

## Formeaning Response Approach in The Teaching of Poetry- A Case Study

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### Abstract

There have been numerous studies that established students unfavourable attitude towards learning poetry due to the teaching approaches employed. Thus, in 2009, Harlan Kellem introduced the Formeaning Response Approach, an approach that integrates the Stylistics and the Reader Response Approach and theorised that the approach will make students understand poems, and also allow them to enjoy their learning process. Since Kellem's study only suggested the classroom activities to be used in lessons but showed no evidence of students' experience using the approach, the current study aimed (i) to delve on students' experience when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response approach and (ii) to study how the Formeaning Response approach contributes to students' learning of poetry. This study used the case study method. Data collected were then analysed using the case study data analysis method. This study concluded that by using the Formeaning Response approach, students experience (i) an elevated interest in poetry lessons. Additionally, this study reveals that the Formeaning Response approach: (i) provides opportunity for students to understand poems and literary devices, (ii) offers an avenue for students to enhance their language proficiency.

**Keywords:** Teaching Poetry, Teaching Literature, Perception of Poetry, Stylistics Approach, Reader Response Approach

### Introduction

It is apparent that students are not enthusiastic when learning poetry, and there are several studies to support the stance. For instance, a study conducted by Ghazali (2008) indicated that almost 70% of the respondents expressed negative attitudes towards poems. Her respondents had claimed that poems are considered challenging due to the use of "archaic and classic language", and that the underlying meaning of poems is hard to comprehend (Ghazali, 2008). There are also studies conducted on higher education students. For example, a study by Sivapalan et al (2017) conducted on 248 engineering students from a private technical university in Malaysia, concluded that engineering students prefer reading short stories rather than novels, plays or poems. Additionally, Adeshir and Shirvani (2015) conducted a study on 63 Engineering students at Islamic Azad University, Iran. The finding of

the study showed that 56% of the students agreed that they had problem reading English poetry while 35% agreed that their problem in reading English poetry is because it has a lot of new words. These studies noted that, students, regardless of their level of education and field of study, possess negative attitude towards poetry. In addition, it is also established that this negative attitude occurs because students perceive poetry as difficult and boring due to their lack of proficiency in English, as well as the challenge in understanding the intended meaning of the poems.

In 2009, Harlan Kellem introduced an integrated approach which he termed as the Formeaning Response Approach. The two approaches that he integrated are the Stylistic approach and Reader Response approach. Both the approaches have their respective advantages. Proponents of the Stylistics approach believe that the approach is beneficial to second language learners because looking at the language components of literary texts will aid students' understanding of the literary texts they read. Some of the studies that lend credence to this belief are (Krishnamurthy, 2012; Arafat, 2000; Van, 2009). In addition, the Stylistics approach is also deemed as beneficial to the students as it can help students improve their language proficiency. Previous studies conducted by Hall (2007); Ahmed (2014); Verma (2015) can corroborate to this notion. In contrast, advocates of the Reader Response Approach strongly believe that increasing students' engagement to the texts they read is crucial. The approach suggests that when students convey their opinion on texts they read and respond to the texts, their interest level will elevate (Rosenblatt, 1938). This is also agreed by Suliman et al (2019) who stated in their paper that the Reader Response approach allows students to be more expressive and consequently gives them the control in learning. Many previous studies are able to corroborate to this notion. Among them are studies by (Iskhak, 2016; Garzon & Castaneda-Pena, 2015; Harfitt & Chu, 2011).

Kellem reckoned that there is a tension between advocates of both these approaches. The tension arises as some researchers believe that analysing the language and style of a poem is important in the EFL context while others feel that personally relating to the themes of the poems can affect readers more positively. Kellem then expressed that there is no need for this dichotomy of what is more important, the language aspect or personal response, to exist. He theorised that these two approaches, the Stylistics and the Reader Response, should be combined. This is because for students who are non-native speakers of English, both understanding the language aspects of poems and expressing their responses of the poems are equally important. Kellem strongly believes that when both stylistic aspects and students' response are being paid attention to, students will not only be able to understand and the linguistic aspects of the poems, but they will also be interested in learning poetry (Kellem, 2009). Hence, this study aims to carry out the classroom activities suggested by Kellem and find out what students experience when learning poetry using the said approach.

