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Rhyme and Reason in Language Acquisition: Incorporating Poetry into the ESL Classroom

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RHYME AND REASON IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: INCORPORATING POETRY INTO THE ESL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Utah is seeing a rapid increase in K-12 students whose native language is not English. With this increase, teachers face the challenge of finding new and effective teaching methods to reach their ESL (English as a Second Language) students. This research explores the study of poetry as an instrument to improve ESL students' pronunciation of English. When read out loud, poetry can be an exercise in pronouncing consonant sounds (from alliteration), decoding vowel sounds (from rhyme), and acquiring the natural speech rhythm of the English language (from meter). Poetry was selected not only because of its exaggerated sound elements (alliteration, rhyme, and meter) but also because of it is a comfortable and approachable text for ESL students to study. During a six-week study with an ESL student, I found to be very beneficial in my subject's pronunciation of English. This case study has shown poetry to be successful for this individual; therefore, there is a need for further research in this subject.

Preface

This project evolved from merging two passions of my life: poetry and teaching ESL. I've loved reading, studying, and writing poetry from a very young age and have been drawn to the poetic devices of rhyme, meter, and alliteration since I can remember. Through my study of poetry in the English Department at Utah State University, I began to realize that poetic devices are simply naturally occurring language elements that are exaggerated and manipulated by the poet. I became more aware of sound devices in poetry and the way they affected the reader.

During my junior year of college, I acted as a tutor in an ESL class to fulfill a requirement for my Ethnic Literacy course. It was during this experience that I developed an interest in and passion for teaching ELLs (English Language Learners). That passion led me to take on ESL teaching as a minor. I also added to my experiences by working with international students in the Intensive English Language Institute at USU.

As I began brainstorming possible topics for my thesis, I knew I wanted to focus either on poetry or teaching ESL. I despised the redundant, boring drills that I'd seen teachers use to teach English pronunciation. I felt that poetry could serve the same purpose in an interesting way and that it could be an effective tool in an ESL classroom due to the exaggerated and frequently occurring poetic devices. In my opinion, the same practice that occurs in ten pronunciation drills could also occur in a single poem. In addition, poetry would offer an alternative to traditional grammar books or worksheets. I felt that the variety of poetry would help interest and involve students in a way that textbooks could not.

My thesis follows the journey I took in learning about teaching English as a Second Language, beginning with a study of current language acquisitions. Next, I narrow my study to strategies for teaching pronunciation and then move on to the benefits and advantages of using poetry in an ESL classroom. I end with the methods, results, and conclusions of my field research, a six-week case study using poetry to improve pronunciation skills.

The first chapter is mainly a review of literature in the field of second language acquisition which I used as a foundation for my study and research. I focus on two of Stephen Krashen's language acquisition hypotheses: the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. The input hypothesis describes how students move from one level of competency to the next, while the affective filter hypothesis discusses how affective elements such as stress or anxiety can discourage language acquisition.

As I mentioned earlier, Chapter 2 zeros in on the specific topic of second language pronunciation instruction. Chapter 2 extends the theories of Chapter 1 into pronunciation teaching strategies, particularly those focused on teaching speech rhythm. It discusses solutions to lower the affective filter, as well as ways to avoid teaching pronunciation in isolation. This chapter also discusses techniques to incorporate Total Physical Response (TPR) to teach pronunciation.

Chapter 3 moves on to the advantages of using poetry as a text for ESL students. I explain how poetry meets both of Krashen's hypotheses by providing comprehensible input and lowering the affective filter. I also discuss how the sound devices of poetry can help students acquire pronunciation skills. I use specific examples from several poems to demonstrate my hypothesis.

I end with the methods and results of my field research. I worked one-on-one with an ESL student from a local middle school for six weeks. During this period I introduced this individual to poetry that I believed could help her with her pronunciation. I found poetry to be a successful tool not only to teach pronunciation but also to keep this student engaged and interested in learning. My results are specific to this particular student; therefore, there is a need for further more extensive research in this area.

