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Teaching Poetry Writing in the Communicative EFL Classroom

*An Analysis of the Possibilities of Content-and-Language Integrated Learning
and Task-Based Language Teaching for Integrating Poetry in the EFL Classroom*

*A thousand times
A thousand tiny drops –
Of black ink.*

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Abstract

This paper analyses the influence of Content and Language Integrated Learning and Task-Based Language Teaching on the educational paradigm. The creation of the Common European Framework of Reference further stimulated the shift in educational theory from explicit instruction towards a communicative approach. This approach relies heavily on somewhat recent theories in language acquisition research, namely the research of Krashen (1980), Long (1989), Swain (2005) and Ellis (2005), who emphasise the use of meaningful interaction in second language acquisition over learning grammatical principles by heart. This development provides new opportunities for a change in foreign language teaching by focusing on skills development and content teaching to achieve linguistic competence goals. Poetry can provide a key contribution to this development by its diverse nature, comprising reading, writing, listening and speaking within a single format. A haiku and a collaborative poetry lesson plan are provided to be used in EFL CLIL contexts.

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Introduction

The introduction of literature in the English foreign language (EFL) classroom is a much debated issue. Teachers usually have a limited amount of classroom time available. Content-related choices are inevitable, since language learning is considered to be the main goal of EFL teaching. Recently, there have been a number of significant developments in the field of language acquisition research that might spark a new use for poetry in language education. The traditional teaching approach, in which language competence is acquired through the direct instruction of grammatical principles and vocabulary, is no longer deemed the only or most beneficial way of language instruction (Ellis, 2005: 210). Researchers, such as Stephen Krashen, Merrill Swain, Rod Ellis and Michael Long, have all developed theories on language acquisition (Krashen, 1980; Swain, 2005; Ellis, 2005; Long, 1989). All their approaches, however, differ from the traditional explicit instruction, focusing instead on the value of meaningful input, output and interaction. The importance of communication in language teaching is affirmed by educational authorities, exemplified by the contents of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), created by the Council of Europe, which emphasises the need for communicative practice in the classroom (Council of Europe, 2001: 1).

Utilising poetry as a potential core ‘theme’ for language teaching in EFL classrooms has become possible and, in fact, might be beneficial to students’ language education, since it might facilitate students’ linguistic, social, cultural and personal development through poetry tasks. The manner in which poetry caters to these new paradigms in language acquisition studies and how it can be integrated into an effective task-based curriculum, however, are questions that remain somewhat unanswered in the case of EFL research. Additionally, the requirements and possibilities of the modern English Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum

should be taken into consideration. Finally, two detailed poetry lesson plans, for haiku and collaborative poetry, will be presented.

1. The State of EFL Teaching in the Netherlands

The development of new teaching methods seems to have led to a great disparity between the findings from language acquisition research from the last few decades and educational practice. Michael Long reports that, although teachers' backgrounds might differ in terms of training, theoretical orientation, materials and experience, teaching practices are actually remarkably similar, regardless of all these factors (1989). Nation and Macalister acknowledged the same phenomenon and suspect "that the various published courses are either drawing on the same findings of research and theory or are unquestioningly repeating what other courses have repeated from some previous poorly based piece of curriculum design" (2010: 37). Why many language curricula seem to be based on outdated principles, according to Rod Ellis, might be related to the fact that much of L2 acquisition research is limited to theory and the classroom setting receives very little attention, which becomes problematic in an educational system that is created by policymakers (2005).

Traditionally, the direct instruction of grammatical rules and principles was the generally accepted form of language education in the Netherlands. In recent years, developers of learning material have started focusing on a more indirect approach and teaching through tasks. Teaching methods, such as the popular *Of Course!* by Malmberg publishers and *Stepping Stones* published by Noordhoff, claim to adhere to the guidelines established by the CEFR and aimed at teaching language skills (Malmberg, 2013; Van Asselt et al., 2009). However, it remains important to note that these claims are not always strictly true, as Michael Long argued: "several recent syllabuses and commercially published textbooks which claim to be task-based are nothing of the sort" (Long, 1989: 9). The definition or

interpretation of the tasks and skills the textbook developers claim to offer sometimes differ from that used by scientific researchers and, therefore, might not meet the educational demands for successful acquisition to occur, or may even simply apply new terminology from language acquisition research for the same old language exercises. It is, therefore, prudent to maintain a critical outlook on commercially published teaching methods and check if they are able to fulfil their promises.

Content-and-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a relatively new teaching approach, based on the premise “that optimal conditions for learning a second/foreign language occur when both the target language and some meaningful content are integrated in the classroom, the language therefore being both an immediate object of study in itself, and a medium for learning a particular subject matter” (Dueñas, 2004: 74). CLIL, therefore, may occur both in bilingual and foreign language classroom settings where content is taught in the target language (TL). The number of foreign language CLIL schools in the Netherlands is rising. As of January 2013, some 120 secondary schools are currently a member of the TTO network, a platform for CLIL teaching in the Netherlands (Europees Platform, 2010). These schools are found across the Netherlands and most offer English as the TL (Europees Platform, 2010). The total number of secondary schools in the Netherlands numbered 659 in 2012, meaning about 18% of schools are currently utilising some form of CLIL education (CBS, 2012).

Firstly, an inquiry into the utilisation of writing, and more specifically, poetry or creative writing tasks in a commercially published EFL textbook is required to analyse the way in which writing is already used. For this purpose, the 5th edition of *Stepping Stones* (Van Asselt et al., 2009) will be analysed for communicative content and use of literature and poetry to see if there are in fact shortcomings or opportunities for integrating these subjects

into a language curriculum. Afterwards, the shape of EFL teaching in Dutch CLIL and TBLT contexts will also briefly be discussed.

1.1 *Stepping Stones*

Language

Stepping Stones is a Dutch EFL teaching method, providing specific materials to all levels of Dutch Secondary education. As the lesson plans presented later will be tailored to B1 level English learners, equivalent to the fifth grade of Dutch secondary education, the specific edition analysed will be the second book of the havo 5 edition. Since the method is not suitable for CLIL education, quality of communicative tasks will be analysed from the viewpoint of relevant language acquisition theories and CEFR requirements.

The *Stepping Stones* course book is divided into two themes, which are subdivided into a number of skills and content areas, including: reading, listening, countries and cultures, speaking, writing, vocabulary, self-test, and task (Van Asselt et al., 2009). The 57 exercises distributed over the two themes have been labelled into various categories by Van Asselt et al. (2009). Some minor changes in their categorisation were made to pinpoint the actual skill involved in the exercise, as this sometimes remained unspecified by the label. The final categories include: reading, listening, writing, discussion, looking-up, vocabulary and grammar exercises. A brief description of the exercise types in *Stepping Stones* is provided, whereas a detailed argumentation for each individual exercise can be found in the appendix (see appendix A1):

1. **Reading Comprehension:** These exercises involve answering questions for which the answers can be found in a provided text (i.e., “What reason does the text give for the fact that Britain doesn’t want to give up the Falkland Islands?” (Van Asselt et al.,

2009: 17), or “match the summary to the correct paragraph” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 42), or multiple choice questions based on information from the text).

2. **Listening Comprehension:** Listening exercises usually consist of answering questions based on information from audio or video material (i.e., “while listening, tick the correct statements” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 49), or “listen to the programme and take notes, in key words, while listening” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 50) and using these notes to answer questions).
3. **Writing Exercises:** These exercises tend to involve writing letters, scripts or other brief written formats, usually individually (i.e., writing a script for a radio commercial (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 15), or writing a letter to the headmaster (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 23), etc.).
4. **Discussion:** Exercises that involve speaking in pairs or small groups, debating a particular topic or working together to achieve a certain goal (i.e., “Discuss the sports with your classmate, and find reasons why people are really into these sports” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 13), etc.).
5. **Looking Up Exercises:** These exercises could also be called ‘internet exercises’, as they involve searching the internet for factual information, usually related to British or American culture (i.e., “Look at the grid and fill in the names of the heads of state and the political leaders” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 3), etc.).
6. **Vocabulary Practice:** Exercises that focus on the acquisition of new vocabulary, sometimes related to the theme and text, and sometimes general. They usually involve matching synonyms or providing descriptions (i.e., “match the words from the text with the correct dictionary definitions below” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 42), etc.).
7. **Grammar Practice:** These exercises focus on the acquisition of specific grammatical structures, such as gerunds, verb tenses, syntax, etc. (i.e., “finish the sentences by

matching the phrases” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 43), or “fill in the correct verbs” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 43), etc.).

The total distribution of these different exercise types is represented in the graph below:

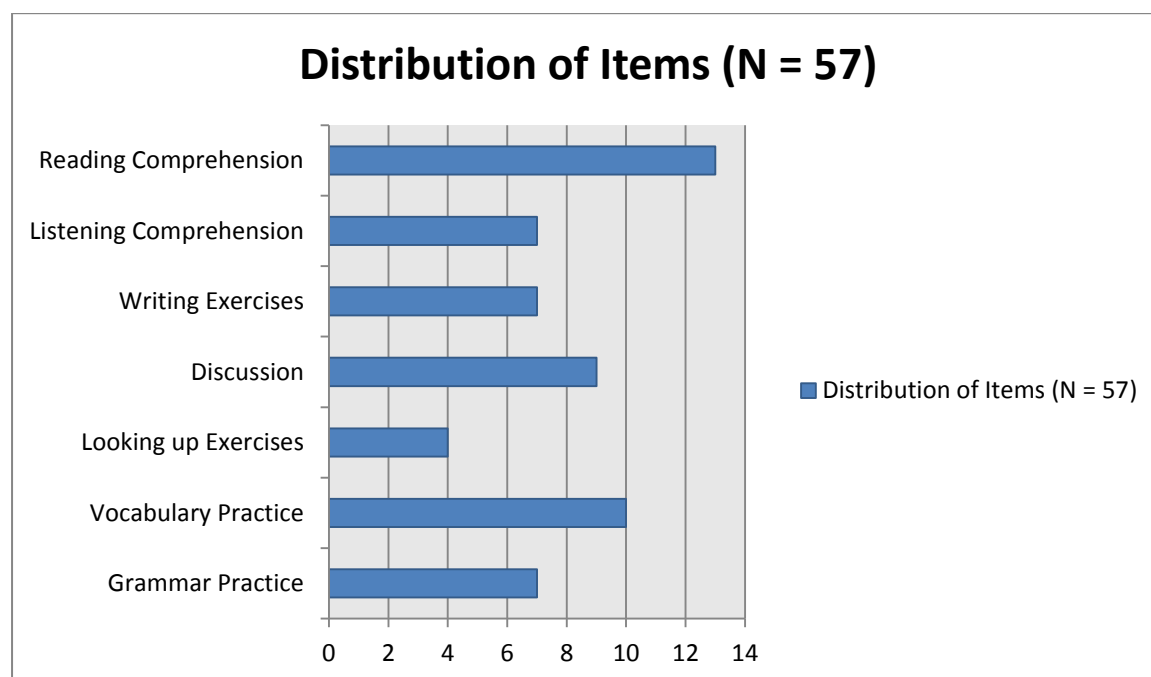


Figure 1

The graph shows that *Stepping Stones* focuses mainly on reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises (22.8% and 17.5% of exercises respectively), making up 23 out of 57 (40.35%) of exercises. This graph includes all the exercises included with the two themes, but not those directly linked to the final exams, which take place at the end of havo 5. Since the EFL exams in the Netherlands solely consist of reading comprehension exercises, their inclusion would provide an incorrect picture of the method’s approach. The specific categorisation of each exercise, supported by examples, can be found in the appendix (see appendix A1).