## **Literature Review**

### *Students' Negative Attitude Towards Poetry*

There are many previous study that reported on students' lack of interest towards learning poetry. Other than studies by Ghazali (2008); Adeshir and Shirvani (2015); Sivapalan et. al (2017), there are also many other studies that were conducted abroad. Perfect (1999) cited research dated since 1988 that showed the negative attitude that both students and English teachers have towards poetry. Perfect (1999) cited Lockward (1994) who claimed that poetry

is the most challenging genre of literature and many students find them not interesting. Perfect (1999) further added that students are normally “turned off” by poetry mostly due to its figurative language and the difficulty in finding the correct meaning of the poem. A more recent study was conducted in Kenya by (Oriko, 2018). In the study that involves 50 students who are 15 years old, it is found that students indeed have negative attitude towards poetry. In addition, the study concluded that the biggest challenges students face in poetry emanate from the nature of poetic language like imagery and alliteration that poems contain (Oriko, 2018).

Although the number is limited, there are also studies conducted in higher education institution to show students’ negative attitude towards poetry. One of them is a study conducted in Iran. In the study, it is highlighted that students consider poetry as boring and monotonous (Oriko, 2011). Khatib claimed that this is because students regard the words used in poems as difficult, and they are not given the chance to have their own view of the poems. He also emphasised that the current approaches used in the teaching of poetry to be ineffective and unsuccessful, and suggested that new approaches should be experimented to look at the educational and attitudinal impact on students. Another study to portray students’ negative attitude was conducted by (Tevdovska, 2016). According to Tevdovska who conducted the study on 53 undergraduate students of English language and literature, it is established that least number of students stated that they enjoy learning poetry when compared to novels, plays, and short stories. Additionally, the same study highlighted 34 students responded that they feel that poems are difficult to learn (Tevdovska, 2016). Other than that, a study conducted by Rohmadi and Setiawan (2016) on students who studied Poem Appreciation subject in four different universities in Surakarta, Indonesia, reveals that although 72% respondents stated that they like poetry in the questionnaire administered, findings from interviews and observation stated otherwise. It is found that students portray low motivation when learning poetry as compared to other genres (Rohmadi & Setiawan, 2016). Another study is by Nordin and Eng (2017) who investigated 132 students from various faculties of University Teknologi Mara, Kedah. In the study, they found that poetry is the least preferred reading genre. 37% of the respondents answered that they never read poems as compared to novels and short stories where only 8% of the students responded the same.

The studies reviewed in this section concur that students, regardless of their level of education and field of study, possess negative attitude towards poetry. In addition, it is established that this negative attitude occurs because students perceive poetry as difficult and boring due to their lack of proficiency in English, as well as the challenge in understanding the intended meaning of the poems. Hence, theoretically, Kellems’ Formeaning Response approach appears to be ideal as it allows students to analyse a poem linguistically and also provides opportunity for students to have their personal response to the poem. Since there is no published research to describe and test the Formeaning Response Approach as suggested by Harlan Kellem, this study aims at looking at students’ experience when learning poetry using the said approach.

### **Integrating Teaching Approaches Employed in Poetry Classes**

Before looking at the Formeaning Response Approach, it will be valuable to acknowledge other studies that had attempted to integrate teaching models and approaches when

teaching literature. Integrating models or approaches refers to the use of more than one model or approach in order to maximize the impact on students' learning.

To start off, in 2004, Savvidou claimed that the three traditional models by Carter and Long (1991); Cultural, Language, and Personal Growth impact learners in different manner, and therefore, to ensure that learning is at the optimum level, models should be integrated. Savvidou then proposed six stages that incorporate the three models of teaching poetry. Savvidou further explained that by integrating the teaching models, students not only learn other cultures, they also are able to interpret text and understand how language is manipulated. Most importantly, by integrating teaching models, a literary text such as a poem becomes a powerful tool that offers language learners the chance to enhance their communicative and linguistic skills, as well as their knowledge about language.