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Language Acquisition Theories

As second language teachers, we need "to know how the mind works, how children learn, how language works, what dynamics apply, who said what and why, so that we bring some of the science of teaching to our very worthy enthusiasm about programs" (Hedley 199) such as whole language, natural approach, and comprehensible input. This is why background knowledge of second language teaching approaches is vital to each teacher. Current theories and approaches to teaching English as a second language include whole language and the natural approach along with the input and affective filter hypotheses.

Through critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of previous teaching approaches, the Neurolinguistic Method emerged. Characteristics of this method in action are ample opportunities for students to express themselves, student decision-making power within the classroom, and relaxed learning environments where students can learn without anxiety (Danesi 14-15). The fairly recent Neurolinguistic Method includes a study of the brain in relation to current teaching approaches in the field of language learning. It centers around the Modal Flow Principle which states, "New notions and structures are learned more efficiently when the learner's brain is allowed to process it in terms of an R-Mode (experiential) to L-Mode (analytical) 'flow'" (Danesi 50).

According to Marcel Danesi, language fluency is the result of both language acquisition and language learning. The difference between acquisition and learning can be confusing. Stephen Krashen states that learning is more traditional, with grammar exercises and structure, while acquisition is a natural, subconscious process (*Principles and Practice* 10). According to Krashen, "the goal of our pedagogy should be to encourage acquisition." (*Principles and Practice* 20). Although the argument for language acquisition is strong—it

mimics the process of first language acquisition in young children—language learning can be beneficial as well.

Language learning, as argued by Theodore Higgs, is more beneficial to the adult learner. It focuses on rules and structure which adults find useful and helpful (Higgs 13). While both sides of the learning-acquisition debate have their own strengths, the Modal Flow Principle combines them both. Essential to effective learning is the order of the flow: R-Mode to L-Mode. R-Mode refers to functions that primarily take place in the right hemisphere but activate other areas of the brain as well. L-Mode is the same with the left-hemisphere (Danesi 50). The R-Mode stage involves experiential forms of learning such as watching a demonstration, listening to a story, or singing a song (Danesi 51). Language acquisition is also labeled an R-Mode function. When acquisition and other R-Mode functions initiate learning, they "open the gates" for L-Mode functions (learning rules of grammar, how to conjugate verbs) to sink in and result in the Intermodal stage where students use previously learned skills to complete a new task.(Danesi 54).

Stephen Krashen's Five Hypotheses for Language Acquisition can be defined as R-Mode functions. The first, which I've already discussed, argues the difference between language acquisition and language learning. According to Krashen, "acquisition is central and learning more peripheral" (*Principles and Practice* 20). Though Krashen leans toward acquisition as the more vital of the two, he still stresses the need for learning at certain times which I will discuss later.

The next two hypotheses are the natural order hypothesis and the monitor hypothesis. Because neither of these two directly relates to my thesis, I will discuss them only briefly. The natural order hypothesis suggests that there is a pattern to the order in which language is

acquired. Though the order varies slightly between first language and second language learners, it is still quite predictable in most students (*Principles and Practice* 12).

The monitor hypothesis states that language learners have a built-in monitor which auto-corrects their speech. Acquisition results in language fluency; however, learning creates in the student the internal monitor. It is this monitor which checks for errors in the acquired language (*Principles and Practice* 15). From observations in the real world, it is easy to see the truth in this theory. When a child learns his/her home language, it is usually through acquisition. The grammar of the home language may not correlate with the grammar of standard English in the beginning. As the child grows older and attends school, he/she begins to learn the grammatical structures and rules of the standard language. Now the child is equipped with both learning and acquisition. The child mostly depends on what he/she has learned through acquisition; however, the rules and structures the child has gathered through learning begin to come into play. As the child speaks, the knowledge he has learned filters through the acquired language, adjusting verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and such.

