On the contrary, he also **said** "I shall be telling this with a **sigh** (in the line 16)" in this poem. I wandered [sic] he was **satisfied** with his **choice** of ways, **but** also he **felt** a little of **regrets** on his life. In my **opinion**, he **wanted** to go to **other** ways that he did **not choose**. In the line 15, "I **doubted if I should ever** come back" **means** he **felt sad** that people **could not** live two ways. From this sentence, it is **impossible** to live with no **regret**, so people have to **choose** the way that has less **regrets**, even **though** you **must** step on many grasses. Robert Frost was an American poet. To teach children about American dreams and **importance** of **choosing** your way, it **seems** that **most** of children **learn** this poem at school. It contains a **strong** message for people, so it can also **encourage** them to live. Moreover, in the line 1 "in a **yellow wood**" is **said** about a new school term in US, **I guessed**. **Therefore**, it matches for children's new days.

Figure 7.7 Response 108-2 coded for cognitive processes and affect

In the second example by Student 108, the length of the response is 318 tokens (her first attempt was 214). The student had a self-reported TOEIC score of 755 and her engagement with the homework activities was high (18/20 in the first activity, 20/20 the second time). The response begins with a statement that the road is a metaphor, and "we" are travellers. Throughout the response, the student talks about "you" and "we" and even "if your mind talk [sic] to you", which has the effect of connecting the reader with the student's ideas. This feature of the writing suggests social engagement, which means that the personal engagement with the situation of the poem becomes clear through use of pronouns and personalization. There is original thinking in the response, suggesting that you "follow your voice of heart", and take the "grassy" way. Looking at pronouns in particular, the response uses a variety: we, your, you, I, his, my, him, he, them and us, which could be interpreted to mean that the student has shown social engagement. The cognitive response, which was high, included the category "tentative", and the following 9 words: wondering, if, any, hope, opinion, doubted, seems, most and guessed.

In Figure 7.7 there are aspects of this response from Student 108 which may have helped to achieve the high engagement score. The response goes on to integrate ideas such as "it is impossible to live with no regret" and explains this as part of the poem's overall message. The response addresses both parts of the prompt, to try and talk about meaning and liking/disliking the poem. Focused attention, or cognitive engagement, is also present in this response, since the student mentioned the "yellow wood", connecting the school year with the autumn. This does require a bit of flexible thinking for a Japanese student, since April is the time for the start

of the new school year, and cherry blossom season, and spring. Noticing the season is an automatic aspect of poetry reading when looking at *haiku*, since *haiku* must always have a seasonal word (季語/*kigo*). The seasonal word can sometimes be hidden, like reference to a breeze to mean summer, or the taste of a type of fish typical of a particular season.

In Table 7.10, we can see that response 320-1 received the highest score for several categories. Student 320 had a reported TOEIC score of 745 and completed the preparation activity to a moderate standard (12/20 and 13/20). The response is in Figure 7.7, with all words for cognitive processes and affect highlighted in red. The categories which appear strong in this response are “insight”, “difference” and “positive emotion”.

Table 7.10 Results of the LIWC analysis of three responses rated with high engagement

	Response 320-1	Response 108-2
Insight	10.3	4.72
Causality	2.99	0.63
Discrepancy	1.66	3.77
Tentative	1.99	3.14
Certainty	1.0	0.63
Difference	5.98	4.40
Total: Cognitive Processes	22.26	14.78
See	1.33	0.31
Hear	0.66	0.94
Feel	1.00	0.94
Total: Perception	2.99	2.20
Positive Emotion	4.95	3.46
Negative Emotion	2.33	2.20
Total: Affect	6.98	5.66

There are 14 words which are categorised in “insight”. These are: choice, choices, choose, think, reason, meaning(s), remembers, wonder, thinks, thinking, interpretations and inspiration. The category “difference” resulted in 10 words: difference (x2), not, however, than, other, opposite, or, if and cannot. Positive emotion (8 words) were: better, attracts, inspiration, faith, good,

satisfied, importance and interest. As we have been discussing, engagement with poetry in writing may be seen through types of language which suggest focused attention (cognitive engagement), personalisation (social response) and affect (emotional engagement, either positive or negative).

Another student also commented on the yellow colour as part of the mystery of the poem: “There is something unknown and intriguing in that road. The curiosity led the author to the unknown world. There is an opinion that 'a yellow wood' is merely an implication of the season. I interpreted 'a yellow wood' as not ordinary situation” (Response 127-1). Both students have made a connection with their previous knowledge of poetry, with the season word being part of their L1 poetic schemata, which they have brought to the L2 reading. Throughout this chapter we have looked at ways in which the data reveals how these learners engaged with poems in English. Looking at lexical variation, use of recycling from the poems, and through particular vocabulary choices, we can see that poetry in English prompted thoughtful and focused responses.

7.7 Conclusions

This results chapter aimed to illustrate the variety of language in responses to four different poems in a timed writing activity. The study analysed the writing and aimed to investigate various features of second language use as evidence of L2 poetic engagement. The results show that there were differences between the responses in the pre- and post-test, which include response length and categories of functional words such as pronouns. In terms of L2 poetic engagement, we considered the three aspects of cognitive engagement, social engagement and emotional engagement. Related to focused attention the poems, longer answers could be considered to be evidence for cognitive engagement. Social engagement occurred with personal response using pronouns and meaningful comments about what could be learned from the poems. Emotional engagement was possibly the clearest way in which these L2 learners showed their interaction with the poems in words related to psychological processes and emotions. Rather than being reticent and reluctant to discuss feelings and personal thoughts, several learners wrote responses which used emotion vocabulary in depth and detail. In practice, what these results may suggest is that for language teachers using poetry, there may be ways to explore language development and practice which encourages emotional engagement.

Considering the topic of engagement with poetry, looking at vocabulary in the responses was useful to help illustrate how successful responses are created. Students who wrote successful work were not always the ones with the highest scores in the pre-test activities (one way of understanding engagement). Instead, a better look at how writing became successful was in the automatic counting and searching using categories identified in the LIWC. From a methodological perspective, the use of computer programs to search could give different experiences from those of Study 1. Instead of the hand-coding in Chapter 6, the use of software to automatically count and organise the vocabulary was efficient.

From the perspective of teaching the poems, the results in this chapter could be interpreted in different ways. There are those who might think that the Blake poem, with over 20% off-list words, is not suitable for students who are still only approaching an intermediate level of language proficiency. The poem requires careful reading, certainly, and use of a dictionary for initial understanding. A reply to this would be to say that the poem was given as an intensive reading text, not meant for extensive reading or fluency development. It was part of the activity to ask students to try and interpret the poem, which would encourage them to re-read. The written responses to the Blake poem resulted in a higher proportion of difficult, off-list words in the responses, which suggested cognitive engagement with the activity. As a basis for discussion, poems about nature, love and other universal themes provide an adequate starting point, and so it was in the case of the Tyger poem.

It is possible to infer from these results that the Frost poem represents an example of a text which is relatively easy for the learners to read and discuss because it contains over 95% high-frequency words. By that logic, the Frost poem should not be used as a text in an EFL class because it did not offer new vocabulary. From the perspective of using the Frost poem in a speaking activity, the text is readable and therefore appealing. Many students identified with the poem and talked about themselves when they wrote about the Frost poem. Considering the writing perspective, the Frost poem had the highest token count of the four poems. There was a high degree of recycling of language in the written responses, which meant that direct quoting or paraphrasing from the poem was frequently done. There was recycling from all four poems, and when done well the recycling was clear evidence of textual comprehension.