A similar study that integrates three teaching models of literature was conducted in two universities in Thailand, by (Supaporn, 2015). The experimental study was conducted on 78 university students from two different regions in Thailand and aims to find if integrating teaching models could elevate students' achievement and attitude towards literature. The findings concluded that the achievement score of the experimental groups was significantly higher than the control groups with the effect size of .172, which indicates that integrating models is valuable. In addition, a t-test analysis was conducted and it was reported that the attitude of students from both experimental groups were higher than the control groups as the mean difference obtained were .51 and .66 in both universities. Yimwilai then stressed that the findings of the study depict that integrating teaching models can impact students' achievement, attitude and critical thinking skills. It was also added that each teaching model has its own advantages, but combining models can maximise the effectiveness they have on students (Yimwilai, 2015).

One study that had integrated the Stylistics and Reader Response approach in literature was done by Dhanapal (2010). Dhanapal conducted a study in two schools in Malaysia, one in a rural area, and the other in an urban area. 25 students from each school were chosen as the sample of the study. The study utilises the pre and post-test as well as a CCTS test that Dhanapal had previously developed as the instruments. In the study, Dhanapal (2010) integrated the Stylistics and the Reader Response Approach in the teaching of literature, which is similar to what is proposed by (Kellem, 2009). However, Dhanapal's study focused on looking at whether combining approaches could enhance students' critical and creative thinking skills (CCTS). In the study, Dhanapal highlighted that the difference that the integrated approaches had over the traditional approaches is quite significant. The finding showed that students in the rural school scored 0%-49.3% higher in the post-test than they did in the pre-test, while students from the urban school showed 12%-64% increase in their post-test score. She then concluded that an integrated approach can affect students of both high and low proficiency positively and expressed her belief that integrated approaches could also impact students' academic achievement (Dhanapal, 2010). Since Dhanapal reported that the integration resulted in an increase in students' creative and critical thinking skills, it proves that the integration is indeed beneficial for students.

The studies reviewed in this section support that the approaches employed in the teaching of literature need to be integrated in order to optimise the learning impact on the students. However, these studies were conducted using short stories as the literary text. The Formeaning Response Approach, the approach being proposed in the current study, therefore intends to augment the findings of the previous studies by looking at how integrating the Stylistics and Reader Response Approach could impact the teaching of poetry that is currently perceived negatively by students.

### **The Formeaning Response Approach**

In order to study the experience that students gain when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response approach, it is imperative to understand approach. In 2009, Harlan Kerlem coined the term formeaning (form + meaning) that represents the Stylistics approach and suggested that it should be integrated with the Reader Response approach.

Kellem explained that when learning a genre that has uncommon metaphor, rhyme, and format like poetry, it is important to focus on the language, as improving one's language proficiency is indeed the prime reason why students are learning literature (2009). Kellem suggested that when using the Stylistics approach, the language component should be the major focus, but discussions of meaning are just as important. The response approach component, which is based on the Reader Response theory, is recommended to be incorporated to allow students to relate the poems that they read to their own personal experience in order to make sense of the poems. Kellem believes that by combining the Stylistics and the Reader-Response approach, poetry, which is generally perceived as boring and difficult, will be regarded as interesting and relevant to students. It is believed that both pleasure and understanding can take place when this integrated approach is used in the teaching of poetry (Kellem, 2009).

In addition, Kellem listed several classrooms activities that can be carried out using the Formeaning Response Approach. Kellem divided the activities into three groups, the form and meaning activities, response activities, and formeaning response activities. The activities were divided into three categories Formeaning, Response, and Formeaning Response activities. Among the activities suggested were listening cloze, listing, alternative word exercise, drawing and role-play. Kellem reminded that the activities need to be adjusted according to students' proficiency level and scaffolding should be provided whenever necessary. If the activities using this integrated approach can be implemented in studying poetry, it is believed that students will be more familiar with the language of poems as they will use linguistic evidence to discuss the poem, and relay the ideas presented in the poems with their own lives and experience (Kellem, 2009).