This is the important role language learning plays in second language acquisition. According to several theorists, language acquisition (R-Mode) must come first and language learning (L-Mode) second in order to have successful, effective learning. Krashen also warns that the internal monitor does not always function effectively. Some students overuse the monitor, always referring to dictionaries and grammar books. Some underuse the monitor, haphazardly throwing together sentences. The ideal usage, however, is a balance between the two (*Principles and Practice* 18-20).

The next hypothesis, the input hypothesis, has become the cornerstone of many teaching approaches. Krashen even states that it "may be the single most important concept

in second language theory today" (*Principles and Practice* 9). The input hypothesis discusses how a learner moves from one level of competency to the next. To illustrate his findings, Krashen uses the formula: $i + 1$. In this formula, i represents the student's current level of competence and knowledge and $i + 1$ represents the next level of competence (Principles and Practice 20-21).

The input hypothesis suggests that acquisition occurs when the learner strives for meaning first and learns structure as a result. This, once again, relates back to the Modal Flow Principle. Krashen divides the input hypothesis into four parts:

1) The input hypothesis relates to acquisition, not learning

2) We acquire by understanding language that contains structure a bit beyond our current level of competence ($i + 1$)

3) When communication is successful, when the input is understood and there is enough of it, $i + 1$ will be provided automatically

4) Production ability emerges. It is not taught directly

(*Principles and Practice* 21-22).

The first two parts of the input hypothesis broadly describe its goal. The input hypothesis has nothing to do with conjugating verbs, diagramming sentences, or any other parts of language learning. It strictly deals with the way in which language is acquired or "picked up." Each student is an individual; therefore, his/her "levels of competence" differ from others. Some learn quicker than others. Some are on a higher level than others. However, all students learn the same way—through understanding language though it contains some structure that is above their heads. The way that students meet this challenge is by using what they have already acquired to fill in the gaps.

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The third part of the input hypothesis states that $i + 1$ is provided automatically when communication is successful. This does not mean that this section can be neglected since it occurs naturally. Rather, second language teachers need to focus on creating environments and opportunities that are rich in input. The input has special criteria. It needs to be understood or comprehensible to the student. It may not be difficult for a teacher to create comprehensible input for one student, but in a class of 15-20 students, all at different levels, this can be an impossible task.

Krashen's solution to this is to incorporate "rough-tuned" instruction as opposed to "fine-tuned" (*Principles and Practice* 22-23). Rough-tuned instruction is simply the opposite of fine-tuned instruction. Rather than specifically targeting each student's individual needs, rough-tuned instruction is a bit more flexible. Though it isn't specific to each student, rough-tuned instruction becomes more complex as the learner's competence increases. This blanket instruction allows students of different levels to extract whatever input is comprehensible to them and stretch to the next level of competency.

The fourth and final part of the input hypothesis states that production is not taught directly but emerges on its own. The key to this section is that fluency cannot be rushed or forced. Every learner has a different timetable of production. Some second language students may be in the "silent stage," meaning they have not yet produced the target language verbally. The silent stage varies from student to student; however, it is important to remember that learners in this stage are still learning. When students do not produce the target language in (what we feel is) a normal amount of time, it is natural to feel that they aren't motivated or putting forth enough effort. However, fluency emerges over time on its

own and the best way to teach speaking "is simply to provide comprehensible input" (*Principles and Practice* 22).

The last of Krashen's hypotheses, and the one I find most valuable, is the affective filter hypothesis. This hypothesis "states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process" (Principles and Practice 30). Essentially, affective or emotional elements can create barriers for second language learners. "Even if [students] understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition" (*Principles and Practice* 31). Some affective barriers include anxiety, low self-confidence, low motivation, poor self-image, anger, frustration, and nervousness. Many native English speakers face these affective elements in school everyday. One can only imagine the intensity these elements must take on to ESL students.