The circle graphs provided show the distribution of the exercise types, as well as the ratio of input- and output-related exercises. This distribution is relevant, as it shows the

amount of meaningful production learners are encouraged to make while using *Stepping Stones*.

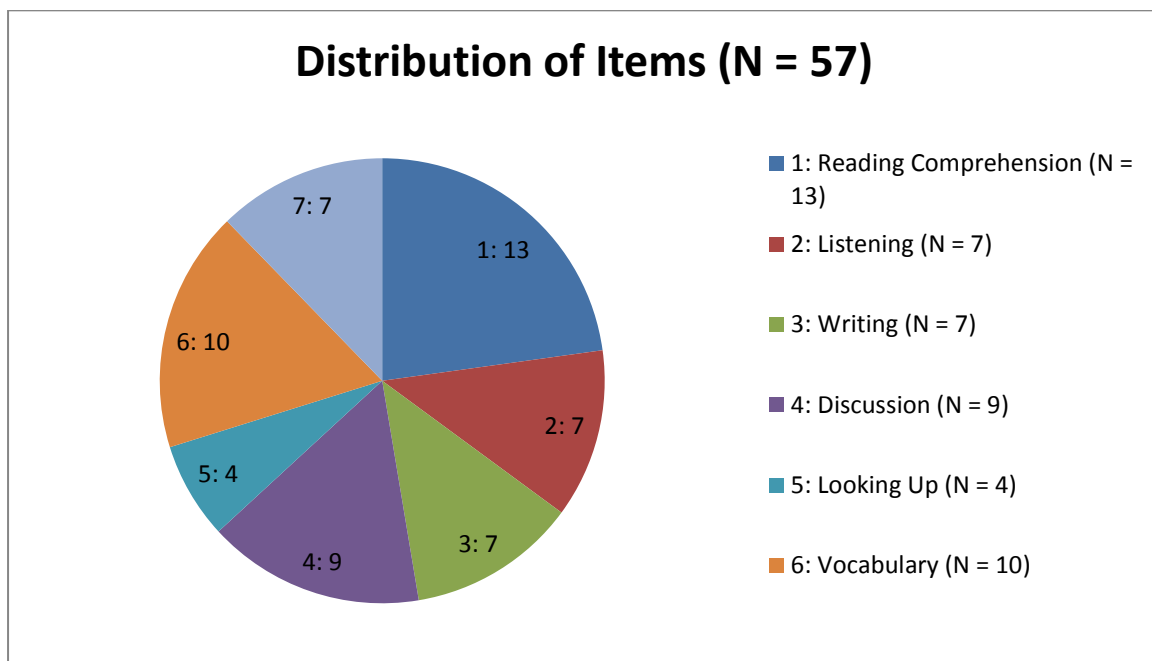


Figure 2

The graph above provides the same distribution as figure 1, and seems to show a relatively well-balanced curriculum design. A more general pairing of the previous categories provides new insight into how imbalanced the coursework is, as far as the disparity between exposure and production is concerned. For this purpose, the choice was made to list reading and listening comprehension as input-based exercises, writing exercises and discussions as output-based, looking up as cultural content, and formal vocabulary and grammar exercises as formal language instruction. This creates the following graph:

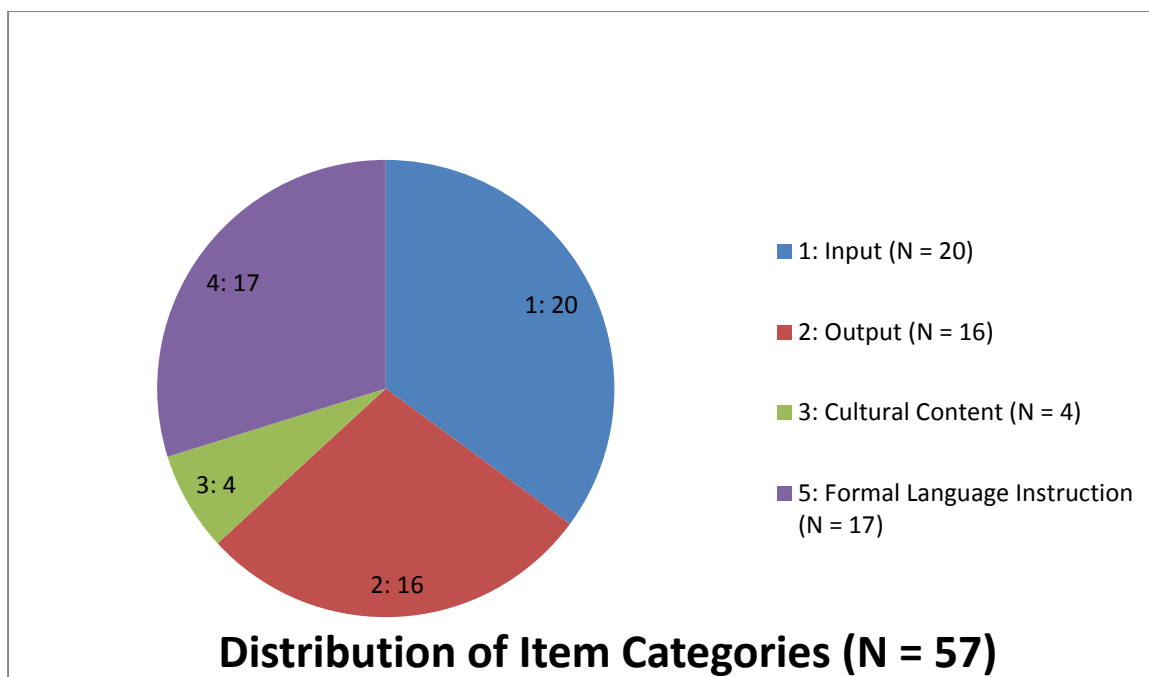


Figure 3

Figure three clearly shows that there is relatively little attention for output and cultural content, which would be main focus areas in a CLIL context. On the other hand, explicit instruction of grammar and vocabulary, making up 17 out of 57 (30%) of the exercises, has no such emphasis in CLIL. A large portion of the production of output in *Stepping Stones* is not suitable for a task-based approach, as the exercises do not usually conform to the requirements set by language acquisition researchers, including a focus on meaningful input and output, contextualised TL production and feedback through collaboration (Mackey, Annuhl and Gass, 2012: 14). Since there are only three instances of peer reviewing in the course book and one additional opportunity in a separate task offered between the theme-based work (see appendix A1), the method does not seem to adhere to CLIL requirements. It should be noted, however, that learners might provide each other with feedback in discussion contexts; however, the course book does not explicitly encourage them to do so.

Despite linking some learning outcomes to the CEFR, *Stepping Stones* seems to be a traditional teaching method, featuring a large amount of explicit language instruction, as well as a large number of reading and listening comprehension exercises. These are, however, not

consistently provided in the TL, although most of the textual material is adapted from native speaker-oriented media, which entails that only parts of the syllabus might be useful for an approach aimed at meaningful interaction.

Literature

Literature plays a minor role in *Stepping Stones*, as it is contained in a brief chapter included after the two themes. In this short section, three excerpts from English novels are provided, accompanied by a number of questions that focus on interpretation, factual information and personal opinion. Additionally, three poems are provided and discussed in a similar manner. Generally, the writer is first introduced in about four lines after which the poem or fragment is provided. The student is then asked questions, such as: “How do the boys in the park show their ‘irony’?” or “What do you / don’t you like about this fragment?” (Van Asselt et al., 2009: 71). The second question stated is a recurring question for every fragment.

The fragments originate from the following novels: *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby (1995), *The Private Patient* by P.D. James (2008) and *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell (2006). The poetry chapter consists of “Song” by Christina Rossetti (1848), “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost (1916) and “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night” by Dylan Thomas (1951). With the exception of Rossetti, these are all works by relatively recent authors and poets, which means the language used is contemporary and should not be too difficult for the students to decipher. Although Rossetti employs some word forms that would now be considered archaic, this is mostly limited to verb conjugations.

The chapter on literature, although well-constructed, is quite brief and attributes more space to questions than texts to be read. It may, therefore, be considered insufficient to serve as the only encounter students have with literature, which is also not what it is meant to be, as Van Asselt et al. mention the students should “have probably read quite a few literary works

in English so far” (2009: 69). Poetry and literature in the EFL classroom, therefore, is supported by, but should not be limited to the materials offered in *Stepping Stones*.

2. The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching

Although most teaching methods originally emphasised direct instruction of grammar and vocabulary, communication has taken a more prominent position in EFL teaching discourse with both teachers and policy makers. A prime example of this trend is the CEFR, which “describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (Council of Europe, 2001: 1). Two notable language acquisition hypotheses merit further discussion, due to their close relationship with the potential of poetry as a language teaching tool. These theoretical approaches are the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (R. Ellis, 2005; Long, 1989) and Content-and-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Nordmeyer, 2010; Sherris, 2008). A brief introduction into these approaches and the way they might cater to a poetry lesson will be provided.