The current study therefore aims to delve on students' experiences when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach. It seeks to find how students can benefit from the approach, how the approach is appealing to them, and subsequently identify if the approach is able to increase their motivation towards learning poetry.



**Methodology***Research Design*

There are several approaches to qualitative studies, and a case study is among them. In this study, the unit of analysis, or the case, is the teaching of poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach. There are three strategies of case study: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive (Yin, 2003). Yin added that in exploratory studies, the research questions are “what” questions. This is in line with the current study’s research question: “What do students experience when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response approach?” Fraenkle and Wallen (2009) added that the exploratory strategy is to be used when studying “little-known phenomenon” in-depth. This fits the current study as the study investigates students’ experience when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach. To date, there are limited studies that have looked into students’ perception, reaction or any other aspect of the Formeaning Response Approach. This makes the approach the “little-known phenomenon”. Therefore, the phenomenon for this study, the Formeaning Response Approach, needs to be explored, described, communicated and interpreted since currently there is limited findings pertaining to the approach. According to Creswell (2009), data collection in case studies often includes interviews with participants. Creswell also added that data in forms other than interviews can also be collected, and these data can be in forms of journals, observations, art, poetry and music 2009. In line with Creswell’s suggestion and in order to achieve triangulation, the three instruments for data collection for this study are researcher’s reflective journals (aided by video and audio recordings of lessons), students’ reflective journals, and online interviews with the participants.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

Houghton et al (2015) in their paper, *Qualitative case study data analysis: an example from practice*, wrote that one of the most influential data analysis procedures in case studies was developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) and the procedure is based on the cognitive processes of qualitative analysis strategies introduced by (Morse, 1994). Houghton et al (2015), studied the procedure and elaborated it. There are four stages proposed by Houghton et al.: comprehending, synthesising, theorising, and recontextualising. The four stages are adopted in the current study. Analysis of data was done using the Atlas.ti.

**Stage One (Comprehending)**

This stage is conducted to “uncover and develop concepts. As recommended by Stake (1995), broad pre-established codes are created at this stage. After reviewing studies on Stylistics and Reader Response approach, it was found that Stylistics approach: (i) helps students understand poetry (Amao, 2013; Inyang, 2009; Buckledee, 2002), (ii) increases their interest towards poetry (Krishnamurthy, 2012; Van, 2009; Arafat, 2000) , and (iii) improves students’ language proficiency (Verma, 2015; Ahmad, 2014; Hall, 2007). On the other hand, studies of Reader Response approach indicated that the approach: (iv) engages students to texts they read (Iskhak, 2016; Garzon & Castaneda-Pena, 2015; Harfitt & Chu, 2011; Mitchell, 1993), and (v) improves students’ creativity in writing (Meera&Sebastian, 2014). Items (ii) and (iv) are similar in which both approaches increase students’ interest. Therefore, at the initial stage, four codes based on the preceding findings of literature review were created on Atlas.ti. The codes are: (i) increase understanding, (ii) improve language proficiency, (iii) elevate interest, and (iv) creativity.

### **Stage Two (Synthesising)**

At this stage, raw data obtained in the study was perused several times to gauge a sense of feeling of the case. Extracts from raw data that are relevant to the codes stated were highlighted (pattern coding). This was done to all three primary documents. Categories were created. The categories were labelled with terms based on the actual words by the participants. The highlighted extracts were then assigned to their respective codes. This was done through the drop-down button in Atlas.ti and the analysis was done deductively as the codes were preexisting. The extracts were reread, and key summaries were written (memoing).

**Stage Three (Theorising)** The theorising stage is described as the stage where “a comprehensive and coherent account of the data” is written after examining the link or relationship between the identified categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During this third stage, reflections on the lessons and her understanding of Formeaning Response Approach. The reflection of the lessons and knowledge on the Formeaning Response Approach were used to answer the research questions. Themes were then formulated. The act of challenging data happens when the researcher cross checks data with the themes to ensure that the themes do reflect the data obtained.