In this hypothesis, the affective elements act as a filter of input. The more affective elements, the higher and thicker the filter. A high affective filter results in less input reaching the language acquisition part of the brain. Therefore, a low affective filter is desirable in second language classrooms. Teachers can lower the affective filter by creating a calm atmosphere in their classrooms. They give students ample time to learn without forcing, drilling, or putting students on the spot. "The effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation" (*Principles and Practice* 32).

Background knowledge of these hypotheses is essential to understanding two important teaching approaches: the natural approach and whole language approach. According to Krashen and Terrell, the goal of the natural approach is to gain communication

skills (*The Natural Approach* 58). Incorporating both the affective filter and the input hypotheses into the natural approach can lead to this goal.

> The Affective Filter hypothesis along with the Input hypothesis, imply that effective classroom input must be interesting. This is easier said than done, of course. The necessity of interesting input is founded on good theoretical reasons. We want students to be concerned with the message, not with the form, in order to bring their filters down. (*The Natural Approach* 56).

Input in the classroom can come from social interactions, teacher instruction, or visual aids. Reading, if it's comprehensible to the reader, can be an additional source of input. There are two requirements for selecting texts to provide input. The first is that the text needs to be at an appropriate level of complexity. The second, but equally important, is that the text needs to be interesting (*The Natural Approach* 131-132). The mistake that many instructors make is oversimplifying readings. They select texts that have such simple vocabulary that they do not challenge the reader. Krashen and Terrell advise that "readers can understand passages that contain syntactic structures that are 'over their heads,' or well beyond their $i + 1$" (*The Natural Approach* 133). Appropriate texts challenge the student's $i + 1$. They contain familiar vocabulary that gives context for a few unfamiliar words. Carefully chosen texts can create comprehensive input in a natural, real world way (*The Natural Approach* 132).

In studying the whole language approach, it is obvious that it borrows heavily from the natural approach. Specifically, it draws upon the affective filter and input hypotheses. Krashen states that whole language refers to the "application of the comprehension hypothesis to early literacy" (*Three Arguments* 26). In the whole language approach,

students are given substantial amounts of comprehensible input from teachers who incorporate context into language learning. Whole language involves real, relevant, functional language that students will encounter naturally. Language is viewed as both personal and social. "It's driven from the inside by the need to communicate and shaped from the outside toward the norms of society" (Goodman 26). Most importantly, whole language is whole. It is not just words and sounds of letters. It's the relationship of words, sentences, meaning, and context.

Because language itself is social, it should be taught in social settings (Hedley 187). Rather than teach from grammar books and worksheets, whole language stresses the importance of teaching language through its social contexts. Teachers can promote the social nature of literacy by facilitating discussion and conversation (Carrasquillo 15). Conversation provides natural input and helps the students learn how to use language in real world situations. As a result, the students become more fluent in their second language.

Though social activities create a context-rich learning environment, "the core of whole language is providing children with interesting texts and helping them understand these texts" (*Three Arguments* 2). As Krashen and Terrell stated in their earlier text, *The Natural Approach*, texts and literature are a natural source of comprehensible input (*The Natural Approach* 131). Whole language classrooms use literature as often as possible (Carrasquillo 12) because it provides input and lowers the affective filter.

Earlier, I've discussed how texts and literature are a natural form of comprehensible input and can challenge the student's $i + 1$. Literature, if it's carefully chosen, is also an effective way to lower the affective filter in a classroom. As was stated earlier, Krashen and Terrell recommend that the literature be at an appropriate level of complexity and be

interesting. Along with this, Hedley suggests that students select their own texts (Hedley 187). When students choose texts, it ensures a high level of interest. Having a choice gives students power in the classroom and results in their taking ownership of their education. Another suggestion by Hedley is that the texts have obvious, real-world purposes (187). The more relevant the material, the more important it seems to the student, which also increases student interest. By allowing students to choose texts, a second language teacher can significantly lower the affective filter in his/her classroom.