2.1 Content and Language Integrated Learning

CLIL is a somewhat recent approach to language teaching where, rather than explicitly teaching language and grammar, relevant content is offered in the target language to stimulate the use of that language and acquire language competence in a variety of contexts. Although originally associated with L2 immersion programmes, there also seems to be equal potential for EFL teaching and it has been argued that “in countries where English is not a native language, teaching subject matter through English is a chance to develop content knowledge and English fluency at the same time” (Nordmeyer, 2010: 2). The application of this teaching method in the foreign language teaching context provides interesting new perspectives and possibilities for English Foreign Language (EFL) situations.

The method's theoretical validity is indebted to the work of Krashen (1989), whose input hypothesis emphasises the importance of natural language acquisition over explicit instruction. Language use, supporters of the input hypothesis argue, is far too diverse and complex to be acquired by explicit teaching; however, "creative linguistic competence emerges from learners' piecemeal acquisition of the many thousands of constructions experienced in communication and from their frequency-based abstraction of the regularities in its history of usage" (N. Ellis, 2009: 142). CLIL, therefore, assumes that "language is acquired most effectively when it is learned for communication in meaningful and significant social situations" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1995). The current focus on communication in educational contexts also provides an opportunity for CLIL. In European contexts, the CEFR, which "describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively" (Council of Europe, 2001: 1), provides much of the legitimisation of any educational context focusing on communication. The CEFR provides policymakers and learners in very different learning contexts across Europe with a standard by which to measure learners' proficiency. The adaptability of this framework to a wide range of contexts by its focus on meaningful interaction makes it a useful tool for determining language standards and setting language proficiency goals.

As CLIL allows for "an approach which is neither language learning, nor subject learning, but an amalgam of both and is linked to the process of convergence" (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010: 4), there are ample opportunities for the introduction of poetry and literature in the EFL teaching context. As CLIL attempts to facilitate language acquisition whilst teaching subject-related content, the utilisation of poetry as a form of content could provide learners with a complete set of skills, as "listening, talking, reading and writing will all take their place in poetry teaching" (Tunncliffe, 1984: 22). CLIL, however, does not

necessarily exclude explicit teaching of structures, but aims to limit this kind of instruction to a minimum. The exact distribution of language and content teaching is captured in a language and content continuum that lies at the basis of CLIL. Most classrooms seek to establish the middle ground in their content and language goals, but Jon Nordmeyer mentions that the classroom application of CLIL principles is so diverse and complicated that it becomes hard to determine an exact distribution figure (2010: 7).

Many researchers have attempted to formulate the basic requirements for a CLIL curriculum, their approaches, however, are quite diverse. Maria Dueñas, basing her views on previous research, argues that a content-based curriculum should include: a core based on subject matter, rather than linguistic forms; original, target language materials, rather than materials attuned to language learners; the learning of new content information in the target language, which students should evaluate from their own cultural literacy, as well as their newly acquired TL cultural awareness; and finally, it should be tailored to the students' needs (Dueñas, 2004: 75). Whereas Dueñas focuses on the structure and contents of the curriculum, other researchers have stipulated the requirements an individual lesson should meet. A CLIL lesson, for example, should include: "clear content and language goals" (Sherris, 2008: p.4); providing learners with meaningful opportunities for communication and reflection with peers and the teacher; skill-based tasks to aid suited for the content area; and the opportunity for evaluation and revision (Sherris, 2008: p.4).

Researchers have, however, found a number of problems with CLIL outcomes. Rod Ellis notes that although language learners in immersion programmes develop excellent language proficiency levels and TL reading skills, "their production often continues to be marked by grammatical inaccuracies and they do not acquire much in the way of sociolinguistic competence" (R. Ellis, 2005: 720). Drawing on the work of Merrill Swain, many researchers argued that this shortcoming can be explained by the fact that learners were

merely passively exposed to linguistic information and content and were insufficiently encouraged to produce and actively utilize language, an idea that formed the foundation for the ‘Output Hypothesis’ (Swain, 2005; Mackey, Annuhl and Gass, 2012: 8). Including elements of TBLT in a CLIL context might, therefore, lead to a more balanced curriculum.

2.2 Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT tasks in CLIL context might provide the opportunity to resolve some of the issues experienced in CLIL classrooms. In order to explain its usefulness to a poetry-based curriculum, it is prudent to accurately define and elaborate on some of the core principles underlying TBLT. According to Mackey, Annuhl and Gass: “Task-based learning is usually described as a form of communicative language teaching in which the primary emphasis is not on decontextualized grammar drills or rote memorization, but rather on giving learners ample opportunities to receive meaningful input, produce the target language in context, and receive feedback on their efforts by working collaboratively on a task” (2012: 14). Rod Ellis provides four criteria for an instructional activity to be considered a task: tasks should focus on content over linguistic features; a task should have a ‘gap of information’ that learners are required to resolve; learners should largely use their existing knowledge and skills; and there should be a clear goal or product, other than the acquisition and use of language” (R. Ellis, 2009: 223).

TBLT and CLIL share their focus on meaningful language acquisition and combining language acquisition with content and skill learning. TBLT, however, rejects the usefulness of explicit instruction and, especially, structural language syllabuses, that rely on a set of preselected linguistic features to be acquired in a set order. Since research has proven that it is impossible to completely predict the order and exact nature of what language learners actually acquire, the idea of basing a syllabus on a selection of linguistic features would, most

likely, not be the most efficient way for learners to acquire a new language (R. Ellis, 2005). Peter Robinson argues that “unless grammatical instruction is timed to the learner’s point of development, it will not influence the developing implicit knowledge base” (2009: 299). TBLT, therefore, aims at encouraging learners to actively use their TL and achieve a more natural process of language acquisition.

In order to achieve this natural progression and skill acquisition in language learning, TBLT differentiates between target and pedagogic tasks. Target tasks are the real-world communicative activities that learners will eventually engage in when applying their TL knowledge in an actual L2 context, whereas the pedagogic task is the usually simpler version of this target task that is used in the classroom setting (Robinson, 2009: 301). Another important distinction is that between focused and unfocused tasks. Unfocused tasks involve general communicative opportunities, whereas focused tasks tend to elicit a specific grammatical feature (R. Ellis, 2009: 223). Focused tasks are generally regarded to facilitate language acquisition at a higher rate than unfocused tasks.

A number of objections have been raised against TBLT. Nation and Macalister mention that some researchers have argued that tasks “focus on fluency at the expense of accuracy” (2010: 81). Robinson, however, mentions that task design can influence the focus on either accuracy, fluency or complexity (2009: 303). Another typical argument against TBLT is the apparent lack of grammar instruction in the curriculum. Rod Ellis argues, however, that “if the syllabus also incorporates focused tasks, then it will also be necessary to stipulate the linguistic content of these tasks, and this typically involves specifying the grammar to be taught” (R. Ellis, 2009: 231-232). In order to provide a complete EFL course that is not merely content teaching in a foreign language, these factors need to be taken into account when designing tasks and the task syllabus.

3. Poetry's Potential in the EFL Classroom

A plethora of teaching materials, curricula, lesson plans and teaching methods are employed globally to aid students with acquiring a new language. This vast quantity of teaching methods is complemented by an even greater number of individual learning preferences. Whether or not using poetry in classes is the best method to acquire language and language skills is too complex a question; however, using poetry in the classroom can be beneficial in a variety of ways. A number of benefits and opportunities that poetry lessons can provide to a CLIL language course are provided below. Although the list is by no means exhaustive, it provides some justification for using poetry in the classroom.

3.1 Meaningful Input and Output

Research into educational theory shows that a curriculum should strive to provide a balance of a number of approaches and skills. Nation and Macalister state that: “A course should include a roughly even balance of the four strands of meaning-focused input, language-focused learning, meaning-focused output and fluency activities” (2010: 51). About 25% of lesson time should be devoted to each of these four strands. As has been discussed in the evaluation of *Stepping Stones*, many of the existing teaching materials tend to lean heavily into a particular strand, usually language-focused learning, which entails the other strands are somewhat neglected. There seems to be “an unwillingness to look at what is already known and to apply it to curriculum design without being distracted by the need to adhere to a method” (Nation and Macalister, 2010: 37).

The linguistic potential of poetry is that it involves both receptive and, more importantly, productive skills for students to develop, if they are to master it. The CEFR states: “Productive activities have an important function in many academic and professional fields (oral presentations, written studies and reports) and particular social value is attached to

them (judgements made of what has been submitted in writing or of fluency in speaking and delivering oral presentations)” (Council of Europe, 2001: 14), providing a pragmatic basis for an emphasis on the development of productive language skills. Most poetry lesson plans involve the reading, discussion and writing of poems (Koch, 1971; Tunnicliffe, 1984; Tsujimoto, 1988). Students are encouraged to interact, somewhat naturally, in the TL, improving their fluency. Rod Ellis notes, that task-based language teaching approaches are often criticised for their apparent reliance on fluency activities, while neglecting explicit grammar teaching and that “performance of tasks will result only in samples of impoverished language use that are of little acquisitional value” (R. Ellis, 2009: 224). Focusing on fluency development, although a vital part of language acquisition, entails learners acquire little new material. Meaning-focused input is received when the learners are exposed to new linguistic material in a relevant context. Meaning-focused output requires the production of new structures in a communicative context while they are being acquired. Rod Ellis argues that this is where task design plays a key role, as tasks should be created that stimulate or encourage learners to employ new grammatical structures and linguistic resources (R. Ellis, 2009). Language-focused learning, then, can be achieved in a number of ways during a TBLT poetry course.

Creating a somewhat balanced distribution of the four strands of language courses is possible for most TBLT courses; however, poetry as a medium for language teaching has the advantage that it caters automatically both to written and spoken production, and input from reading and listening exposure. As shown in the analysis of *Stepping Stones*, a substantial amount of time is devoted to speaking exercises, whereas a relatively limited number of exercises concern writing practice (12.3% of items in *Stepping Stones*). Although the percentage of speaking exercises is not much greater (14% of items in *Stepping Stones*), this figure is not necessarily conclusive, as it does not include other in-class communication that

occurs in classrooms where the TL is spoken. Writing practice, however, is usually limited to the exercises included in the teaching materials. Both speaking and writing, however, are essential to language acquisition, as “in completing speaking and writing tasks learners would have to try out their linguistic knowledge by testing new hypotheses while reinforcing the entrenchment of what they already know” (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 261). A major benefit of written production, according to researchers, is that it allows learners to direct more attention to form which might increase their proficiency (Polio, 2012: 325), and also provides them with an opportunity for revision. By including written and spoken input and output, a poetry-based course can provide a balanced lesson, provided that the curriculum designer applies the available data on successful lessons when developing suitable tasks.