English proficiency scores do not truly indicate how well a person may be able to interpret a poem, understand the emotions in a painting or give a detailed response to a piece of music. The note-taking preparation homework was a kind of scaffolding which would help learners with background research (internet details), vocabulary pre-teaching, identification of language

devices and identifying elements of structure (with the option to draw pictures to show understanding). Some of the students' planning was extensive and indicated careful research, while some was more creative and relied on strategies such as dictionary use, glossing and diagram or pictures to suggest preparation and understanding of the poems. In conclusion, all four of the poems prompted original interpretations, detailed answers and use of a range of vocabulary use. The results might support the notion that authentic texts are challenging but motivating for students because there are so many ways in which poetic texts can be interpreted.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

Reading and responding to poetry in English is a challenging activity for second language learners. Idiosyncratic uses of language and difficult vocabulary combine to make poetry challenging. Yet poetry seems to engage readers and hold their attention while also prompting detailed personal and emotional responses. Poetry has the potential to provide an engaging reading experience, one which may have benefits for speaking and writing skills.

This thesis has explored the responses which learners of English gave to a range of poems selected for their potential interest. The study has considered the role that school learning in the L1 plays in the development of poetic awareness, or poetic schemata. The aims of the project were to describe features of speaking and writing about poetry and to try to evaluate learner engagement with poems in English. The project was conducted through analysis of learner language gathered in a questionnaire as well as spoken and written data. We saw how to apply a framework adapted from SLA and general theories of education, with a focus on engagement with language and sociocultural theory. In this thesis, the aim was to investigate L2 poetic engagement, viewed as a combination of cognitive engagement, social engagement and emotional engagement, observable when L2 learners are interacting with poetry in their second language.

8.2 Main findings

The thesis presented results in three parts, beginning with Chapter 5. The first of these, a questionnaire, asked about the background poetry experiences of Japanese university learners. For the purposes of gaining a detailed understanding of learning backgrounds, there was also discussion of Japanese L1 literacy practices in Chapter 3. Poetry reading in L1 literacy practices is part of the educational experience in many countries, including Japan, and this early introduction to poetry is useful because it represents a part of the learners' reading experience. The discussion in Chapter 3 and the findings of Chapter 5 concluded that Japanese students already have schemata for Japanese poetry. As Verdonk (2013) notes, schemata exist for all kinds of cognitive processes and they are "to a large extent flexible and adaptable" (p.118). Our understandings and knowledge about any genre of text, including poetry, is adaptable and open

to change. One point about this is that the L1 understandings of poetry could be better utilized in L2 education. The questionnaire in Chapter 5 revealed that many students could remember poetry lessons in general, could name specific poets and could describe literature lesson styles. Several students expressed positive feelings towards poetry in general, or to specific poets or poems. Overall, the response to the questionnaire suggested that Japanese learners have a general understanding and appreciation of poetry which could be utilized in the tertiary setting more effectively.

In Chapter 6, in which I reported on the conversations of learners reading two poems (Study 1), I looked for engagement with the poems in paired conversations using an existing coding system, adapted to include emotional responses. The chapter reported on examples where the learners used strategies such as *questioning* to develop their understanding of both poems. The findings suggested that the Japanese poem prompted more discussion overall but that the one category in which the English poem had a higher number of codes was the strategy of integrating ideas. The results of this speaking activity could be interpreted to mean that a more difficult poem presents a kind of pushed output, and opportunities for language related episodes (LREs) to occur. The small-scale of these results do make that suggestion tentative, however. The chapter concluded with discussion of the limitations of the study and how the activity was adapted for Study 2.

In Chapter 7, reporting on Study 2, the focus was on learners' written responses to poems. The student-participants did the same activity twice with a gap of four weeks in between the two activities, during which time they completed various lessons related to reading and interpreting poems. The methodology in this chapter was to use automatic corpus counting to report on the lexical frequency data and linguistic features of the writing, comparing the writing they had done when they wrote two responses to different poems. Comparisons with larger corpora meant that it was possible to identify features of the responses to poetry which were characteristic of the data.

In the second part of the chapter, a holistic approach to scoring the responses on a scale of engagement helped to identify particular responses which several raters agreed represented engagement with the poems. Independent raters graded responses according to their understanding of the term engagement and several pieces of writing were successfully selected as having high engagement, using a holistic score. Several of the students who wrote more in the preparation homework activities also went on to write successful responses, although other students who had only prepared brief notes were also able to produce successful work. In

Chapter 7 also, a comparison between four poems allowed for further discussion of the effect of difficulty on the responses. Those which were categorized as highly engaged by independent raters were additionally discussed in the light of their use of language. The results were also coded for cognitive processes and affect in this section, and several of the most effective responses used a range of vocabulary to express emotion. Through the lens of sociocultural theories of education and learner engagement, the thesis has explored how Japanese learners of English may build on their existing experiences of learning with poetry in their L1. The results showed that when the Japanese learners recalled their early poetry experiences, many of these early encounters with poems were memorable and emotionally engaging. The thesis also sought to make suggestions for implementation of activities which would support and develop interacts with poetry in English. The following sections provide summaries of the findings of this thesis and then goes on to discuss how the findings may be used in L2 education contexts.

8.2.1 Poetry experiences

From the starting point of one general question (RQ1: How do Japanese university-level learners of English engage with poetry in English?), several connected questions were created to explore the topic. In the next section, I review each of the research questions in turn with a summary of findings, and discussion in light of the main theme of L2 poetic engagement.

RQ2: How do extant poetry-reading experiences of Japanese students affect their engagement with poetry in English?

In the early stages of the project, I was curious to know why my Japanese students seemed to be so interested in poetry, and were generally so positive about it, despite its perceived difficulty. I was teaching an elective poetry course before this study began, and always aimed to find out in more detail about students' experiences of poetry. When I had the chance to ask students about their poetry backgrounds, answers seemed creative and there was no sense that poetry itself was being avoided. The image of the quiet Japanese student, reluctant to give answers and avoiding giving opinions, did not seem to be true when it came to poetry. Students seemed to talk about their interests in language learning and poems, learning from song lyrics or for a small number of students, writing their own creative work. There was something intriguing in the way that students seemed to give genuinely thoughtful answers to questions about poetry.

In Chapter 4, we saw that the Japanese education system and aspects of L1 literacy practices use poetry. Poetry is a component of Japanese L1 literacy practices from the early years of elementary school, where it features in textbooks and is used for a variety of L1 learning goals, such as fluency development, reading aloud, and training in reading with emphasis and expression. I argued that Japanese learners have had experiences with poetry which could be more fully appreciated in their L2 learning contexts. Creative writing exists in different forms as part of L1 literary development, including reflective writing, diary writing and Japanese poetry writing.

In Chapter 5, in which I detail the answers to a background experiences questionnaire given at the start of the semester, I collected answers about poetry which could help inform the course planning but also answer the query about poetry experiences and engagement with poetry. The answers suggested that many students had a distinctly positive disposition towards poetry, from their classroom interactions with poems in elementary school, or from interest in songs and lyrics. The findings were in line with the conclusions reached by Gilroy (1995), who interviewed teachers and found that learning with literature is successful when the learners enjoy it. Chapter 5 illustrated the value of background reading experiences in planning any course of study using authentic materials. None of the students mentioned political poetry, but several students mentioned female poets and their work. Only one student made reference to war poetry, very briefly, and did not comment on the topic in any personal way. This is to be expected in Japan, where politics, like religion, is of course taboo and in state schools in particular, is avoided. Philosophy is an exception, and poetry is embedded in different curriculum areas such as language arts, history and social studies, but the purpose of the poetry is not to highlight social injustice or to bring out strong anti-war sentiments. There are exceptions to this, and it is true that there is art, including poetry, which is political in Japan, but these are not generally used in language classes and students are surprised to encounter them in English. Contrasting this with the UK's teaching of the war poets, for example, and it seemed that poetry education in Japan is focused on personal development with a direction towards contemplative learning and reading skills such as fluency development in the L1. To sum up the findings of the BEQ, university students seem to remember the poetry they have previously encountered.