Through a careful study of current second language teaching approaches, I've found more similarities than differences. The natural and whole language approaches, Krashen's five hypotheses, and the Modal Flow Principle are all related. They are connected into interweaving web. The affective filter hypothesis strengthens the Modal Flow Principle, which helps us understand the acquisition-learning distinction, upon which the input hypothesis was founded. There are endless possibilities of connecting these approaches and principles. They all support each other. Having a knowledge of these approaches and how to implement them can help any teacher create the best learning environment possible for second language learners.

Strategies for Teaching Pronunciation

The linguistic systems of second language learners can be separated into three parts: native language, interlanguage, and target language. While the native language and target language remain stable and fixed, the interlanguge system changes and shifts. The interlanguage system acts as a bridge between the student's native language and English, in the case of ESL students. The interlanguage evolves as the student's approximations more closely match English (Tarone 325). While there are many components in interlanguage that lead students to their target language, one of the most difficult to acquire is pronunciation.

Native-like pronunciation may be impossible for ESL students to attain. In fact, "perfect pronunciation" of the English language cannot be defined due to several accepted and comprehensible dialects. However, intelligible target language pronunciation is vital to communication. It is important to teach pronunciation (at the proper time) regardless of difficulties that may arise. Instructors may find that pronunciation instruction raises the affective filter and makes it difficult for learning to take place. They might also discover that students have difficulties keeping their pronunciation and speech consistent with the grammar they have learned. This is usually a result of teaching pronunciation in isolation from other linguistic elements. Finally, students may find the natural speech rhythm of English conflicts with their native language's rhythm, resulting in choppy or unintelligible speech. Though there may be hurdles along the way, ESL instructors can help their students to rise above stumbling blocks and find success in comprehensible English pronunciation.

Though pronunciation does make a difference in communication, the Natural Approach discourages direct pronunciation instruction, especially in the early stages of second language acquisition (The Natural Approach 90). Language learners have a lot to think about when beginning second language acquisition. They need to acquire new

vocabulary, grammar rules, and syntactic elements in addition to intelligible pronunciation. Though comprehensible pronunciation is important, other linguistic features should take precedence. In the early stages, excessive pronunciation correction may discourage students from speaking aloud, raising the affective filter and hindering language acquisition. However, once students build a foundation and feel comfortable with the target language, pronunciation instruction can begin. My thesis will therefore focus on pronunciation instruction with intermediate or advanced ESL students.

Similar to the Natural Approach methodology, Morley believes that ESL teachers should not put great focus on pronunciation. In fact, she believes that "perfect pronunciation" is an unattainable goal for most students and should not be stressed by teachers. She writes that "there is a widely held consensus that few persons, especially those who learn to speak a second language after the age of puberty, can ever achieve native-like pronunciation in that second language" (Morley 498). Morley identifies an internal conflict in second language teaching. If native-like pronunciation is nearly impossible for most students, why teach it? While native-like pronunciation "is *not* a necessary condition for comprehensible output" (Morley 498), intelligible pronunciation is. ESL instructors should incorporate pronunciation instruction in their teaching with intelligible, rather than perfect, pronunciation as the goal.

As I mentioned earlier, there are several obstacles to overcome in acquiring intelligible target language pronunciation. The affective states of students directly relate to their success in pronunciation. When the affective filter is low, students learn and progress. However, a high affective filter due to stress, anxiety or resistance to the target language results in discouragement and disappointment. Murphy reflects that student tension and

frustration ultimately leads to poor performance. Poor performance leads to more tension and frustration, and the students are stuck in a downward spiral (Murphy 58). In addition to these affective obstacles, resistance to the target language is also detrimental to pronunciation learning. Students, consciously or subconsciously, may feel a strong loyalty to their native language and an opposition to English.