3.2 Other Advantages

Brevity

Many poetry lessons are perfectly suited for a 45-minute lesson (see Koch, 1971; Tunnicliffe, 1984; Tsujimoto, 1988; Higginson and Harter, 2009). This allows the curriculum designer to create a fixed format for a poetry lesson, which has a number of advantages: it is less difficult to make a new lesson when there is a set format, the course will be easier to monitor and evaluate, and learners become acquainted with its principles, making it easier for them to utilize and learn from (Nation and Macalister, 2010: 9). The advantages of using poetry are epitomised in the haiku, which only consists of a small number of syllables (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 172). This does not, however, mean that students should spend less time writing. The division explained in the previous section should be maintained, however, brief writing exercises create fewer difficulties planning.

Communicative Fluency

Poetry is a form of written communication, and could be beneficial for developing writing fluency and introducing students to the concept of conveying a message through

writing. Therefore, “similar to oral discourse involving negotiation of meaning between participants, written communication requires interaction between a writer and a reader” (Iida, 2008: 172). In fact, Roberts W. French argues that the main idea behind poetry is not always clear to students: “that its value depends, finally, upon its effect on the reader” (1969: 437). The brevity of most poetic forms forces writers to use words sparingly, without losing the meaning or the message to be conveyed. The constraints poetry places on written communication force the writer to consider every word used, therefore, the literary form of poetry forces learners to be attentive to the linguistic forms of the target language to be able to write meaningful poetry” (Lee, 2011: 27).

Literature in the EFL Classroom

Poetry lessons also provide an opportunity to introduce literature in the EFL classroom. Poetry, like other forms of written art, is an important part of literature and can, therefore, be used to teach cultural values and literary appreciation to learners while simultaneously developing language skills. As most EFL courses are primarily concerned with developing linguistic competence, literature tends to be overshadowed by language exercises. It has been argued, that “the hesitation to use literature in the classroom is based on the assumption that the language of literature is the result of an intensive process of composition by a specially gifted author, so the language of literature is seen as being sophisticated and complex” (Lee, 2011: 26), which many EFL students might not be ready for. This assumption, however, is not generally true and teaching poetry can provide students a new insight into an accessible form of literature that they themselves are able to produce. In fact, some teachers of poetry in schools have, over the years, gathered their students’ poems and compiled it into “their own literary tradition, to be used in helping them teach themselves and to become a standard for evaluating new student work” (Tsujimoto, 1988: 10). Additionally, by actively working with literary elements, rather than observing them while reading, students can develop a deeper

understanding and appreciation of literature (Groenendijk, 2013). Literature, therefore, becomes a notion that is not distant and alien to students, but something they can interact with and contribute to. In this manner, poetry can bridge the gap between language and literary education within the foreign language classroom, which for many foreign language teachers is still a distant dream.

3.3 The Common European Framework of Reference

In European teaching contexts, the introduction of the CEFR in 2001 created a major watershed in foreign language teaching. Many teaching methods and curricula now compare their learning goals to CEFR proficiency levels. It should, however, be noted that the specific goals and features of teaching materials “state the distinguishing features of a language context, whereas the CEFR tends to stress what makes language contexts comparable” (Cambridge ESOL Examinations, 2011: 12). The usage of tasks in language teaching finds support in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001: 157) and tables are provided to rate tasks in accordance with CEFR proficiency levels. In order to create a proper poetry lesson plan, the level at which poetry reading and writing can be introduced should be determined. The following table shows which creative writing skills are associated with the different levels of proficiency found in the CEFR:

	CREATIVE WRITING
C2	Can write clear, smoothly flowing, and fully engrossing stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted.
C1	Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.
B2	Can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences, marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned.
	Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest. Can write a review of a film, book or play.
B1	Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.
	Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text.
	Can write a description of an event, a recent trip – real or imagined. Can narrate a story.
A2	Can write about everyday aspects of his/her environment, e.g. people, places, a job or study experience in linked sentences.
	Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.
	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can write short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.
A1	Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.

(Council of Europe, 2001: 62)

From this table it can be concluded that the earliest stage at which poetry writing could be introduced in a somewhat complete form is with B1 level students of EFL. As writing “accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text” (Council of Europe, 2001: 62) are some of the basic requirements of a successful poem, the B1 level will be adopted as a benchmark. The B1 level in writing proficiency corresponds with the fifth grades of Dutch EFL education at the havo and vwo levels (Beeker et al., 2010). It is for these classes that the following lesson plans have been developed.

3.4 Creating a Poetry Task

The following lesson plans will rely heavily on tried and tested material by Kenneth Koch, who described his experiences teaching grade school children poetry in his book: *Wishes, Lies and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry* (1971) and those who followed in his footsteps: Stephen Tunnicliffe (1984), William Preston (1982), and Joseph I. Tsujimoto (1988). For the lesson plan on haiku, *The Haiku Handbook* by William J. Higginson and Penny Harter (2009) proved particularly useful. The lesson plans provided by these authors

will be modified to suit EFL learning goals, which will be expanded upon later. Furthermore, a theoretical basis from course and task development literature shall be included to substantiate educational claims.

Before presenting the lesson plans, it is prudent to first discuss some of the theory at their cores. Nation and Macalister claim that “the aims of curriculum design are to make a course that has useful goals, that achieves its goals, that satisfies its users, and that does all this in an efficient way” (2010: 10). Both lesson plans, therefore, should have clearly defined learning goals at their foundations. These goals should be communicated to, or in some cases negotiated with, the learners. Nation and Macalister warn that the usefulness of a particular learning goal is sometimes not shared by the learner, in which case the goal should be remodelled in negotiation with the learner (2010: 29). Furthermore, they argue that “if both teachers and learners are aware of the goals of each activity, why they are useful goals, how the activity should be best presented to achieve the goal, what kind of learning involvement is needed and the signs of successful involvement then learning is more likely to be successful” (Nation and Macalister, 2010: 88).

Another important topic to consider is task difficulty. Tasks should be suited to the learners levels and, insofar possible, account for individual differences between learners. Peter Robinson warns that “task complexity and levels of cognitive abilities affecting perceptions of task difficulty clearly interact in differentiating success on tasks for L2 learners, and also the linguistic outcomes (accuracy, fluency and complexity) of L2 task performance” (2007: 12), which entails that the task should not merely be tailored to the students’ level, it should also be presented in such a way so as to maximise the likelihood of successful learning outcomes. Although the subject is still debated among linguists, it seems that increasing a task’s complexity does not increase the number of errors learners make, in fact, students seem to make fewer mistakes in more complex tasks (Kuiken and Vedder,

2007: 126-127) and some researchers have suggested that a learner's attention can be directed at accuracy, complexity or fluency of language without being detrimental to the other (Ishikawa, 2007: 150). Providing tasks that have clear linguistic and content-related goals that are catered to the learners' levels allows the teacher to focus on any linguistic skill or competence without worrying it should negatively influence the students' development in another.

With regard to the specific situation of the CLIL classroom, teachers should ensure that the students are equipped with all the tools they need to successfully complete the task and participate in the content-related discussion. Therefore, "the integration of language and academic objectives should be carefully planned, providing for the presentation, practice, and application of specific language forms that are necessary for discussing different academic content" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1995). Ari Sherris mentions the following characteristics for a successful CLIL classroom: every lesson should have language and content goals, learners should have meaningful interaction with each other and the teacher towards acquiring content knowledge and skills, tasks that promote the acquisition of linguistic skills (i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening) are offered, and proper evaluation should be conducted during and after lessons.

For the following lesson plans, these core notions will be applied to modify and specify the lesson plans provided by the aforementioned teachers and poets. Their teaching setting, however, usually consists of giving a poetry workshop, and in some cases a course on poetry, rather than a language acquisition course. Their lesson plans, therefore, shall have to be altered to include specified language and content goals, while also being tailored to fit within the CLIL and TBLT frameworks. The final product should be a single lesson plan for haiku and collaborative poetry respectively, that can be employed for B1 and perhaps B2 level learners of English as a foreign language. It should be noted, however, that every

classroom is different and due to the nature of education, these lesson plans are inevitably generalisations. At the same time, it should not be too difficult to tailor them to suit a specific classroom, which provides the basis of their usefulness.

4. Using Haiku to Create a Poetry Lesson

When developing a lesson plan for teaching haiku in EFL classrooms, it is important to first elaborate on some of the characteristics and backgrounds of haiku poetry. Haiku is a poetic form that originally served as an introduction for a Japanese epic poem. Eventually, the short poem developed into an independent genre that gained popularity with a large number of poets worldwide (Higginson and Harter, 2009). An advantage of using haiku is that “the haiku, due to its brevity, is at once demanding and not quite overwhelming in its challenges” (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 47). The basic characteristics of a haiku poem should be briefly touched upon: a haiku is a poem usually consisting of three lines and is made up of a fixed number of syllables; traditional Japanese haiku tend to include a seasonal reference, known as a *kigo*; finally, a haiku should have a grammatical interruption, dividing the poem into two parts (Higginson and Harter, 2009; Iida, 2008). Furthermore, a haiku is a word-picture, a description of a scene or action that carries some kind of emotional impact. Haiku poets, therefore, tend to steer clear of metaphor and deep figurative meaning (Blasko and Merski, 1998: 39). Finally, the traditional Japanese haiku counts three lines of five, seven and five syllables respectively (Iida, 2008: 173), however, Higginson and Harter argue that due to the differences between the Japanese and the English language, adapting this construction in English language haiku will lead to a much longer poem than the traditional Japanese form (2009), therefore, they suggest employing “an overall form of seven accented syllables, plus unaccented syllables up to a total of about twelve” (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 105), which would provide the same length and rhythmic structure as Japanese haiku. The pause can be implemented “between the second and third or fifth and sixth accented syllables” (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 105). It should be noted, however, that the use of these conventions in the EFL classroom setting is not a necessity and several can be selected or scrapped depending on the teacher’s or students’ personal preferences or level of proficiency (Lee, 2011: 31).