### **Stage Four (Recontextualising)**

Morse (1994) described this stage as the stage for researcher to sharpen their study by comparing their findings to previous research. In terms of the current study, the comparison of findings cannot be conducted directly as there are limited studies involving the Formeaning Response Approach. However, comparison against the notion stated by Harlan Kellem, and studies involving the Stylistics and Reader Response Approach were conducted.

### **Data Analysis and Result**

*Research Question 1: What do students experience when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach?*

Theme 1: Students experience an elevated interest in poetry lessons.

The first theme that emerges from data analysis is the students experience elevated interest in lessons. The data reviewed shows that a 100%, or all 28 respondents have indicated in their journals and online interview that learning poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach has allowed them to experience elevated interest in lessons. Further investigation reveals that the elevated interest happens because the students enjoy the ability to give unrestricted responses and room to express themselves. When analysing data from all three instruments, it is found that the theme emerges in six of the activities conducted. Additionally, it is also gathered that the students experience elevated interest due to the ability to give unrestricted responses via activities alternative word exercise, discussion (think of what ‘they’ in the poem refers to), write a stanza as a response to the poem, and true or false questions. On the other hand, alternative word exercise, discussion (sharing about a sad incident in your life), and discussion of a video of an interpretation of a poem have allowed the students to experience elevated interest in the lessons as the activities allow them to express themselves. In the researcher’s reflective journal, it is written that the researcher heard many students saying the phrase “*I think...*” and “*...because...*” during the activity. The researcher stated that it illustrates that they are good at rationalising their answers. Other than that, the researcher wrote that laughter and giggles were heard when they were rationalising the answers which

depicts that they are having fun at the same time. The data from the second instrument, the students' journals are also able to support the findings from the first instrument. First of all, it is found that 82% of the respondents have indicated in their journals that their learning becomes more interesting when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach. Analysis of the journals reveals that the word "fun" appears 19 times ( $f=43.1$ ) while the word "interesting" appears 15 times ( $f=34.0$ ) in their journals when they were reflecting on the above-mentioned activities. Additionally, the students have related the word "fun" and "interesting" to the phrase "no right or wrong answers".

Students positive attitude towards the lesson could also be seen from the third instrument, the online interview. Some of students' responses worth noting are:

*Respondent 3: My opinion for the activity Type B is fun and flexible. I like this the most. It is like give us a chance to say what we want to say.*

*Respondent 17: It become interesting as we can give our own opinion as far as we can justify.*

*Respondent 24: Every week, our lessons have different and fun activities. our lecturer wants us to express our own feelings or interpretation of the poem, rather than just studying it.*

From the findings above, it can be clearly seen that students enjoyed the lessons and showed increased motivation when learning poetry.

*Research Question 2 : How the Formeaning Response approach contributes to students' learning of poetry*

Theme 1 : This approach provides opportunity for students to understand poems and literary devices.

Overall, from the first instrument, it is found that the theme appears in all five journals that were written throughout the study. A few excerpts can highlight that the approach provided opportunity for understanding of poems. For instance, when the students were asked to listen to a song that has a similar theme to the poem they learnt, the researcher wrote in her journal that she felt that the students were able to tell the similarity of the theme for both the poem and the song. This is because the answers that they gave were correct; that both the poem and the song talked about how a virtuous soul is immortal. Next, from the second instrument, students' journals, it is found that 79.3% of the respondents indicated in their reflections that they feel that the lessons have helped them understand poems and literary devices. In the students' journals, when responding about these activities, the word 'understand' appears 21 times ( $f=56.7$ ). In addition, students also used words like 'meaningful' and 'learned' to show that the activities provide opportunity for them to understand the poems. Among the entries that are worth noting are:

*Respondent 17: It is more fun here to learn poem by listening to a song that brought the message from the poem we are going to learn. This is to improve our understanding to [of] the poem that [we are] going to learn.*

*Respondent 19: Watching videos that goes [go] with our learning materials are a great way of making us understand more, because we can get the whole picture better.*

Finally, from the third instrument, the online interview, 86% of the respondents stated the same. For example, when responding to question number 8, 'Overall, what did you learn from



our lessons? 64% of the respondents' answers portrayed that the approach helps them understand of poetry and literary elements. Some of the answers are:

Respondent 5: *From our lessons, I learnt how to understand the poem by myself.*

Respondent 6: *I learned about the elements in poetry such as assonance, onomatopoeia, and many more. And I also learned how to understand poetry.*

Theme 2: This approach offers an avenue for students to enhance their language proficiency. Analysis of the instruments reveals that the second theme appears when analysing data involving five of the activities employed. The activities are: listening cloze, listing (parts of speech), listing (tenses), listing (nouns), and alternative words exercise. The students view listening cloze activity as being able to help them improve their listening skills, listing (parts of speech) and listing (tenses) helped them improve their knowledge in grammar, listing (nouns) and alternative word exercise allow them to expand their vocabulary acquisition. Overall, for the first instrument, the theme emerges in all five journals that the researcher wrote. To illustrate, after the listing was carried out, in the researcher's journal, it is stated: *"Many of the groups asked for clarification especially on adverbs. They were confused because the word "so" which is repeatedly used in the poem is an adverb, but they thought that it can also be a conjunction. I then explained how the word in the poem is actually an adverb and not a conjunction. After 15 minutes, I then asked each group to read out the words for each category, I corrected them where necessary. I found that they were able to get the answers correctly."*

In addition, from the analysis of the second instrument, the students' reflective journals, it is found students feel that the Formeaning Response approach has helped them increase their language proficiency especially in grammar, vocabulary and listening. Several excerpts from students' journal to portray this are:

Respondent 12-*Through the activity, I had learned some new vocabulary and how the words to be apply when compared it with the original poem.*

Respondent 23- *For "alternative words, it's good because it made us look up in the dictionary for the difficult words that we never knew...*

Respondent 26-*For me, I think there are more than five nouns that I don't know its meaning. This exercise also improves my vocabulary and understanding of the poem.*

Finally, analysis of the third instrument, the online interview, reveals the theme also emerges in the answers of three of the questions asked. In total, 68% of the respondents' answers portray that the activities have become an avenue for students to enhance their language proficiency. Among the excerpts worth noting are:

Respondent 9-*I learn a lot of new words...my grammar also become good*

Respondent 19- *I think they are very good exercises because they can strengthen our English vocabulary, usage, listening skill and such.*

Hence, it can be established that students experienced elevated interest when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach because the approach allows them to express themselves and their responses are not restricted. Additionally, learning poetry using this approach allows students to understand poems and literary devices, as well as it offers an avenue for students to enhance their language proficiency, especially in listening, grammar and vocabulary.

**Discussion**

The first finding of this study is students experience an elevated interest in poetry lessons, and this is due to this approach allows students to have their own perception of the poem they read, express themselves and that their responses are not regarded as right or wrong. The finding of the current study corroborates with finding from the study conducted by (Alazzi, 2007). Theme 3 from Alazzi's (2007) study "joyful noises" proves that students appreciate the ability to give responses that made the class noisy and that they were surprised that there are no right or wrong answers. Parallel to Alazzi's study, a study conducted by Garzon and Castaneda-Pena (2015) indicates that activities based on the Reader Response Approach were appealing to students as students become more intrinsically involved with the text when they are able to respond to it personally. In the current study, the same pattern is recorded as it is established that students enjoy expressing themselves and it is found that the ability to enjoy themselves have helped established the first theme.

Additionally, the findings of the current study also partially agree with Iskhak's study published in 2016. Iskhak stated that "response-based literature instruction deals with enjoyment, freedom, engagement, and language growth." He also elaborated that the aesthetic experience while reading literary texts that his subjects encounter via Reader Response approach resulted in their increased participation, motivation, and self-confidence 2016. The current study is only able to concur that using the response-based activities allows students to perceive the approach as enjoyable, and that it gives students freedom to express themselves and increased their participation in lessons. However, the findings of the current study do not indicate that the response-based activities are able to promote language growth, motivation and self-confidence in participants.