Another stumbling block in second language acquisition involves a conflict between what Tarone describes as "language units" and "speech units" within the student. Language units are defined as the linguistic rules or grammar of a language, while the speech units are the communicative acts in a given language. Tarone believes that students learning a second language feel a tension between the grammar rules they have learned and their ability to speak in the target language. They want to communicate but feel pressure to apply perfect grammar to their speech. The conflict between speech and language results in "unnatural speech rhythm, insertion of schwa, insertion of glottal stops, failure to blend sounds across word boundaries, and improper juncture" (Tarone 328).

A natural speech rhythm is at the heart of intelligible pronunciation, yet many students have difficulties mastering the suprasegmental features of their target language. Each language has two types of vocal sounds: segmental phonemes and suprasegmental elements. Segmental phonemes include the sounds of consonants and vowels in the target language. Suprasegmental features include the stress and intonation of words or phrases (Llamzon 30). Segmental phonemes tend to be the first to be acquired. Though there are variations and exceptions to rules, vowels and consonants are predictable. Even when a student has mastered the segmental phonemes of the target language, he/she may still need mastery of suprasegmental features in order to be understood. This aspect of second

language pronunciation may be difficult to acquire because there many subtle stress changes that alter the meaning of a word or phrase. For example: the definition of "produce" changes based on where the stress is placed. Stress on the first makes "produce" a noun, while stress on the second syllable changes "produce" into a verb. The segmental phonemes remain the same, but the suprasegmental elements change the meaning of the word.

Along with stress and intonation, another aspect of suprasegmental features is rhythm, which Walker finds to be "overlooked in English instruction" (Walker 98). She believes that natural speech rhythm is essential in communication and is a major hurdle for ESL students to overcome. The conflict comes in "dissimilar rhythmic expectations" of language learners. ESL students have specific rhythm patterns ingrained in their native language. Depending on their native languages, these patterns may be vastly different from English rhythm.

As I discussed earlier, one of the main obstacles to overcome in an ESL classroom is a high affective filter. Students may have a variety of affective barriers that may keep them from effectively acquiring a second language. The goal of the teacher is to create a comfortable classroom environment where the affective filter may be lowered. The classroom environment must be supportive and comfortable in order to achieve maximum learning. This includes both teacher-student and student-student interactions (Morley 505). Providing support as a teacher may not be a difficult task, but fostering supportive student interactions may be a challenge. The ESL teacher needs to implement activities where the students can develop trust and confidence in one another. This may be a slow process, as true confidence cannot be rushed, but it is essential in lowering the affective filter in the classroom.

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Another key to lowering the affective filter is being sensitive when correcting student errors. Students need to practice speaking English in order to improve their pronunciation. Inevitably, students will make errors, and they'll need to have corrective feedback to learn from their mistakes and improve. However, there will be many, many errors, and teachers should constantly consider when, how, and whether to correct the student (Perish 312). Not every mistake needs to be corrected, but, when necessary, "correction can be given individually without impatience or asperity, regardless of how recurrent the problem may be" (Perish 314). Correction is something ESL teachers need to consider seriously and sensitively. "Overcorrecting can discourage a student and interrupting a class to correct an individual student can embarrass him" (Llamzon 44). Both discouragement and embarrassment hinders the ESL student and is counterproductive to the end goal.

In addition to embarrassment and self-consciousness, resistance to the target language raises the affective filter in an ESL classroom. According to Pennington and Richards, ESL students should gradually reduce the first language influences in their pronunciation of English. This is vital for intelligible communication with native English speakers. However, it is not necessary that students rid themselves completely of their native languages (Pennington 219). Some students may feel resistant toward speaking English. They may feel that they are abandoning their native languages and cultures by learning English. Teachers should be aware of this possible conflict and demonstrate to the students that bilingualism does not necessarily mean abandoning one culture for another. As was mentioned earlier in this paper, native-like English pronunciation may not be possible for many ESL students; yet, they can still speak comprehensible English. This should be

explained and demonstrated by the ESL teacher—students can retain some of their native language characteristics while speaking English. Though this is true, students still need to learn and practice English pronunciation in order to be understood while speaking English.