A brief discussion of the advantages and potential disadvantages of using haiku for a poetry lesson in CLIL context should be provided. A controversial issue in this regard is the use of a strict syllable count. Lee mentions that Kenneth Koch found that keeping a syllable count would inhibit his students in their writing process, but whereas Koch's students were all grade school children, Lee states that "for second language learners with a high proficiency, keeping a strict syllable count can be beneficial because it makes learners more attentive to the selection of vocabulary" (Lee, 2011: 31-32). Taking into consideration that the target audience are EFL students at B1/B2 level, the most proficient of them might be intellectually challenged by adhering to a syllable count, whereas those who experience difficulty writing should be allowed more freedom in their form, as the most important aspect of haiku writing is not its stylistic form, but conveying an experience (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 177). Another advantage, as previously mentioned, is that haiku tend to avoid figurative language, allowing students to write about their own experiences (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 154). Blasko and Merski comment on this quality of the haiku and state that "haiku are intended to be written and read by people of all ages, sexes, and education levels, and the topic matter is everyday human experience" (1998: 43). Additionally, the brevity of the haiku allows for a dynamic lesson in which many teaching objectives can be addressed. Penny Harter mentions that in her lesson plan, "since the poems are short, there is usually time for everyone to read at least one aloud" (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 161). This entails that there is time for evaluation or peer reviewing in the same lesson in which the poems have been written, providing a benefit in both time, but it also means that students can evaluate the poems while they are still fresh in their memory. There is, however, some debate over whether the haiku's supposed simplicity is merely a positive misconception, as Blasko and Merski state: "It is a blessing because it invites widespread participation even among those who would not ordinarily consider themselves the least bit creative; it is a curse because

many people, including those who teach it, often neglect the more interesting cognitive, creative and cultural aspects of haiku” (1998: 39). This problem arises most prominently in the simplification of the syllable count rule which, although suited perfectly suited for the Japanese language, changes the reach of the poem in English. Another instance would be the neglect or non-existence of seasonal words in English, which are prominent in most traditional haiku. It is, therefore, the teacher’s choice just how complex they would like their haiku lesson to be.

4.1 Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is divided into three parts: preparation, task and evaluation. It will rely on Penny Harter’s lesson plan in *The Haiku Handbook* (2009), while adding a number of elements and goals to make it suitable for an EFL format. The role of the teacher will be specified for each of the different stages of the lesson plan. A number of language and content-related goals have been determined for the lesson plan. An important role in CLIL is reserved for classroom communication, both between peers and the teacher and students. Oral production by students should, therefore, also be encouraged in the lesson plan, while not disregarding the need for input and introduction of new linguistic features.

Goals

Content goals:

- Students can read and write haiku.
- Students can remember a number of traditional and contemporary poems.
- Students can demonstrate how literature can arouse emotions through images.

Linguistic goals:

- Students can use language communicatively, thus increasing their fluency.
- Students can use the different skills involved in poetry, including: listening, reading, speaking and writing.
- Students can write grammatically correct poems.
- Students can use a number of words that can be linked to seasons, which they are then asked to include in their haiku.

The manner in which these goals will be achieved in the lesson plan will become apparent as the various stages of the lesson are discussed.

Preparation

In preparation, the teacher should select a number of haiku to read out to the students to give them an idea of what the poems should look like and illustrate the various aspects of haiku poetry. An example used by many teachers of haiku writing is a classic by Matsuo Basho:

“An old pond...

A frog leaps in

Water’s sound”

(Matsuo Basho, 2010)

This poem also allows the teacher to explain the function of the grammatical stop, indicated by three dots after the first line, which arrests the reader’s attention briefly with the stillness of the old pond. The way in which the poem plays with the senses is another feature of a good haiku. A game can be made out of having students guess which season this poem should be

associated with, as the seasonal reference might be perfectly clear to a Japanese reader, but no so much to a European. A number of additional examples can be found in the appendix (see A2) that can be used in class; however, any selection is completely dependent on personal preference. Kenneth Koch argues in favour of using student-made poetry for examples, to decrease the distance between the poet and the student (1971: 64). This becomes a viable alternative when a decent collection of student material has been gathered and teachers can select the best to serve as examples.

In EFL, the acquisition of new vocabulary leads the progression and greater communicative competence; therefore, any lesson should aim at also increasing the students' word repertoire. For haiku, an obvious word group to make a selection of would be words related to particular seasons. Since a classical haiku includes a season word, or *kigo* (Iida, 2008: 173), a vocabulary list for students to acquire by using them actively in their haiku and discussions is not difficult to realise. An example of such a list that can be presented to students has been added to the appendices (see appendix A3). Students should be required to use at least one of these words in every haiku they write, which should serve both to internalise vocabulary items and to increase awareness of literary forms.

Finally, the teacher should be sure to be able to produce and explain haiku and should at least be aware of some of the history of haiku writing and use. There are many electronic resources and course books for haiku writing available, for instance, Higginson and Harther's *The Haiku Handbook* mentioned earlier. A good way of introducing the haiku is by telling the students something about the history of the genre, and teachers should be able to answer some of the questions the students might have.

Lesson

Step 1: Explanation

When introducing the class to haiku, the first point that should be made is that haiku consist of images. Following Penny Harter's example, students should be explained that these images may originate from the senses, the memory or even the fantasy (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 158-159). Higginson and Harter define an image as "a group of words which presents an object or objects, and possibly some action, that appeals to the senses" (2009: 169). Carefully explain to the students which stylistic rules they are supposed to adhere to. Although it is up to the teacher to decide which rules to include in the writing process, there are some that should be followed: no rhyming, since "that makes it sound like a sort of nursery rime [sic] and takes our attention away from what the haiku has to show us" (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 172). Kenneth Koch mentions that "the effort of finding rhymes stops the free flow of [the students'] feelings and associations" (1971: 8). Additionally, the use of metaphor or figurative language in haiku is discouraged (Blasko and Merski, 1998: 39), as it tends to distract readers from the intended image. The other conventions (keeping syllable count, including a grammatical stop and the use of seasonal words) should be decided on for each individual class or even student to increase or decrease the difficulty of the task. For the purpose of this lesson plan, the use of seasonal words is included, as it provides an opportunity for students to acquire some useful new words to expand their vocabulary.

Step 2: Analysis

After explaining the concept of the haiku to the students, the teacher can read out a number of haiku poems to use as examples and to look into the manner in which the different conventions of haiku function in more detail. Some teachers, however, have chosen to do this before providing a definition (Lee, 2011: 33); however, this is a matter of personal preference. A number of sample haiku are included in the appendix (see appendix A2), but

many more are readily available on the internet and plenty of haiku books and anthologies exist. Read at least one haiku in class and discuss it with the students, then provide additional examples and ask students to analyse the poems. Questions include:

- What do you think of the way the image is described in this haiku?
- Which of the senses are utilised in this poem (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, movement, etc.)?
- Which emotions does this haiku arouse for you?
- Which season do you think this haiku is associated with?

Lee mentions that “such discussions will also help them write their own haiku more easily, because the discussion of a specific haiku will give them the scaffolding within which to organize their own thoughts” (2011: 34). Once students seem to grasp the essential characteristics and possibilities of haiku, they can continue to the next phase of the lesson: the writing task.

Step 3: Writing

The students are now asked to write their own haiku, adhering to the limitations previously determined. The teacher, however, should always keep in mind “there never exists the notion of ‘correct’ or ‘wrong’ in haiku, because articulating ‘self’ is an art” (Iida, 2008: 174). This means students should be allowed their own creative expression and teachers should be careful not to impose themselves too much on the students when guiding them. Students should be advised, however, to pay heed to the following questions while writing their haiku:

1. Is it brief?
2. Does it present one or two clear images, with no metaphors or similes?
3. Does the image, or do the images coming together, create an emotion in the reader without telling the reader what emotion to feel?

(Higginson and Harter, 2009: 173-174).

It is also advisable, when asking students to write a poem, for the teacher to write a few poems as well. Higgins and Harter state this will make students more serious about their assignment and less likely to ask too many questions (2009: 171). When most students have started writing, the teacher can walk around the classroom and assist the students wherever necessary. If a student cannot find a suitable topic to write on, ask them about familiar places they often visit and “ask them if there is any evocative memory associated with any of those places and encourage them to write about their feelings at that time” (Lee, 2011: 36). The students should be able to finish at least one haiku in about twenty minutes.

Step 4: Reviewing

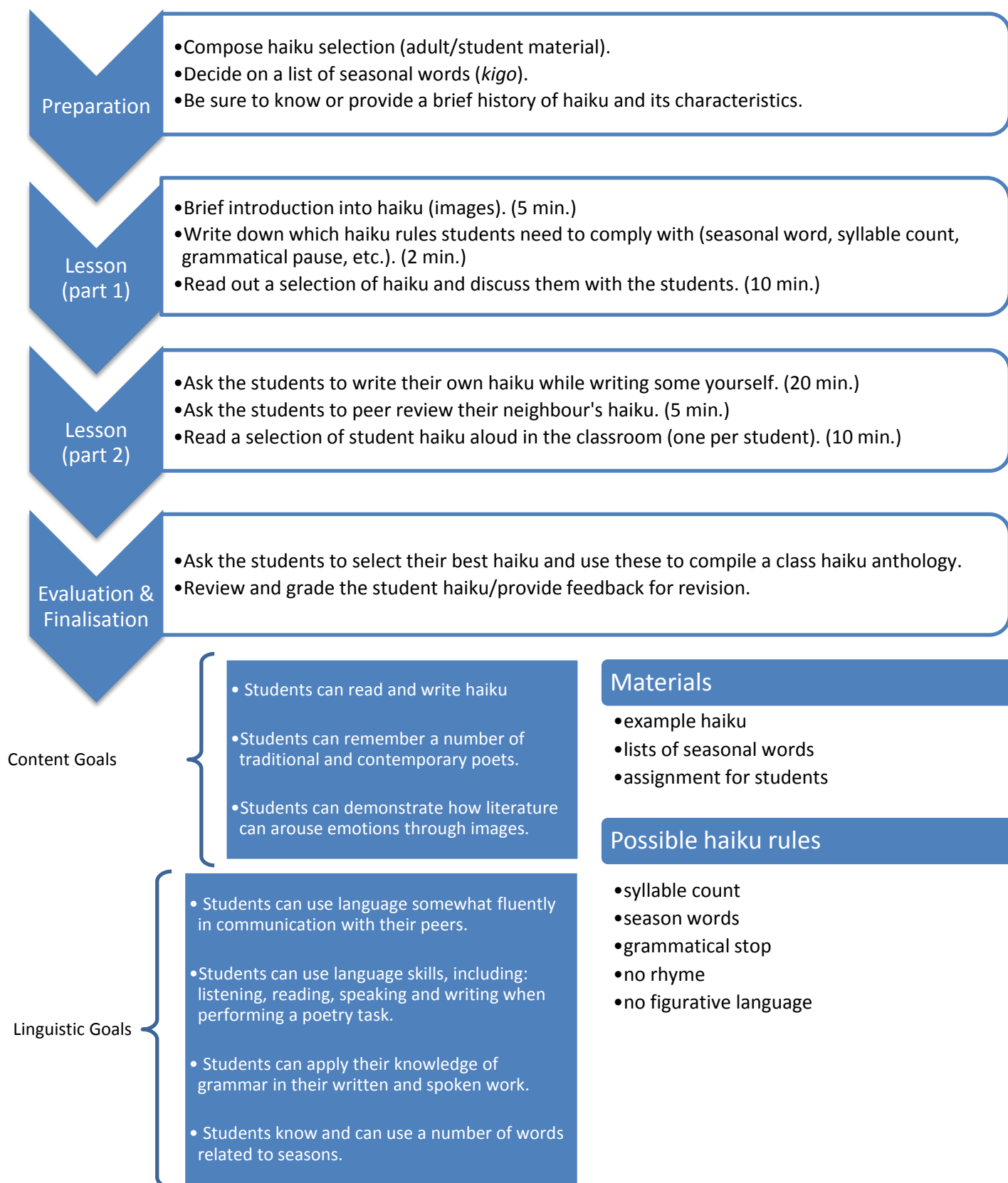
Having a written product provides vital opportunities for peer interaction. Students can review each other’s work in pairs and both practice their fluency and develop a critical eye for language. Tsujimoto states that “students benefit not only from revising others’ work and from the feedback gained through their partners’ revisions, but also, as they have told me in their journals, from their partners’ original draft, they learn new vocabulary, new strategies of organization and possibilities of style, and bold new attitudes of tone and voice” (1988: 23). Students can then select their best work for the in-class discussion and ask their peers to help them select which of their haiku is the most successful. Subsequently, the final part of the lesson will consist of reading out student poetry, allowing discussion and giving praise and constructive feedback. The brevity of the haiku entails that “since the poems are short,