8.2.2 Spoken responses to poetry

RQ3: What identifiable differences are there between the conversations that

Japanese learners have about a famous Japanese poem and conversations that they have about an English poem and which of these types of poem results in greater L2 poetic engagement?

In Study 1, pairs of learners read a Japanese poem in English and an English poem and talked together about both poems. The aim of Study 1 was to encourage interaction between students in a peer-to-peer activity, with no input from the teacher. Each pair of students talked together about the same two poems and I transcribed the conversations and then held a second session with the students in which we talked about the transcriptions. Initially, I thought at the time that it would be possible to get insights from learners who talked together which would not emerge in the typical teacher-oriented discussion activities which are so common in reading classrooms. Analysis of the conversations using qualitative coding revealed that strategies such as elaboration and paraphrasing were used frequently when talking about both poems, but that background knowledge was lacking in detail for the specific poems themselves, and that reading a poem without much time to prepare a response was overly challenging for students.

The Japanese poem inspired emotional engagement, but many comments turned out to be negative, as students had feelings which disagreed with what they perceived to be the opinions of the poet. The English poem, which was deceptively simple in its use of short words and lack of complex language, encouraged use of questioning and integrating knowledge, while both poems resulted in frequent use of the strategy of noticing. The follow-up interviews revealed that even though students could recognise the Japanese poem from previous learning, they did not have detailed opinions on the poem but admired the poet for his views. One student commented that the poem was “a little long...difficult to memorize”, revealing her own previous encounters with poetry from earlier learning, which may not have been entirely positive. Several students commented that they did not like the poem because of the way it seemed to be telling them how to live, which in a way is evidence for engaged reading in that they did understand and appreciate the message of the text. What this meant for the next part of the study was that I realised that specific Japanese poems may bring with them lingering thoughts about a text which may have brought out negative feelings when first encountered. As a result of the first study I decided that in the next stage of the project that English poems, despite their difficulty, could still result in focused and engaged responses.

RQ4: What can Japanese learners' spoken responses to poems reveal about L2 poetic engagement and what are some pedagogical implications of the

findings?

The findings from the poetry responses indicated that learners use a variety of strategies to discuss poems. These strategies can be categorised as cognitive, social or emotional engagement. Poetry discussions could provide the opportunity for authentic and meaningful interactions in the language classroom. Although the Japanese poem was well known, several students did not like the poem and expressed negative feelings towards the poem. The form of the poem, a kind of description of what it means to struggle to survive in life, seemed difficult to relate to the daily lives of these students. Written in the 1930s, the perspective on how to live not close to the students' experiences. Perhaps the refusal to accept this type of poem's message was expression of authentic reading, which came from the learners themselves (instead of the teacher). Emotional engagement with the poem was sometimes negative, but the discussions about the poem related well to background knowledge and poetic understanding. The message of the poem was just considered to be too serious for them, or aimed at older people, or both. It is possible to argue that even though there were negative comments about the message of the Japanese poem, there did still seem to be cognitive, social and emotional engagement with the poem.

One result of this study was to discover that a short time to read and discuss a poem is not enough for most learners, even for third year university students with advanced language skills and background reading poetry. The difficulty does not only lie in the words and the topic of the poem, but also in thinking about and formulating answers to the discussion questions and thinking about how to take a position or guide an individual response to a poem in such a short time. In future studies, it would be recommended not to use this method, even with students who know each other well and are willing to help each other to make a 'successful' conversation.

Pedagogical implications of these findings may be linked to the choice of poem and usefulness of certain types of poem when looking to initiate discussion. Selecting poems which are famous and anthologized does remove problems in the sense that those poems are easy to justify to course planners. However, famous poems or older poems can be challenging for learner to read if the context is unfamiliar.

An additional implication of the findings from Study 1 is that interaction with poems, supported by appropriate dictionary use and time to consider discussion points, could indeed be a source of language learning. The results support the ideas as reported in sociocultural theory, that learning occurs in steps of increasing complexity, and that interaction comes before

internalization. Study 1 was not longitudinal and so it was not possible to report on the longer-term effects of talking about poems or allow for another collection of data. In the next section, I summarize the findings of Study 2 which were reported in Chapter 7.

8.2.3 Written responses to poetry

RQ5: What can Japanese learners' written responses to poems reveal about L2 poetic engagement and what are some pedagogical implications of the findings?

In Chapter 7, using a series of stages in automatic corpus counting and searching, it was possible to show descriptive statistics of the data set and then use this information to look at how Japanese learners are engaging with English poems using writing. Most students wrote more in the second written response than the first, which could have been because of an increased familiarity with the activity or more willingness to engage with the poems, or both.

Also, in Chapter 7, it was possible to identify features of the writing which showed cognitive, social and emotional engagement. This was seen in the use of recycled language from the poems as well as through looking for elaborations which brought in new and creative vocabulary. The results showed a number of differences between the responses to the poems. Despite these difficulties, there were ways in which the Blake poem prompted particular use of difficult, low frequency words more than the other three poems. The Blake poem had low recycling of language from the poem itself, and seemed to prompt creative words, including the word “create” and its related stem words. The results seem to suggest that the difficult poem presented an opportunity to respond using challenging and elaborative vocabulary.

Next in Chapter 7, the focus was on how raters evaluated responses, and how the “high engagement” could be accounted for by looking at the lexical profile of the responses. Particularly looking at thinking and feeling, two aspects of literary response as favoured by Eva-Wood (2004a, 2004b), Zyngier and Fiahlo (2010) and others, it is possible to identify ways that the responses make use of thinking and feeling categories in their successful writing. Engagement, according to the definition given to raters meant “focused, reflective learning with own knowledge construction” and “affective/emotional engagement” which was “purposeful and autonomous” (Appendix F). A score of 4 was given when the responses were able to use attention to detail and larger exploration of the poem’s meaning. Results also indicated that other

categories such as use of pronouns (we, our, you) appeal to the reader and could be evidence for L2 poetic engagement. Selected responses which were marked for cognitive processes showed that “think” was a commonly used word although a variety of other words showing different cognitive processes were used.

Cognitive engagement was seen when learners brought in difficult words to the discussions, or persisted with a poem which they found difficult, for example. More research using different types of poems or different types of activities could illuminate the topic still further to be able to say which kinds of poems were most effective for this kind of engagement with poems. Finally, the use of positive and negative emotional words and processes such as insight also appeared in the responses to poetry. We can look at this from the perspective of seeing these words as being evidence of the learners’ encyclopaedic knowledge. Readers may feel that their reading lacks autonomy or control if the repeated words are difficult to comprehend or imagine. In the case of this study, learners did notice repetition, but it raised questions for them and caused difficulty as they considered issues such as “whose dread feet” and “where is the tyger?”.

When reading a text and given the freedom to develop individual responses to poems, the act of creating an understanding (building on Rosenblatt’s idea of transactional reading) could be new and stimulating for Japanese learners precisely because of their previous experiences. As a result of this, reading literature could lead to greater autonomy and independent thinking, related in turn to L2 poetic engagement. Evidence for this in the current investigation was the use of cognitive processes such as insight and emotional involvement in the responses, as shown through the use of pronouns or positive and negative language.

8.3 Pedagogical implications

Teacher education in L1 and L2 contexts lacks any time at all spent on poetry, and as a result of this there is a general lack of awareness about how to teach literature (Paran, 2008). As others have noted, there is a need for more research in specific contexts, including primary and secondary settings and a need for more reader-focused research (Hall, 2009). In Japan, the prevalence of the extensive reading approach means that reading teachers are focused almost entirely on increasing learners’ reading speeds and fluency in reading classes. While these are positive aims and will help learners to increase their ability to perform well in examinations, the opportunity to spend time on reading, to engage in thoughtful consideration of a text and to do

any kind of critical reading may be lost in such situations. One implication for teaching is that the study could support the view that poetry reading makes use of the tendency to seek growth and knowledge.