The second finding of this study is that students view Formeaning and Formeaning-response based activities as (i) being able to provide them opportunity to understand poems and literary devices, as well as (ii) offer them an avenue to improve their proficiency. This correlates with the notion that Kellem (2009) proposed whereby if form and meaning of words are paid attention to when learning poetry, it can result to improved language skills and understanding. In addition, since Formeaning and Formeaning-response activities derive from the stylistics approach, the findings of the current study are also parallel to several previous studies. Amao (2013) said that by looking at the choice of words, structure, figurative speech, lexical and grammatical pattern of poetry, the intended meaning or message of the poems can be gauged. Another previous study that lends credence to this belief is Buckledee (2002) who claimed that by analysing the language of the poems, students will appreciate the author's artistry and this acts as a foundation for literary appreciation and criticism. This is supported in the current study as it can be seen that students expressed that when they are given the chance to explore the meaning of the words used in the poems, they feel that they understand the poems better.

Other than that, findings of the current study also correspond to findings revealed by Inyang in 2009. In her study, Inyang stated that using the Stylistics approach has significantly improved students' achievement and retention ability in poetry as the approach allows students to learn how to interpret poetry as well as gives them the opportunity to practice their skills in interpreting (2009). In the current study, students' achievement was not tested, however students expressed that Formeaning and Formeaning-response based activities

have helped them interpret poems. Finally, the finding of the current study also correlates with the findings from Ahmad (2014) who found that employing Stylistics based activities helps students improve their grammar, and vocabulary. In his study, Ahmad (2014) also stated that Stylistics based activities can help students improve speaking and writing significantly, however, the findings of the current study is unable corroborate his findings. Instead, the finding of the current study added that students view the Formeaning-based activities as having the potential to improve students' listening skills.

### **Significance of Study**

It is hoped that the findings of this study can benefit teachers when learning poetry is concerned. Firstly, a 'new' approach - the Formeaning Response Approach was tried out in a Malaysian classroom context. Previously, Kellem merely suggested the integrated approach, however this study has tested out the approach, observed students using the approach, and studied their experiences when learning poetry using the Formeaning Response Approach. Secondly, this study confirms that indeed integrating the Stylistics and the Reader Response approach is effective. Students regard the approach as interesting and it has elevated their motivation towards learning poetry. In addition, students also regarded the approach as being beneficial. With this, teachers can employ the approach to deliver more effective poetry lessons. Thirdly, it can also be gauged from this study that students participated actively in the lessons using the Formeaning Response approach and this is because students are allowed to express themselves and their responses were not regarded as right or wrong. Teachers should take this into consideration when planning their poetry lessons. Teachers should not restrict students from relating the poems to their own experience and move away from 'textbook answers'. Perhaps, class participation will increase and poetry will no longer be regarded as a boring and irrelevant.

### **Study Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research**

There are several limitations that were encountered during this study. Firstly, since the sample of the study consists of only 29 students in one particular institution, the findings cannot be generalised to students of other academic institutions in Malaysia. In addition, since the data obtained was largely from reflective journals and online interview, the data depends on how much a participant was willing to share. Therefore, the nature of their information was limited to participants' own perspective and lived experiences. However, this study triangulated data and used other methods like prolonged engagement and member checks to establish validity of the findings. Finally, the approach could only be conducted for five lessons (10 contact hours). This is due to the extensiveness of the syllabus. Only 10 hours can be allocated for teaching poetry as there are other content like short story, drama, and grammar to be covered.

Although this study represents a start for developing a notion that Formeaning Response approach is beneficial to be used when learning poems, further research is necessary. First, more future studies on gaining educator's perspectives of the implementation of the approach needs to be conducted. Next, with the establishment of the positive experience that the Formeaning Response approach has on students provided by the current study, one area of possible future study is to conduct experimental research to test whether the approach can increase students' interest in poetry. On a similar note, another experimental study can be carried out to test the impact of the approach on students' achievement. This can be done

by having students learn poetry using the Formeaning Response approach and achievement test or pre and post-test are given to them to gauge the impact of the approach on students' achievement. Other than that, the researcher would also like to suggest that a longitudinal study involving the Formeaning Response approach is carried out. Due to the limitation of this study, the lessons were only carried out five times. Conducting a longitudinal study might be able to reveal other advantages or disadvantages that the approach has.

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