there is usually time for everyone to read at least one aloud” (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 161). If a student is too shy to read his or her own work to the class, then the teacher can offer to read it out for them (Higginson and Harter, 2009: 162).

Finally, students can each nominate one of their own haiku to be incorporated into the class’ own poetry book. This book can then function as a resource for examples of successful student haiku to classes in later years. The selected poems can then be read by the teacher, who can provide comments for revision and grade the revised versions. Teacher comments should either focus on specific features of haiku (i.e. brevity, no metaphors, images, etc.) or specifically for poetry, as suggested by Tsujimoto, who focused on: diction (i.e. making “verbs more vivid and forceful, make nouns more specific or precise, replace clichés and trite statements with statements that express the unique experience conveyed in the poem” (Tsujimoto, 1988: 24), compression (deleting “redundant or ineffective words, to delete words that do not contribute information or that overload lines, to delete irrelevancies that dilute emotional impact, and to replace word groups with shorter expressions...” (Tsujimoto, 1988: 24), and development and extension (i.e., adding “words that supply the who, where, when, how, why, whose, or which where necessary for clarity and in places where ambiguity seems counterproductive...” (Tsujimoto, 1988: 25).

The evaluation of student work will be discussed in a separate chapter after the lesson plan on collaborative poetry, as it is largely applicable to both haiku and the class collaboration poem. A table providing a schematic representation of the lesson plan has been provided below for quick reference.

4.2 Lesson Plan: An Overview



5. Using Collaborative Writing in a Poetry Lesson

In *Wishes, Lies and Dreams* (1971), Kenneth Koch introduces a sestina, a relatively complex poetic form, as a class collaboration project for his grade school students. Koch writes: “I did the sestina as a class collaboration: I wrote the end-words, in proper order, on the blackboard, and asked the students for a line to fit them. This way children got the pleasure of solving the puzzle aspect of the poem – making their lines and ideas fit the form – without the troublesome remembering part” (1971: 21). Collaborative work has great benefits according to language acquisition theory, its advantages include: providing a large quantity of language practice opportunities, improving and increasing their speech repertoire, allowing students to follow their own pace, improve student relationships and, finally, increase student motivation (Long, 1989: 9-10). Unfortunately though, “when collaborative writing activities are introduced into writing classes it is generally for the purposes of brainstorming ideas prior to the writing activity itself, or for the purposes of obtaining feedback on the drafted or completed written piece from teacher or peers” (Ishikawa, 2007: 157). Although this approach is undoubtedly useful, it does not provide all the benefits of classroom collaboration.

Research in education studies suggests that “the quantity of negotiation for meaning will be higher on closed tasks, when participants know that task completion depends on their finding the answer, not settling on any answer they choose when the going gets rough and moving on to something else” (Long, 1989: 17). Many language exercises, however, involve open discussions in which there a specific outcome is not required. A collaborative poetry writing assignment requires students to work together towards a set goal, namely a poem that represents their combined effort. Merrill Swain’s research found “that tasks where students are asked to write something together tend to elicit collaborative dialogue as the students discuss how best to represent their intended meaning” (2005: 478), and that this dialogue

eventually led to language learning. The collaborative poem, then, is an opportunity to attain all the advantages from student dialogue.

Aside from eliciting conversation, there are additional reasons for considering a collaborative assignment in a poetry class. For instance, several scholars, when “examining the effects of collaborative writing in L1 settings, found that collaborative writing put students in the position of having to explain and defend their ideas to their peers, and thus fostered reflective thinking about their writing” (Storch and Wigglesworth, 2007: 158). Storch and Wigglesworth then tested these findings in second language writing in a test with advance level learners, which showed “that collaboration may not result in longer texts or more complex language but does result in the production of more accurate texts (2007: 171-172). Additionally, the collaborative format tends to function particularly well in the CLIL setting, which relies heavily on student interaction for language development (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010: 88).

Various approaches to collaborative poetry writing can be adopted. Whereas Kenneth Koch chose to use the sestina, a rather complex, restrictive form (1971: 21), William Preston chose to focus on metaphor and simile when giving a poetry workshop to Thai English teachers (1982). He asked the teachers to write a poem made up of comparisons and had “the group select individual comparisons from each other’s poems and put together a single class poem based on a collection of their many images” (Preston, 1982: 494). Although Preston’s approach is well suited for a poetry workshop, it does not truly involve collaborative writing, but merely a joint criticism and selection of individual writing. Koch acknowledges the limits of his own approach, involving the entire class in the composition of a poem, stating he “found that certain children tend to dominate this kind of composition; they are hard to resist because their ideas are usually so good” (Koch, 1971: 64). It should also be mentioned that Koch’s poetry lessons were created for L1 grade school students and Preston’s for Thai EFL

teachers in secondary schools; therefore, their specific learning goals do not match those of Dutch EFL students of B1/B2 proficiency level.

5.1 Lesson Plan

Since none of the aforementioned lesson plans is meant to cater to Dutch EFL learners in a CLIL context, a new lesson plan must be developed specifically for these students. Preston's focus on metaphor will be adapted and combined with contributions from language acquisition researchers to create a lesson plan that has a similar final product, but a more communicative writing process. As with Preston's lesson plan, students are asked to create a poem consisting entirely out of metaphors, however, they are to include a surprising twist and avoid using clichés (1982). Students will work on their metaphors in pairs, where one student provides the initial object A, to which his or her partner responds with the comparison B, creating a language game in which both students are encouraged to use language creatively. Students are then asked to exchange their lines with some of their peers who will then select their best lines to form a class poem, which includes metaphors by all students.

Goals

Content goals:

- Students can differentiate between metaphor and simile and use both in their written work.
- Students can co-operate successfully to produce a written poem.

Linguistic goals:

- Students can use English in a meaningful, communicative way to negotiate a writing task.
- Students can correctly use the linguistic and grammatical items required to produce a written poem.

Once more, the way in which these goals are incorporated in the lesson plan will become apparent in the course of the discussion.

Preparation

In preparation, the teacher should gather examples of metaphor used in an inventive way to utilise as examples during the lesson. Some suggestions of possible poems to include are sonnets 18 and 130 by William Shakespeare, which are fine examples to introduce analogy in poetry (see appendix A4). Another example to make students contemplate the meaning of a particular metaphor can be found in John Donne's *The Blossom* and *The Sun Rising* (see appendix A4). The teacher must be aware that these examples might prove difficult for students and be able to support them to facilitate understanding. It is, therefore, wise to highlight any vocabulary items that might provide difficulties and prepare hand-outs for the students, since "by highlighting and emphasizing [sic] new vocabulary, teachers can make new content comprehensible" (Sherris, 2008). An additional advantages to reading and analysing these poems is that it might inspire students when writing their own poetry, which Kenneth Koch mentions can originate from "new subject matter, new sense awareness, new experience of language or poetic form" (1971: 8). Although Tsujimoto favours using examples of student poetry, rather than adult or even canonical writers, he does acknowledge "giving students many examples, by both students and adults, can encourage the writing of original poetry" (1988: 10). By using these examples, students also become acquainted with famous, historical English poets, thus achieving another potential learning goal.

Lesson

Whereas haiku avoids metaphor and figurative language to provide a clear picture (Blasko and Merski, 1998: 39), this collaboration poem encourages students to experiment with metaphor. Teachers may consider using a word association game to provide students with a playful introduction into figurative language. Tsujimoto uses these kinds of games for a

number of poems that involve relating words (Tsujimoto, 1988: 43-44). The teacher can provide one word, for example: tree, the students must then provide an additional noun to complete the metaphor, i.e. pillar, after which students complete the metaphor together, for example: ‘a tree is a pillar of green, then gold’. Such games can get students into the idea of using metaphor in poetry and perhaps makes them enjoy the writing process more, due to its similarity with the game.

The teacher should then read and discuss the poems that were selected during the preparation phase. Although the advantages of using adult poetry have already been mentioned, teachers may also consider using student poetry if available, since “not only do the students share with the poet similar experiences and sensibilities, but more importantly, the young poet shows other students the potential quality of work that they themselves can produce” (Tsujimoto, 1988: 10). Depending on the teacher’s choice and time constraints, therefore, the choice must be made whether or not to include some student poetry. The teacher help students understand the poem and explain difficult words wherever necessary.

Task 1

Explain the use of metaphor and simile to the students and then ask the students to find all the instances of metaphor and simile in one or two of the selected poems. This should take up no more than five minutes of class time, after which the teacher asks the students for their answers and discuss them in class.