Empirical studies which use data from real readers are useful to help illuminate aspects of the language learning process. The current study is one such example. There is evidence in this thesis that poetry reading is a way of encouraging interaction and noticing of language features (Schmidt, 1990, Long, 1991, Swain and Lapkin, 1995), two elements of language acquisition which have been explored in detail in other settings. As a sub-field of L2 reading research, poetry in specific settings has not been explored in detail, and in Japan empirical evidence related to poems in language classrooms has yet to be fully reported. While there has already been interest in literature, including the use of short stories, novels and in the rare case, poetry (see Teranishi, Saito and Wales, 2015), evidence for the uses of poetry in specific contexts continues to be limited.

Further analysis could be done using analysis of the metacognitive strategies learners are using when reading poems. Evidence of questioning, in particular, is important in that it could mean clear evidence of thinking about the text, sometimes critically evaluating it, or at least showing interaction with the text which could be considered cognitive engagement. When learners search for meaning in poems, asking questions of their partners and themselves, they use various elaboration and conversation strategies. Additional analysis of dialogue such as the conversations presented in this study and looking at ways in which learners are engaged in “*linguaging*” (Swain, 2005) could reveal more insights as potential evidence for language development. The learners are actively discussing ideas and producing meaningful, comprehensible language in the target L2, while negotiating their own co-constructed ideas about poetry. Further studies looking at poetry reading and discussions using poems could adapt the activity further for the purpose of looking more closely at what type of language learning is possible with poetry.

Another implication for teaching is that educators could look more closely at what is happening when learners work with texts in pairs and group discussions in the language classroom. Responding to poetry, either in speech or writing, may be activities which show evidence of the output hypothesis (Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Swain, 2005). This theory claims that producing language, either spoken or written, can, in favourable conditions, result in language learning. The act of being involved in the creation of language is the essential element, since “*the learner is in control*” (Swain and Lapkin, 1995, p.99). Output activities in language

learning contexts include speaking and discussion activities, as well as writing for fluency, free writing or other activities which activate the prior knowledge of the learners. Speaking activities using poetry are likely to place demands on the readers and will be challenging for L2 users. Even poems which are short can present resistance to understanding on first reading, however. A poem made up of relatively easy words will still be likely to require slow and careful reading, even once the difficulties presented by vocabulary are overcome with glossing and use of a dictionary.

Teachers may not always have the opportunity to develop their own materials for literature classes, but if they do it would be helpful for them to know more about the theoretical underpinnings of a strategic approach to using literature, including poetry, in their classrooms. Teaching literature as a subject, with the aim of testing knowledge of specific texts, means that there is a missed opportunity to use literature to assist with L2 language learning. Any future research into this topic would benefit from a greater focus on teacher education, at various levels, to help improve the current situation related to uses of creative texts in EFL contexts such as Japan.

8.4 Theoretical implications

As well as pedagogical implications, there are a number of theoretical implications from the current investigation. We have discussed the possible uses of the EWL framework for learning with poetry, but there are several other points related to the theory of the thesis which are relevant at this final stage in the thesis.

A key finding of this thesis was that from a sociocultural point of view, talking about and reading or writing about poetry holds potential for L2 development. Swain (2005) and Lantolf (2000) agree that classroom learners of second languages can push their language development by focusing on the language they are interacting with. Talking with others is an essential part of second language learning. If we also agree that language learning occurs incrementally as a gradual internalization process, then interaction with texts such as poetry, which draw attention to language features, could facilitate this process of internalization. The talking and co-construction of meaning which occurs when learners interact with poems is not without its limitations, but this approach does remove the teacher from getting in the way of the reading experience. Incidental learning, not only of new vocabulary but through the practice of language structures, is one possible effect of interaction with poetry.

A second theoretical implication is related to application of self-determination theory (SDT). As SDT applies to second language learning (Noels et al. 2003; Noels, 2009), we can see that reading a poem and talking or writing about it will lead to questioning and a search for understanding. In the case of this study, learners' abilities to demonstrate an understanding of aesthetic qualities in poems, along with their noticing of textual manipulation (such as repetition, rhyme, and metaphor) showed that these elements became part of the meaning construction process. While poetry does appear to "make us think" (as suggested by one respondent to the poetry experiences questionnaire), it also allows for conversations which provide practice in natural conversation, developing co-constructed meaning and opportunities to practice the target language. Another potential implication of this shared understanding of poetry and poetic meaning is that it could be related to learner autonomy, or taking charge of one's learning (Holec, 1981). When learners are asked to bring in their favourite poems, in their L1 or L2, they bring with them a bit of their background experiences, cultural knowledge and local perspectives. Instead of approaching interpretation as a way to get students to think the same thing about a text (as Pickens, 2007 had done), diversity of perspectives through literature could be a useful way to harness a natural tendency for language learners to also want to learn about culture.

In the opening chapters of this thesis, the case for poetry in language classrooms in Japan was linked with the idea that ELT approaches in many international contexts have not fully embraced the indigenous cultures and literacy practices of the L1. Critical reading practices such as discussing personal choices and explaining them, talking about the impact of a text on a social issue or society and reading critically for evidence of social context are all possible areas of future investigation. It would be possible to create a related project looking at engagement with other types of creative texts and try to determine how and in which ways creative reading of poetry, combined with critical reading, could enhance language learning.

8.5 Limitations

There are a number of limitations to the current study which should be acknowledged and addressed. Experimental conditions such as time, resources and environment are key factors in any piece of research, including this investigation. Future research should aim to take into consideration the shortcomings of the current project, with particular attention to students' experiences and ways to increase the validity of research findings.

First, one limitation of this research which occurs frequently in studies which involve data collection in education contexts is the problem of a small sample size. In this investigation this limitation has implications for broad generalizations of the results. The first study reported on conversations of only four pairs of students, which is not enough to make claims about the success or otherwise of this approach with a larger group of students. One of the reasons for the small sample size was the difficulty of arranging the data collection and making time to adequately follow-up with each pair of students after the data collection. The activity of reading poems together and then discussing them with the researcher in a follow-up interview was a beginning step towards understanding the topic. However, the activity itself and the data generated was not enough to make claims about developing interlanguage, and language learning. While conversations themselves could help to reveal existing uses of English when interacting with poetry, finding a way to measure development of particular strategies over time would be a possible way to adapt and improve the study design. For example, speaking skills would be better evaluated through a longitudinal study in which earlier and later production of language could be compared. A higher number of participants could also help to reveal subtle differences between the responses to poems between learners of different proficiency levels and between poems. A variety of data collection methods, including a comparison between spoken and written responses and including self-assessment of engagement with the activities could have assisted in the goal of understanding more deeply the potential for L2 language learning when interacting with poetry. One way of dealing with this in any possible future study would be to arrange the data collection making use of online reading or offering the activity to participants from different teaching contexts. It could be useful to try and investigate interactions with poetry at different age levels, including younger learners and also with trainee teachers, and possibly with a multilingual group of students.

The second limitation was related to the limited access to student data during the research period. It was not possible in this case to gather video data from inside the classroom due to

university regulations and privacy issues. The paired conversations had to be conducted outside of class time and students were reimbursed for their time to complete the activities. The choice of organising the data collection was made to help separate the activities from the course grading. However, there could have been different data available if it could have been possible to gather video data from the classroom interactions as an additional source of data. Related to this issue, making the study more longitudinal could have meant continuing the investigation after the students had finished the one-semester course. Several of the students were completing their final year at university and starting work, while others were busy with internships. It might have been possible to gain greater insight into the background experiences of poems to have more questions related to wider reading background, including questions about pleasure reading and author recognition, or another way to evaluate depth and detail of reading backgrounds, creating more data for analysis.