The second main obstacle in teaching pronunciation that I mentioned earlier is isolation teaching. Tarone described how teaching pronunciation in isolation results in a conflict between language (grammar and rules) and speech (communication) within a student. Her solution to the problem is simple: she discourages teachers from teaching pronunciation in isolation (Tarone 330). But how do ESL teachers go about doing that? Perish offers a method for incorporating pronunciation into other aspects of language learning. He states that "everything the teacher does co-involves pronunciation" (Perish 312). He believes that every moment in the ESL classroom is an opportunity to study and practice pronunciation. Whether the teacher is directly teaching or simply engaging in casual conversation with students, he/she is demonstrating proper pronunciation. The teacher should be aware of this and, consequently, should keep his/her language consistent. The teacher can also tell the students that an opportunity to improve pronunciation is always present. They should also be aware of the instructor's example of pronunciation.

Recent research has led educators to view pronunciation as a "fundamental part of the process by which we communicate" (Pennington 208). Something so central to communication ought to be practiced often in an ESL classroom. Rather than with drills and exercises, instructors should help their students learn pronunciation through natural instances. Conversation with other students in the class is a good method of incorporating comprehensible pronunciation in the classroom in a natural way. Reading passages aloud and discussing them in small groups is also another way of practicing.

To strengthen ESL students' speech rhythm, there are a variety of methods an instructor can choose from. One way of teaching and learning correct speech rhythm is through repetition. "Imitation is the key to developing a 'sync-sense'" which Walker believes to be crucial in ESL students' English pronunciation (Walker 99). She believes that when students focus on the rhythm of the target language, they progress and improve their pronunciation. She suggests exercises such as chanting together as a class or physically tapping the rhythm of a phrase. According to her article, "this immersion in imitation, with synchrony as its goal, ultimately fosters fluency" (Walker 99). While I don't agree completely with this argument, there is an aspect of it that I find interesting. I feel that suggestion of physically moving to the rhythm of the target language is a good one. It incorporates the Total Physical Response into pronunciation instruction.

James Asher, the founder of the Total Physical Response, found that beginning second language learners did more listening than speaking. Just as young children communicate with actions before their speech develops, Asher believed that second language learners could communicate with actions (Brown 107). In what would normally be a high-anxiety environment, Total Physical Response, or TPR, gives students the opportunity to communicate. In a TPR classroom, the teacher "gradually introduces commands, acting them out as she says them" (Herrell 65). Over a period of time, the teacher fades out his/her actions and gives commands to which the students respond nonverbally. The nonverbal response of the student does two things. First, it encourages the student to listen carefully to the teacher's instructions, watching the demonstrations to understand the words. Second, it is a way for the student to show that he/she understands the message being presented.

In my research I took a different approach to incorporating TPR. Rather than having the students respond to a command, they physically respond to the rhythm of the poem by tapping or moving to the beat. Especially when the students are equipped with texts rich in rhythm, which I will discuss later in my paper, tapping to the rhythm may help them "feel out" and acquire its natural flow.

Morley feels that "pronunciation and speech instruction must go far beyond imitation." She suggests three categories of practice activities that move past repetition and imitation. These are: 1. dependent and imitative, 2. rehearsed and self-practiced, and 3. extemporaneous speaking (Morley 505). For the purposes of my research, I'll focus on the first two categories. The dependent and imitative category of exercises occurs in the early stages of target language speech and should be used only when necessary. These exercises are fairly simple and basic. The students listen to a word or phrase and repeat it. Though this is a temporary stage and the end goal is extemporaneous speaking exercises, the dependent and imitative category is necessary for beginner speakers (Morley 509).