When the students understand the concepts of metaphor and simile and have encountered sufficient examples in the poetry they discussed, they can start working on the actual assignment. For this task, students should be grouped in pairs and alternate turns providing an object and its comparison. The students should be encouraged to flaunt and make their comparisons as elaborate, eccentric or unusual as possible and avoid any clichés in their

poems. Teachers might want to explain to their students how clichés work and how the use of a cliché influences a poem’s meaning and that, because of this, they should not normally be used in a haiku.

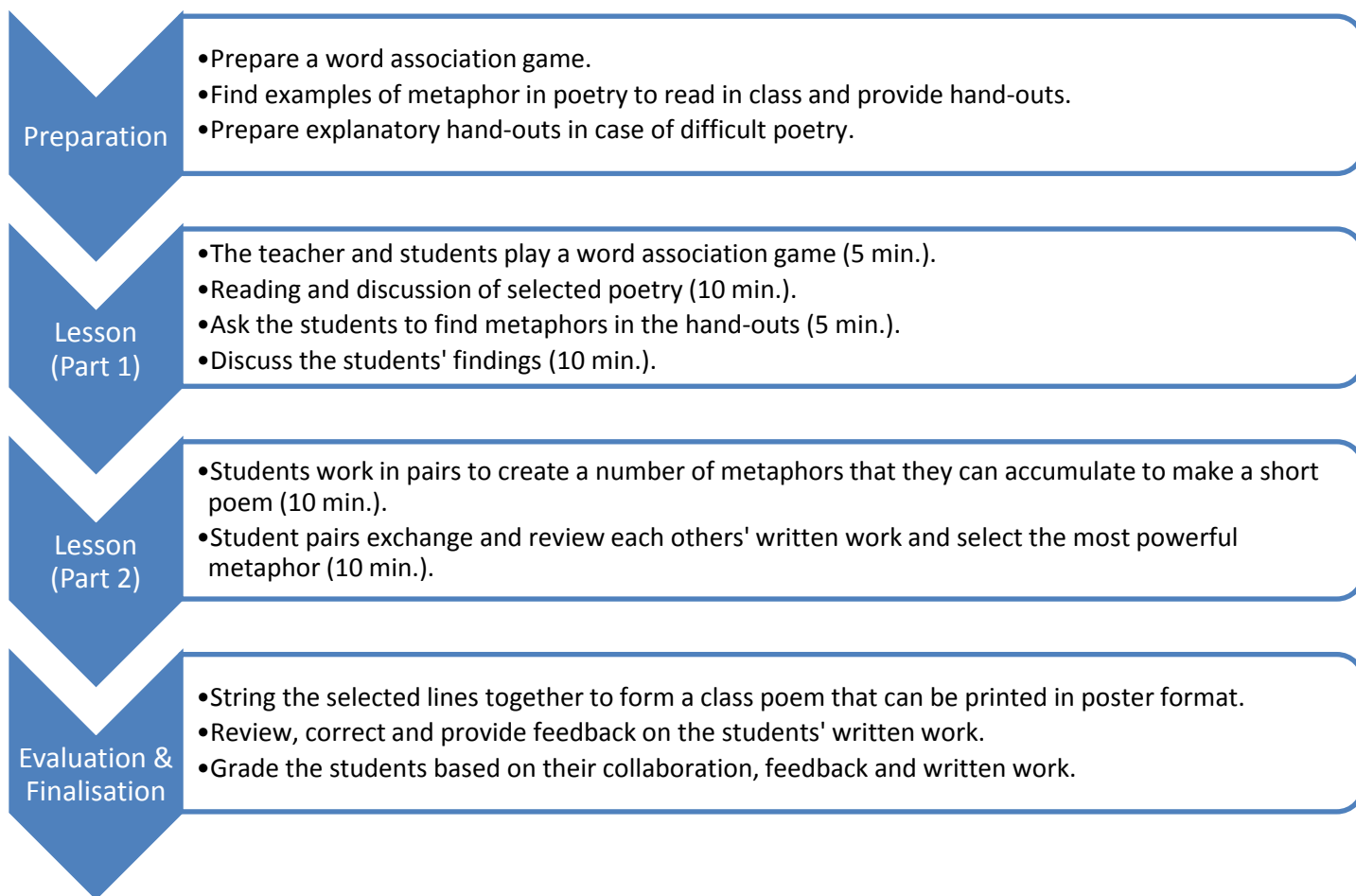
Task 2

Students work in pairs and take turns in a word association game. One student provides a noun that becomes the subject of the metaphor and the second student then supplies the comparison. After about six such comparisons are made, the students can work together to smooth out the lines and make them into a poem. Tsujimoto comments on the most successful word associations: “What we are looking for is the unexpected shift, the surprise leap, to another mental-emotional world, exercising alternative ways of thinking in addition to logic” (Tsujimoto, 1988: 44). Students should, therefore, be encouraged to steer clear of cliché and make strange, unsuspected associations that surprise the reader.

Student pairs can then swap their written work and have it checked by their peers. This has a number of distinct advantages, some of which have already been mentioned: students learn from having their work commented upon, but also gain more exposure to language from the work they are reviewing (Tsujimoto, 1988: 23). It should also make them more aware of the manner in which their use of structural elements can influence the reader’s interpretation of their work (Groenendijk, 2013: 8). The reviewers should then select the two best lines from their peers’ work.

The selected lines will be submitted and joined to form a class poem consisting of a string of metaphors. Although this might not result in the most poetic form, it is a way for students to experience EFL in a creative, communicative and meaningful way, which is the purpose of the lesson plan. A schematic representation of the lesson plan is provided on the next page for quick reference.

5.2 Lesson Plan: An Overview



Content goals

- Learners can use metaphor and can differentiate it from simile
- Learners can cooperate to produce a written poem

Linguistic goals

- Students can use English to negotiate in a cooperative setting.
- Students can correctly apply their knowledge of English grammar in their written work

Materials

- Hand-outs metaphorical poems
- Hand-outs difficult vocabulary
- Explanation word association game (opt.)

Collaboration poem rules

- Students should use metaphor, not simile.
- Only one line can be selected from every pair's work to be included in the class poem.

6. Poetry Evaluation

Feedback, correction and evaluation are vital in any educational setting as it provides a way of assessing a student's progress and proficiency level in relation to his peers. Evaluating student poetry, however, should be approached with extreme diligence. Kenneth Koch warns his readers not to impose their own standards of poetry upon their students (Koch, 1971: 27). Additionally, ethical issues "are particularly acute in the assessment of writing because it often involves expressing personal views, resulting in a form for others to evaluate" (Polio and Williams, 2009: 506). This does not entail student writing should not be evaluated and corrected; however, the teacher should constantly ensure the integrity of the students while evaluating their work. It is important to note though, that prior to this evaluation, students have already received feedback from peers and the teacher on their written work.

Other than the ethical and subjectivity problems mentioned, there are a number of other issues that should be taken into consideration to provide a balanced assessment of poetry. Scholars have made an important point in weighing textual complexity as well as accuracy when assessing linguistic features, as "accuracy may be achieved as a result of a learner not taking any risks in their writing and relying on simple, well-controlled forms" (Storch and Wigglesworth, 2007: 161). This topic is related to an even more controversial theme: "whether teacher feedback should focus on form (e.g., grammar, mechanics) or on content (e.g., organization, amount of detail)" (Fathman and Whalley: 1991: 178).

There are a number of interesting theories regarding feedback on written work. Fatham and Whalley found that students only increase the grammatical accuracy of their written work after receiving feedback on their grammatical errors, whereas they would always improve their work's content, albeit to a larger degree where content-related feedback did occur (1991: 183). This does, however, point to an additional requirement for successful writing, namely that "learners are required to do something with the feedback they receive"

(Nation and Macalister, 2010: 66). It can, therefore, never harm to allow students to revise their work for some bonus points after checking it, or implement a pre-final feedback round before having them submit their final version.

Iida argues that “poetry consists of the author’s voice including emotions or thoughts reflecting on his or her life experience” (2008: 173). Personal voice then, becomes another point on which students can be evaluated, alongside linguistic features and development. Developing a personal voice in different communicative settings is seen as one of the key language competences to be achieved by learners and should, therefore, be considered of importance when assessing writing. In haiku, personal voice is the ratio in which a picture of nature is infused with a more profound meaning (Iida, 2008: 178).

6.1 Evaluating Haiku

Iida provides a detailed scheme for assessing haiku poetry, which is perfectly suitable for using, since it provides a detailed justification for weighting particular factors of students’ written work. Iida’s assessment categories include: personal voice, audience awareness, organisation, haiku conventions and L2 linguistic conventions. The model developed by Iida is provided below.

Ratings Content	(Excellent) 3	(Fair) 2	(Poor) 1	Scores
Personal Voice	Equal balance of nature and human mind	Lacks either feature of nature or human mind	Simple description of nature or context	Ratings x 3
Audience Awareness	Provides readers with multiple interpretations	Provides readers just one interpretation	Provides readers with no interpretation	Ratings x 2
Organisation	Natural and easily flowing expression	Strained or unnatural flow of expression, may include some inaccurate forms	Laboured expression, frequently interferes with comprehensibility	Ratings x 2
Haiku Conventions	Correct use of haiku conventions	Uses general haiku conventions, but misses one of the fundamental features	Serious problems with haiku formats; haiku illegible	Ratings x 2
L2 Linguistic Conventions	Neither misspelling nor grammatical errors	Either misspellings or usage errors	Misspellings and usage errors	Ratings x 1
				Score: /30

(Iida, 2008: 178)

Iida's evaluation sheet provides a solid basis for the assessment of student haiku, as it comprises the most important categories of evaluation and rates these according to their perceived importance. The teacher can decide, then, which haiku conventions to include, the benefits of using seasonal words has already been mentioned; however, some teachers might not wish to adhere to a syllable count or grammatical pause. Iida's model, therefore, can easily be adapted to fit the haiku lesson plan provided above.

6.2 Evaluating Collaborative Poetry

Although evaluating a small number of lines provide some difficulties, there are still a number of factors that could be analysed for this particular assignment. For instance, metaphors could be assessed for their ingenuity, where clichés should be awarded the lowest number of points and surprising, inventive metaphorical language should be valued highly.