Third, there were factors about the environment of the university which created limitations for the project. The first was the examination period at the end of the semester, in which students were hurriedly trying to finish their courses and projects. It was not feasible to try and to additional data collection at the end of the semester, which may have become caught up with successful semester completion. The lack of exit questionnaire or additional data from the end of the course in this thesis is a limitation of the current investigation. The use of an exit questionnaire as an additional form of data could have been used to gather information regarding the students' ideas and opinions of the activities used in Study 1 and Study 2, which could have led to a greater degree of analysis of the learners' reflective comments and self-awareness of their engagement with poetry.

Also related to environment was an issue of time from the students' perspective. The students who took part in both studies were in their third and fourth year. Because of hiring practices in Japan, this means that they are usually looking for employment during the term time, which can cause a tension between the teachers' expectations and the students' abilities to meet those expectations. While many students kept their motivation and interest high throughout the semester, some were busily looking for work. Although students completed reflections on their poetry reading experiences as part of the final course assignment, those comments were part of the course of study and were evaluated to calculate their grade for the semester. Since I was the instructor on the poetry course and had also conducted the research with the students, participants may have felt that it was necessary to report on the activities in a positive way and could have concealed their honest feelings. An exit questionnaire could have been interpreted

to help increase the validity of the data in the investigation overall and in a different course of study, the use of an exit questionnaire which was clearly indicated as separate from any evaluated assignments would be recommended.

All research decisions imply alternative routes and methods. There is still so much that can be investigated related to the topic of poetry and L2 learning. The current project could have taken a more varied, multimodal approach to poetry teaching, or used more of the students' work, or involved more practical suggestions on how to use varied and contemporaneous poets. None of these alternative paths were taken this time, although numerous possibilities were considered while conducting the project itself.

8.6 Suggestions for future research

A future area of investigation related to this thesis is the closer analysis of creative language use outside the text and amongst responses and developing learner language. Poetic language, including metaphor, is ubiquitous and appears in creative texts such as songs, poems and fictional prose, as well as everyday language and non-literary texts. The current project has used poetry as a focused example of how creative texts can be engaging and useful in language teaching but expanding the research beyond poetry is a natural next stage. Creative language also appears in language jokes, in speeches and in discourse aimed at persuasion such as advertisements, all of which appear frequently in everyday communication. In a language learning context, it is not yet clear how text choice in classroom activities, as well as creative text choices, can influence learners' language awareness and engagement. Further studies, using real-world tasks which involve interacting with poetic language in contexts such as the linguistic landscape, could be useful areas of future investigation.

A second area of future research would be to look more closely at poetic engagement with learners' own choice of poems. One option would be to look for ways in which the poems encourage opportunities for co-constructed meaning and interest. As the BEQ revealed, Japanese learners appear to have engaged with poetry in their L1 literacy practices, and to some degree have already developed background knowledge of poetry or schemata for understanding poetry. At the current time in Japan, as in many areas around the world, poetry is a marginalized resource. Additional research could be conducted to compare the translation choices in a variety of versions of the same text or to invite students to compare their own translations of Japanese

poems. My own experience of using translation with short Japanese texts such as modern poetry has been very positive, even with learners who are not familiar with English poetry but are keen to try translating poems from Japanese. Along with other research using poetry in L2 contexts, the current thesis has shown that poetry has the potential to result in careful and close reading, engaged discussion and thoughtful interpretation.

Further studies could look more closely at the language used in negotiating a learning activity as reported by Storch (2008) in a study of metatalk during paired activities. Storch's findings supported the suggestion that learners should be encouraged to talk about the language they are using and creating. The current investigation only made a small study to look at spoken interaction with poems, and an area for future research could be to look more closely at what kind of LREs are happening when learners get together to talk about poetry.

As the discussion draws to a close, I remember some of the activities and classroom tasks with students which were particularly memorable. A popular poetry workshopping activity at the beginning of a course of study is to ask a group of learners to write out "Poetry is..." and try to complete the sentence using creative and original ideas. Next, using all the responses from students, it is possible to combine their words to make a simple poem, listing all the comments and arranging them in any way that we may choose. The resulting poem can be repetitive or surprising but is always interesting. Poetry written in a class in this way may not have the same revised and condensed form of a sonnet or a limerick, but it meets the criteria for creativity or newness. Across cultures and in different languages, poetry stands out and the result is focused and concentrated attention. A popular poetry workshopping activity at the beginning of a course of study is to ask a group of learners to write out "Poetry is..." and try to complete the sentence using creative and original ideas. Next, using all the responses from students, it is possible to combine their words to make a simple poem, listing all the comments and arranging them in any way that we may choose. The resulting poem can be repetitive or surprising but is always interesting. Poetry written in a class in this way may not have the same revised and condensed form of a sonnet or a limerick, but it meets the criteria for creativity or newness. Across cultures and in different languages, poetry stands out and the result is focused and concentrated attention. It is this attention, or engagement with poems, that the thesis seeks to investigate.

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From global contexts the arguments for literature, including poetry, picturebooks and travel writing, continue to build an argument for inclusion. Yeh (2005) used poetry in a task-based intervention in Taiwan, finding that learner reflections and interactions with the poetry assisted

their elaborations and extended responses. In a recent study of culture and language in an English as a second language (ESL) setting in the U.S.A., Melin (2010) continues the discussion on how, if anywhere, poetry can fit into to language learning. According to Melin (p.357), there are numerous arguments for using literature, including the benefits which exploration of culture and encouraging affective responses can bring. Macleroy (2013) writing about the secondary multilingual context of London, agrees with this perspective and reports that emergent bilinguals are able to have rich interactions with literary texts and that richness of vocabulary were appropriate and suitable for language development. In South Africa, Newfield and D'Abdon (2015) used poetry and oral studies together for a multimodal approach to poetry and language learning. Their approach was to first evaluate the existing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum, then find an alternative conceptualisation which valued indigenous poetic forms, and finally to trial the use of an English poem South African Xhosa-speaking poet to engage and, in their words rejuvenate literacy. In contexts where English is not the first language of the students, this reconceptualising of poetry through multimodality shows how poetry may be utilized in global contexts for literacy purposes. In a recent study by Nguyen (2016) in Vietnam, interactive approaches to literary response, reported on using detailed commentary, shows how the field is embracing new methods of research. Recent innovative research practices are emerging, but more studies using literature in specific research settings are required.

Several previous studies have looked at metalinguistic activity using poetry as a resource to prompt conversations. Fortune and Thorp (2001) found that “sustained engagement with form” (2005, p.32, quoted in Gutierrez, 2008, p.521) was evidence for attention and long-term learning. In a previous study of spoken interactions using a metalinguistic activity approach, Gutierrez (2008) conducted a microanalysis of bilingual learner interactions while reading poetry. This study aimed to report on metalinguistic activity in the L2 building on previous research related to form-focused instruction. Due to this, metalinguistic activity may not be openly stated in studies using think-aloud protocols, and should be investigated elsewhere, for example through conversation and interaction. Gutierrez concludes that “two different types of metalinguistic activity can be observed in learners’ oral production. In one type of metalinguistic activity, attention to language is directly observable in the learners’ speech and hence, can be labelled explicit metalinguistic activity, whereas in the other type, such attention to language underlies that speech and, in contrast, can be called implicit metalinguistic activity” (ibid, p.521). Metalinguistic activity is one area of potential future interest when analysing learner interlanguage with poetry.