Another interesting part for evaluation would be the written peer feedback provided by each pair to their fellow students, where students can also be graded on their selection of metaphors, and their comments on linguistic features and content in general. A possible table for evaluating the collaborative poem is presented below:

Content	Ratings (Excellent) 3	(Fair) 2	(Poor) 1	Scores
Quality of Metaphor	The metaphors are inventive, stimulating and make sense.	The metaphors are somewhat inventive, but lack clear connection.	The metaphors are clichés or make no sense.	Ratings x 3
Quality of Feedback	Students were able to find most issues with their peers' work in both content and language.	Students found some issues with their peers' work in both content and language.	Students hardly found issues (although they were present), or feedback was focused entirely on content or language.	Ratings x 2
Organisation	The metaphors have a good flow and are clearly structured.	The metaphors have a strained flow and some inaccurate expressions.	The metaphors' structure and wording are incorrect.	Ratings x 2
Linguistic Features	No/few spelling and grammatical errors.	Few/acceptable level of spelling and grammatical errors.	Many grammatical and spelling errors.	Ratings x 1
				Score: /24

Adopting a system similar to Iida's for rating our metaphorical poem, but adjusting it to the requirements set by the lesson plan provides a clear system of evaluation to be used when correcting student work. Assessing students' feedback can be justified when its importance for student development is considered, as "revising other people's work nurtures in the reviser the cold calculation necessary when reseeing, judging, and recasting their own work" (Tsujimoto, 1988: 23) and can be employed to increase audience awareness with student

writers (Groenendijk, 2013: 8). Organisation and linguistic features can be evaluated in much the same way as Iida's haiku evaluation table.

Conclusion

The current reform in foreign language education has created new opportunities for different approaches to language teaching. The new-found focus on students' communicative competence has greatly influenced the general outlook on language teaching. A number of relatively recent developments in language acquisition theory have further reinforced this process of change. In Europe, a major breakthrough in the innovation of language education across the European Union was made with the creation of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). This development has led to an increase in the number of bilingual schools, adopting methods from the CLIL approach (Europees Platform, 2010). Some of CLIL's underdeveloped aspects might be solved by employing a task-based approach, pushing students to produce meaningful output in a variety of classroom contexts.

In a CLIL classroom setting, language teaching is able to shift away from explicit instruction and adopt a more content-oriented, meaningful approach. Poetry becomes a viable option for content-based approach, aimed at simultaneously developing language skills and competence when its potential to adopt several angles and involve a number of key communicative competences – including reading, listening, writing and speaking – is considered. A poetry lesson plan can be introduced successfully with students at the B1/B2 level of EFL. Although there are many shapes and angles to explore as far as poetry teaching in EFL contexts is concerned, the selected approach is indebted to *The Haiku Handbook* (Higginson and Harter, 2009) and Kenneth Koch's *Wishes, Lies and Dreams* (1971), as well as a number of poets and teachers who followed in their footsteps.

The haiku form is particularly suitable for using in a secondary school context, due to its brevity, abstinence of figurative language and picture-like qualities (Blasko and Merski, 1998: 39). Teachers decide how complex the task should be, by choosing to include or exclude various traits of the haiku form. A collaborative poetry assignment is designed specifically to teach students communicative skills, while working on a creative assignment. Using figurative language as a topic facilitates an encounter with literary conventions. Evaluation can be based on poem restrictions and learning goals.

Poetry, therefore, might serve as a medium to help students achieve their language acquisition goals, motivate them by being creatively engaged with the TL and acquaint them with literature, poetic conventions and target culture. The brevity of many poetic forms means not too much time needs to be invested and a poetry lesson can be developed relatively easily. Poetry lessons, therefore, have the potential to provide a meaningful contribution to EFL classrooms in a CLIL setting.

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Appendix

A1

List of items in *Stepping Stones*

Theme 1

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Group discussion | (discussion on sources of power in groups of four) |
| 2. Internet exercise | (look up heads of state for different countries) |
| 3. Vocabulary | (match words with their descriptions or synonyms) |
| 4. Vocabulary | (describe the meaning of words) |
| 5. Reading comprehension | (are statements true or false and which line is the information required?) |
| 6. Reading comprehension | (open questions in Dutch to be answered in Dutch) |
| 7. Group discussion | (open / no defined outcome; discuss the statement) |
| 8. Vocabulary | (emotion association: positive/negative) |
| 9. Reading comprehension | (these topics are discussed in which paragraphs?) |
| 10. Reading comprehension | (which answer is correct?) |
| 11. Vocabulary | (which word in the text fits the following description?) |
| 12. Grammar practice | (translation / specific features) |
| 13. Writing | (letter to department store) |
| 14. Vocabulary | (match the words/synonyms) |
| 15. Listening | (tick the correct statement) |
| 16. Group discussion | (discuss extreme sports and choose; closed discussion) |
| 17. Listening | (tick the correct statement) |
| 18. Vocabulary | (describe consumer brand products) |
| 19. Writing | (radio commercial script) |
| 20. Reading comprehension | (answer the questions) |

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 21. Internet exercise | (looking up; exploration/colonialism) |
| 22. Reading comprehension | (answer the questions) |
| 23. Grammar practice | (find the right form) |
| 24. Grammar practice | (translate into English) |
| 25. Group discussion | (discuss unjust school regulation; peer review) |
| 26. Vocabulary | (find the correct synonym or description) |
| 27. Writing | (letter to headmaster) |

Theme 2

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Internet exercise | (crossword, looking up) |
| 2. Vocabulary | (find the correct synonym or description) |
| 3. Reading comprehension | (skimming; answer the questions) |
| 4. Reading comprehension | (which statements fits which paragraph?) |
| 5. Vocabulary | (find the correct synonym or definition) |
| 6. Grammar practice | (match the phrases; syntax) |
| 7. Grammar practice | (use the correct verb; morphology) |
| 8. Writing | (what would you do if you were talented?) |
| 9. Reading comprehension | (preparatory exercise) |
| 10. Reading comprehension | (make a chronology of events) |
| 11. Reading comprehension | (are the statements true or false?) |
| 12. Vocabulary | (find the correct synonym or description) |
| 13. Group discussion | (roleplaying; interview for the school paper) |
| 14. Group discussion | (preparation; work in pairs) |
| 15. Listening | (which statement fits the gap?) |
| 16. Listening | (tick the correct statement) |
| 17. Group discussion | (what would you take to an island?) |

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 18. Listening | (take notes while listening and answer the questions) |
| 19. Listening | (choose the correct character description) |
| 20. Vocabulary | (write down the meaning of the collocation) |
| 21. Writing | (what would you do if you had money?) |
| 22. Reading comprehension | (answer the questions) |
| 23. Internet exercise | (American history) |
| 24. Group discussion | (the ideal roommate) |
| 25. Grammar practice | (choose the gerund or the infinitive) |
| 26. Grammar practice | (translate into English; gerund and infinitive) |
| 27. Group discussion | (roommate selection, peer evaluation) |
| 28. Reading comprehension | (which statements are correct?) |
| 29. Writing | (job application requirements) |
| 30. Writing | (application letter, peer reviewing) |

A2

Some Example Haiku

long night—
too late to take back
the e-mail

Patricia J. Machmiller
San Jose, California
(Machmiller, 2013)

waiting up –
the rain’s rhythm
becomes a prayer

Ferris Gilli
Marietta, Georgia
(Gilli, 2013)

poor end of town—
between rusted roof ridges
streams of silver rain

Ruth Yarrow
Seattle, Washington
(Yarrow, 2013)

Awake at night—
the sound of the water jar
cracking in the cold.

Matsuo Basho
Trans. Robert Hass
(Basho, 2010)

Sources

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A3

A Brief List of Seasonal Words¹*Spring*

Lamb
New-born
Green
Blossom
Hay fever

Summer

Sunshine
Heat
Clear skies
Ice cream
Melting
Shorts

Autumn

Rain
Dry leaves
Chestnuts
Wet
Bare trees
Thunderstorm
Lightning

Winter

Snow
Hail
Chill
Cold
Ice
Sled
Skating
Snowman

¹ **N.B.** This list is by no means exhaustive and consists entirely of a personal selection of vocabulary items that might be associated with a particular season, and should, therefore, be merely seen as suggestions. Any other words are possible and some words might be subject to interpretation

A4

Sonnets

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines
 And often is his gold complexion dimmer;
 And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed.
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st
 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breadth that from my mistress reeks.
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
 I grant I never saw a goddess go;
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
 As any she belied with false compare.

The Blossom

LITTLE think'st thou, poor flower,
 Whom I've watch'd six or seven days,
 And seen thy birth, and seen what every hour
 Gave to thy growth, thee to this height to raise,
 And now dost laugh and triumph on this bough,
 Little think'st thou,
 That it will freeze anon, and that I shall
 To-morrow find thee fallen, or not at all.

Little think'st thou, poor heart,
 That labourest yet to nestle thee,
 And think'st by hovering here to get a part
 In a forbidden or forbidding tree,
 And hopest her stiffness by long siege to bow,
 Little think'st thou
 That thou to-morrow, ere the sun doth wake,
 Must with the sun and me a journey take.

But thou, which lovest to be
 Subtle to plague thyself, wilt say,
 Alas ! if you must go, what's that to me?
 Here lies my business, and here I will stay
 You go to friends, whose love and means present
 Various content
 To your eyes, ears, and taste, and every part ;
 If then your body go, what need your heart?

Well then, stay here ; but know,
 When thou hast stay'd and done thy most,
 A naked thinking heart, that makes no show,
 Is to a woman but a kind of ghost.
 How shall she know my heart ; or having none,
 Know thee for one?
 Practice may make her know some other part ;
 But take my word, she doth not know a heart.

Meet me in London, then,
 Twenty days hence, and thou shalt see
 Me fresher and more fat, by being with men,
 Than if I had stay'd still with her and thee.
 For God's sake, if you can, be you so too ;
 I will give you
 There to another friend, whom we shall find
 As glad to have my body as my mind.

The Sun Rising

Busy old fool, unruly Sun,
 Why dost thou thus,
 Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?
 Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
 Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
 Late schoolboys, and sour prentices,
 Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride,
 Call country ants to harvest offices,
 Love, all alike, no season knows, nor clime,
 Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
 Why shouldst thou think?
 I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
 But that I would not lose her sight so long:
 If her eyes have not blinded thine,
 Look, and tomorrow late, tell me
 Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine
 Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.
 Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
 And thou shalt hear: 'All here in one bed lay.'

She is all states, and all princes I,
 Nothing else is.
 Princes do but play us; compared to this,
 All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
 Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,
 In that the world's contracted thus;
 Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
 To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
 Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
 This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere.

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