One future project linked to the thesis could be to work on developing and reporting on the use of poetry and EFL materials for language teachers or beyond the language classroom. Related to speaking skills, poetry's potential for reducing pronunciation errors is another area of potential interest for L2 studies. Woore (2007) used reading aloud and poetry with Year 7 beginner learners, finding that poetry practice activities encouraged learners to connect new words with ones they were already familiar with. The current investigation did not make use of pronunciation gains as a possible way to evaluate successful interaction with the poems, although that could be an area of future investigation. Although there are reports of how poetry is being utilized in specific education contexts such as the post-16 English literature curriculum in the UK (Giovanelli and Mason, 2015) there are relatively few such studies which discuss poetry in L2 settings (Xerri, 2013; Vassallo, 2016 and Viana and Zyngier, 2017 are notable exceptions). In Japan there are researchers using literature in a variety of ways, as reported in Teranishi, Saito and Wales (2015) and in Burke, Fiahlo and, Zyngier, 2016, and these studies help to show the range of possible directions for future studies in Japan in literature classrooms. In a recent paper, McIlroy (2019), I discuss the topic of poetry and related speaking skills.

Japanese language learners, trained in memorization of word lists, have expectations that English classes should use difficult readings which can prepare them for test-related skills and strategies. While in certain contexts, program planners may have responded to gaps in creative texts by compensating by using other text types (e.g., songs, multi-media, film scripts), poetry remains missing from many programs, despite its potential uses. Teachers and curriculum planners may suggest that learners need to improve their basic understanding of core vocabulary, or improve their speaking skills, or study more grammar before they should look further to more creative texts. For these various reasons, poetry is almost absent from tertiary language proficiency courses and is conspicuously missing from research into reading in a foreign language. It is hoped through this research and reporting on this small project, related research into the uses of poetry may result.

During the course of researching this project and working with Japanese students using poetry in English and Japanese, it seemed that there were many times when translation became a useful tool for communication and interaction. Working multilingually may be the future of the workplace in Japan, as well as the future of education, entertainment and other fields. As Japan continues to welcome more international residents than ever before, understanding and using translation in communication could be a useful way to promote language learning across cultural boundaries.

As Japan becomes more open to international students, and those students bring their own multi-lingual backgrounds to the classroom, a greater openness towards culture and literature from international contexts will be beneficial in many contexts, including the workplace and wider society. Poems and other creative texts such as songs and fictional texts are useful resources which can be used in innovative ways with learners in classrooms and can provide memorable experiences in daily life and contexts outside education. Engagement with poetry, like engagement with learning in general, can be a lifelong pursuit, and one which continues to provide opportunities for personal growth and development.

8.7 Concluding comments

While the writing of this thesis has drawn to a close, there is still much to learn for my own professional understanding of the thesis topic. When I set out on the path of investigating poetry in the university setting, my own perspectives and understandings were different to how I now see the options for researching the topic. My views on the topic, the teaching of literature and the research field have changed beyond recognition since taking on this project. Reading a poem is usually an individual experience and the process of researching can be isolating too. In the first ‘poetry response’ study, learners were asked to participate in a paired speaking activity during which they discussed poems in English that they had not read before. While poems are difficult and resist reading, the potential for language learning and development is seen in the use of strategies such as elaboration and paraphrase. The transcripts of the discussions revealed their different understandings of the meanings and feelings about the poems. In the second study, the students were invited to prepare written responses to poems, also in a peer-to-peer arrangement, where learners talked together and then wrote about poems. The study analysed their writing and aimed to investigate various features of second language use as evidence of L2 poetic engagement. Strategies used to engage with the poems included the use of quotations, paraphrase and through lexical elaboration. Using lexical analysis of the written responses to four different poems, the results showed that evidence of cognitive engagement could be found in the detailed responses which made use of a substantial amount of lexical variation. Social engagement occurred when there was interaction with the situation of the poem, shown in use of personal pronouns.

After conducting this project, I found that poetry seemed to be able to connect with students' lives outside the classroom also. One Japanese poet, whose short poems are widely known and cited, is Mitsuo Aida (1924-1991). Aida's work, which was written as calligraphy, is kept in a museum near Tokyo station. As part of one homework activity for the elective poetry course discussed in this thesis, one student visited the Tokyo museum, and she had a tour of the museum with the poet's son. During that time, she had the opportunity to ask him questions about her homework assignment and the poet's work. Her focus was a poem called 待つ／matsu (waiting). She wrote about the poem in her "poemography" assignment and through that homework activity it was possible to link classroom learning with the world of poetry around her. Taking the learning outside the classroom can be done in many ways, which could be explored further in future studies. One aim of any future project using poetry would be to work with students in reading their favourite poems in Japanese, translating them and writing about the poems, and then critically reading the poems for language and meanings which help to go beyond surface-level interpretations.

Limited experience with poetry, in any language, might not mean that students have negative views of poems. The results of this investigation seem to show that different types of poems can result in co-constructed meaning-making, even with difficult poems. For students who require practice in asking and answering questions, giving opinions and justifying them, or help with conversation practice, poetry could be a useful resource. Removing the teacher from the discussion of texts, even for only selected activities in a lesson, could be valuable speaking practice for reticent students who have been used to teacher-led instruction. If learners approach poems in English and express feelings of difficulty, this could suggest that they are not able to successfully interrogate the text. To overcome this problem, finding innovative ways to interact with texts could help bring about successful and engaged reading.

To sum up, it is still not clear precisely how poetry reading may relate to language learning. Learners in Japan appear to respond well to reading, listening to, talking about and writing about poetry. There are students who I have come across who are not particularly engaged by Shakespeare, but who love John Lennon and Bob Dylan. In the tertiary context in Japan, surrounded by the need for justification of methods and test-related relevance, poetry may need to justify its inclusion in a course of study. Yet, for reasons discussed in this concluding chapter and also throughout this thesis, the notion that we still do not know clearly how and in what ways poetry could be used in the L2 classroom persists. Through this investigation, I have

attempted to show how examples of interaction with poetry could be evidence of heightened language awareness or development of L2 poetic engagement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participation consent form

The consent form was created using a template from the Japanese university. Students signed both copies of the forms and kept the Japanese version.

CONSENT FORM

Participant's Name:

Research Project Title: Investigating L2 poetry in a Japanese university setting

I have read the research description and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.

My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without retribution. The researcher may withdraw me from the research at their professional discretion.

Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the researcher, who will answer my questions. The researcher's email address is

If at any time I have comments or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Director of the English Language Institute:

I () give my consent/ I () do NOT give my consent to be audio recorded and/or video-recorded for research purposes [*please tick appropriate bracket*]

I () give my consent/ I () do NOT give my consent for any written materials to be used for research purposes [*please tick appropriate bracket*]

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Application for Ethical Review ERN_12-1407
"Investigating L2 poetry in a Japanese university setting"

Appendix B:

Study 1: Participant Information

Pair	Student number	Male/female	Ethnicity	Age	Grade	Language ability (self-reported TOEIC score)
1	Katsuhiko	M	Japanese	21	junior	725
1	Hiro	M	Japanese/British	20	junior	810
2	Maki	F	Japanese	22	senior	755
2	Takako	F	Japanese	21	senior	785
3	Eika	F	Japanese/Filipino	21	senior	625
3	Yukino	F	Japanese	20	junior	790
4	Taka	M	Japanese	21	senior	670
4	Aya	F	Japanese	21	senior	740

(names are pseudonyms)

Study 1 Instruction sheet

Poetry discussion activity

Instructions

You will be asked to read two separate poems and talk about them with your partner. You may use a dictionary and you can use English and Japanese.

Spend up to 15 minutes on EACH poem.

Discuss the poems separately.

Complete Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 for each poem.

Part 1

Read the poem individually.

Part 2

Talk with each other to try and understand what the poem is about.

Part 3

Give a personal response to the poem. Talk about what you liked or didn't like about the poem.

The conversations will not be used as part of your grade.

Poem 1: 雨ニモマケズ Ame ni mo makezu

by Kenji Miyazawa
Neither giving in to rain
Nor giving in to wind
Neither yielding to snow
Nor yielding to the heat of summer
Blessed with a robust body like this
Without extreme desire
Never getting angry
Always keeping a calm face
Eating one and a half pints of brown rice,
Miso soup made from bean paste,
and some vegetables every day
In everything,
Not taking myself into account
Observing carefully, listening attentively,
And understanding properly
With all of these three items always in my thoughts
Living in a little thatched hut
In the shade of some pine trees - now growing thick in the field
Upon hearing a boy now sick in his bed out in the east,
Heading for his house to nurse him
Upon seeing a mother now exhausted out in the west,
Heading for her place to carry bundles of rice for her
Upon hearing of a man now dying in the south,
Heading for his house to tell him not to worry
Upon seeing a fight or a law suit started up in the north,
Heading to their place to tell them to drop it
because of its triviality
Shedding tears day after day in a long spell of dry weather
Walking all around in a dither day by day
in a very unusually cool summer
Called a blockhead by everyone
Neither praised by anyone
Nor concerned by anyone
The person like this
Is who I want to be. ¹

¹Permission was granted by Hiroaki Sato and University of California Press for the English translation of "November 3rd/Ame ni mo makezu".

Poem 2: Do not go gentle into that good night by Dylan Thomas²

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

² Permission was granted by David Higham Associates to reproduce the poem "Do not go gentle into that good night" by Dylan Thomas.

Study 1: follow-up interview questions

These interviews were semi-structured, so not all questions were asked to all groups with exactly the same wording. The purpose of the interviews was to give students a chance to see their conversations again and confirm that the conversations were transcribed accurately. The interviews aimed to clarify any unclear points emerging from the conversations. As much as possible, the interviews contained questions which covered the same general topics.

1. Let's read over the transcript of the conversations you had about the poems. You can ask me anything about the transcript, and please let me know if you think that the transcript is different from what you meant or intended to say. Okay?
2. Looking at the first poem, it seems like you focused on _____.
3. Why were you interested in that feature of the poem? (ask both students at least one point about this)
4. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the first poem?
5. Do you want to ask any further questions about the first poem?
6. Looking at the second poem, you talked together about _____.
7. Why were you interested in that feature of the poem? (ask both students at least one point about this)
8. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the second poem?
9. Do you want to ask any further questions about the second poem?
10. Are there any other comments or questions that you would like to add about the poems before we finish?

Appendix C:

Student instruction sheet

Teach a poem

You are going to teach a poem to a partner. The aim is to help you and your partner understand the language and the poem. You should also prepare notes on your personal response to the poem. Be prepared to say what you liked or didn't like about the poem. Use examples from the poem.

Using the poem you have been given, prepare notes and bring them to class on _____. Hand in the preparation page.

NOTE: This activity is not part of your grade for this class.

Part 1: Preparation

Prepare to teach your poem (do this at home)

Use this page to make plans about the teaching of your poem. Use bullet points and brief notes.

Poem: _____

Poet: _____

1: Background

Find out some relevant details about the poem. Choose some points to teach that will help your partner understand the poem.

2: Language

Make notes about the language in the poem (e.g. metaphors, repetition, rhyme). Think about the tone and atmosphere created and prepare to teach some interesting points.

3: Personal response

Prepare some comments to help explain your understanding of the poem.
Say what you liked or didn't like about the poem.

(optional). Draw an image or diagram to help explain your understanding of the poem.

Part 2: Listen and make notes about your partner's poem

You have 40 minutes to complete this task. During this time both you and your partner should talk about your poems.

Learn about a poem from your classmate. Make notes and ask questions as you learn about the poem.

4a: Notes

Make notes here about the poem your classmate teaches you.

4b: Questions

Write any questions you have for your classmate here. Ask your questions during the conversation.

Part 3

Write a response to your poem

Directions: You should write an essay in response to the poem you read at home. Try to explain what you think the poem is about. State, explain and support your opinion on the poem. Say what you liked or didn't like about the poem. An effective essay will contain a minimum of 300 words. You will have 40 minutes to plan, write, and revise your essay.

(Optional). Write a poem like the one you read.

Poems used in Study 2

The Tyger

Tyger, Tyger, 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?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake

Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth

The Song of Wandering Aengus

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire a-flame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And someone called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done,
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

William Butler Yeats

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost

Participant data

Individual number	Gender	Age	Reported TOEIC score	Estimated CEFR level	Response 1: no. tokens	Response 2: no. of tokens	Response 1: homework score	Response 2: homework score
101	M	20	740	B2	152	285	16	8
102	M	21	490	B1	170	279	14	7
103	F	22	725	B2	196	118	14	9
104	F	22	865	C1	246	320	15	11
105	M	21	650	B1	131	279	10	15
106	F	20	780	B2	178	339	17	14
107	F	21	640	B1	77	164	14	16
108	F	21	755	B2	214	317	18	20
109	F	21	665	B1	152	279	20	15
110	M	22	630	B1	210	278	14	13
111	M	21	730	B2	244	223	12	6
112	F	21	460	B1	282	299	13	12
113	F	21	700	B1	228	303	19	13
114	M	21	795	B2	308	318	20	14
115	F	22	720	B2	274	132	19	17
116	F	21	655	B1	307	393	18	19
117	F	21	770	B2	284	227	18	20
118	M	20	605	B1	348	242	15	12
119	F	20	620	B1	266	322	20	17
120	F	20	635	B1	249	379	17	20
121	F	20	665	B1	119	295	13	9
122	F	20	650	B1	202	152	11	10
123	F	20	740	B2	208	290	12	11
124	F	20	605	B1	161	247	13	4
125	F	20	655	B1	221	138	16	9
126	F	20	715	B2	181	180	11	12
127	F	22	750	B2	219	240	15	8
201	F	20	550	B1	169	216	10	7
202	F	21	625	B1	163	358	9	20
203	M	20	645	B1	237	358	15	14
204	F	20	600	B1	203	141	11	4
205	F	21	700	B2	227	190	13	15
206	F	21	780	B2	214	357	17	20
207	M	20	740	B2	146	140	13	3
208	F	25	780	B2	168	289	18	17
209	F	20	720	B2	259	309	9	8
210	F	20	620	B1	108	196	7	13
211	F	20	750	B2	313	357	20	20
212	F	20	615	B1	278	293	16	10
213	F	20	640	B1	153	213	11	13
214	F	20	750	B2	204	305	16	19

215	M	20	680	B1	171	179	11	13
216	M	20	620	B1	223	118	15	10
217	M	20	650	B1	267	319	12	14
218	F	20	715	B2	212	330	9	13
219	F	20	760	B1	224	259	19	12
220	F	20	720	B2	209	292	11	9
221	F	20	740	B2	285	307	18	18
222	F	21	860	C1	205	280	20	20
223	F	20	600	B1	255	299	14	13
224	F	21	730	B1	205	187	12	8
225	F	20	810	B2	125	267	13	13
301	F	21	760	B2	138	265	15	16
302	F	20	650	B1	197	262	16	9
303	F	20	650	B1	157	340	9	14
304	F	21	750	B2	211	229	8	10
305	F	22	800	B2	288	258	12	13
306	F	21	550	B1	241	205	17	13
307	F	21	760	B2	272	270	11	17
308	F	20	665	B1	240	274	15	12
309	F	22	600	B1	250	253	5	11
310	F	21	750	B1	214	285	15	18
311	F	21	650	B1	224	318	20	20
312	F	21	725	B1	357	467	20	20
313	F	22	790	B2	210	267	15	14
314	M	21	725	B1	301	386	13	20
315	F	21	810	B2	147	149	20	20
316	M	22	715	B1	285	219	5	7
317	F	22	650	B1	160	220	3	9
319	F	20	725	B1	265	175	16	14
320	F	21	745	B1	280	310	13	12
321	F	20	710	B1	303	270	14	20
322	F	21	735	B1	96	119	15	13
323	F	21	800	B2	271	287	9	9
324	F	21	785	B2	326	447	10	18
325	F	20	650	B1	198	291	15	20
326	M	20	610	B1	157	145	16	7

All participants were from Japan except: 123 (Japan/US), 203 (Chinese), 212, 313 (Korean), 315 (Japan/Chinese)

Appendix D:

Course outline and course aims

Are you interested in poetry and songs? Do you enjoy learning English through reading poems and song lyrics? Do you like the idea of writing poems in English? This course is a four-skills course using poems in English and some in translation from around the world. The course has three aims: first, showing you how to describe language features in poetry, second, encouraging you to develop close reading skills using poems and song lyrics, and third helping you produce creative poetry writing using a range of styles. An additional aim of this course is to encourage language learning and engagement through reading and responding to the poetry all around us.

Course Aims

1 Show an understanding of language used in poetry in English

Students will be able to demonstrate some awareness of language features used in poetry and poetic texts. As well as becoming aware of these features in poems and other literary texts, students will also show some awareness of the same poetic devices in everyday English.

2 Show an understanding of own experiences reading poetry

Using examples from the classroom activities and own choice of poems, students will be able to show an understanding of the ways that poetry affects the reader using the senses such as sound, sight, taste and feeling that make up the experience of reading poetry.

3 Apply creative methods to write and respond to poetry

Students will engage with texts and respond in ways which show their understanding of creativity in language use. This means that students will write original poems/songs and reflect on the experience.

Learning objectives and learning outcomes

You will gain an understanding of the sounds and senses in poetry. You will apply this knowledge to your own writing and look for applications in the wider world beyond the text.

Reading poetry: Individual and group responses to set readings will be encouraged, as will suggestions about poems to use in class. I will provide opportunities to learn about reading analysis, but encourage other ways of “seeing” the texts we explore also.

Writing poetry: You will make use of creative writing strategies to help challenge and write creatively. Once workshops have been completed, there will be time to edit work so that it is at the level required for submission. Standard writing rules should be followed unless justified by the creative process.

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- Students will demonstrate understanding of at least three poetic devices through describing them in a written response to a poem. Using examples such as repetition,

metaphor and rhythm, students will be able to write about their individual reading of a poem closely making use of these terms.

- Students will be able to show an understanding of the relationship poetic language and everyday language by identifying language features used in both.

2 Show an understanding of own experiences reading poetry

- Students will be able to write about their experiences reading poetry and sharing poetry making reference to the language in poems. Fulfilling the requirements for the classroom activities and homework to a satisfactory standard and providing evidence in the final class assignment will help achieve this learning outcome.
- Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to work in a team to carry out a group project which requires group cooperation with other class members wherever possible.

3 Apply creative methods to write and respond to poetry

- Students will be able to write poetry to show their understanding of poetic effects such as the use of aural images to create sound effects or the use of metaphors to create feelings. After writing poems students should reflect on the process of writing.
- Students will show evidence of the process of analysis, through completion of classroom activities and homework.

Assessment and course requirements

Assessment criteria

1. Class participation and attendance	30%
2. Portfolio of class work	20%
3. Individual presentation	20%
4. Written assignment	30%
TOTAL	100%

Teach a poem to a friend

Three assessments. 1) teach a poem 2) explain a poem presentation and 3) poemography.

Student Instructions (simplified)

Teach a poem assignment

You are going to teach a poem, a part of a poem or some song lyrics to someone you know. Next you should write about the experience of teaching it. Think about how you would like to teach the poem to another student or family member.

The report should be 500-700 words. Use direct quotes (“ _____ “) from the poem and from your conversation. You can use the person’s real name or a pseudonym.

Ideas about how to teach a poem:

- 1 Choose a poem that you understand well
- 2 Look for the rhyme in a poem
- 3 Look for the rhythm and practice reading it using the rhythm
- 4 Break the poem or lyrics into lines
- 5 In each line, make sure you understand the meaning
- 6 Explain the meaning in Japanese if necessary
- 7 Look for the rhythm and emphasize the stressed words
- 8 Think about the easy and difficult parts of a poem
- 9 Draw pictures to go with the poem
- 10 Write your own poem to show your understanding of the original poem

NOTE:

Choose someone you think would be interested in the poem. Prepare to teach the poem in a quiet, uninterrupted place. This might take 30 minutes or more, or maybe less. You can let the friend see the poem, but should aim to remember it themselves after you have taught it. You should use techniques such as shadowing, repetition and encouragement to help the friend remember the poem. Arrange to meet again one week later to see if your friend can remember the poem then. Write a report about teaching your poem to your friend, co-worker or family member.

Explain a poem presentation

Student instructions (simplified)

Presentation: explain a poem

In this presentation, you are encouraged to look creatively at a poem you have read and present an explanation of the poem. You can use various ways to illustrate your points, including pictures, drawings or music. You can use poems written in any language, but if you are using short poems such as *haiku*, you should choose a group of poems, and you should talk about the poems in English. You can use song lyrics for this assignment. It is fine to use any poems which we have talked about in the class also. You must also prepare the following:

- An introduction 100-200 words
- The text of your poem, song, or collection of poems
- Images (drawings or photos) as a separate slideshow
- A written report explaining your poem (at least 500 words)

Poemography

Student instructions

Assignment: Poemography

The *poemography* can be submitted in any *format, digital, hand-written, illustrated*.

The *poemography* is a set of poems by you. It is a word made from the words

poem + biography

The poems and song lyrics are going to be personal to you and together build up an image of your character, your style and your individuality. The word 'graph' in biography reminds us of pictures, and 'bio' means life. So the poemography is a set of poems and explanation which will give a picture of you and your life. You can include a mixture of your own original poems and ones we have read in class, or your choice of other poems and songs you have read during the semester, with explanations of your choices.

- An introduction 100-200 words
- Your poemography as a slideshow, book or webpage.
- Be prepared to read aloud to your group
- A written report explaining your choices (at least 500 words)

Engagement with poetry: notes for raters

Thank you for your help to be a rater for my student responses to poetry as part of my PhD thesis. Participants in this activity were asked to read a poem at home, talk to a partner in class and then write a response to the poem. They wrote about their understanding of the poem and whether or not they liked the poem. Students completed the activity more than once with different poems. You are being asked to complete 36 responses, which is around 20 percent of the data. These have been left as they were written, with only spellings corrected and no grammar correction or rewording. The space beneath each response is for a comment - please consider this optional. I estimate that the time needed to complete this is 30-40 minutes.

"Engagement" here means cognitive engagement (focused, reflective learning with own knowledge construction) and affective/emotional engagement (purposeful and autonomous) (Svalberg, 2009). Scores increase as more features and possible meanings of poems are given attention. High scores of 4 are given when "attention to detail" combines with "larger exploration" of the poem's meaning: "In these responses, student references were supported by knowledge of the world as they began to integrate overview and detail" (Eva-Wood, 2004a, p.184).

Please evaluate the responses on "engagement" using 1=low, 4=high. I will use these scores to create an average score. Please rate the responses holistically.

1 low engagement: basic response with simple generalizations

2 slight engagement: limited response with some noticing of poetic/non-literal language

3 moderate engagement: extended, detailed response with elaboration using the poem

4 high engagement: focused response with attention to detail, exploration of non-literal language such as metaphor and knowledge creation

Attention to detail could be, for example:

- discussion of speaker/poet
- use of elaboration and explanation
- noticing of textual features such as repetition or rhyme, non-literal language such as metaphor
- expressing a detailed personal view or visualization
- using personal pronouns to signal personal connection to the poem