Once speakers have a basic understanding of pronunciation, they move on to the next category—rehearsed and self-practiced. In this category, the students are much more independent though they do have guidance from the teacher. Most exercises consist of the students rehearsing, practicing, and preparing on their own for a group reading (Morley 509). This lowers the affective filter because it allows students to prepare before they read aloud. Through the rehearsed and self-practiced category of exercises, students begin to find the natural "feel" of target language pronunciation while being guided by the instructor and given enough time to prepare.

Just as we should move beyond imitation in pronunciation instruction, we should also move beyond limiting pronunciation exercises to the ears and mouth. "Training the eye, along with the ear, not only to recognize but to anticipate common phonological processes such as...phonetic syllabification, stress patterns, and the rhythm of spoken English is beneficial for many learners" (Murphy 60). Students must practice speaking in their target language in order to improve their pronunciation; however, incorporating other aspects of language acquisition such as reading and writing can also improve pronunciation development. ESL students should learn to connect written and spoken English "quickly and accurately if they are to become truly literate in English...Learner awareness of spelling patterns as cues to stress and rhythm patterning can be tremendously useful" (Morley 505-506).

Chapter 3

Benefits of Poetry in an ESL Classroom

When we have so many options of texts, why use poetry in an ESL classroom to promote English pronunciation? In addition to lowering the affective filter, incorporating TPR, and providing comprehensible input, poetry contains intensified language. Rhyme, alliteration, consonance, and rhythm are exaggerated in poetry. Exposing students to exaggerated sound devices helps students identify and recognize them in oral speech. Reading poetry aloud gives students practice pronouncing vowels and consonants along with rhythm.

Two significant characteristics of poetry relating to ESL students' pronunciation of English are its rhyme and meter. It is "the rhythm and rhyme of poetry [that] attract[s] readers of all different abilities, including non-readers" (Barton 5). There are many reasons why poetry is an excellent tool for lowering the affective filter; however, rhyme and rhythm seem to be the most powerful. The rhyme and rhythm of poetry draw in readers of all abilities because they connect the students to the text with little or no effort on the part of the student. While other types of literature require a lot from the reader, rhyme and rhythm create an automatic, innate, and almost physical connection between the poem and the reader. The readers can feel the musicality and rhythm of the poem best when it is read out loud to them as opposed to reading silently. Often, the rhythm and rhyme set the mood and tone of a poem; therefore, even when the student doesn't understand all of the words in the poem, he/she can still catch the general idea. That hint of meaning then becomes the hook to get students interested in the poem.

Rhyme is one of the first things that comes to mind in relation to poetry. As children, we learn that rhyme is a significant characteristic of poetry. Not only is it significant to the definition of poetry, it is also important to ESL students and teachers. Rhyme, along with

meter, draws the reader into the poem. It builds musicality within the lines. It creates

balance and indicates closure. ESL students, even those beginning students who do not fully

understand the language, can sense these effects.

On a more practical level, poetry with predictable a rhyme scheme serves as a tool

for comprehensible input in regards to pronunciation. The rhyme becomes a context for

unknown words. For example, a student may understand how to pronounce the word "bite"

but is not familiar with the sound of the word "night." In a poem with predictable rhyme, the

student can ascertain that the vowel and final consonant sounds of "night" are the same as

those of "bite" by following the rhyme scheme. When the student is not familiar with the

pronunciation of a word in the poem, he/she can determine the sound of the unfamiliar word

by looking at its rhyme. Take for example "Who Has Seen the Wind?" by Christina Rossetti.

> Who has seen the wind?
>   Neither I nor you:
> But when the leaves hang trembling,
>   The wind is passing through.
>
> Who has seen the wind?
>   Neither you nor I:
> But when the trees bow down their heads,
>   The wind is passing by.

This poem's predictable rhyme scheme follows the pattern: ABCB, meaning that the

second and forth lines rhyme. To a student learning English as a second language, those

rhyming words (you, through, I, and by) would not appear to rhyme at first glance. Poems

that use rhyming words that don't look similar give ESL students a quick review of spelling-

sound correlations. The poem is like a visual puzzle. It gives students the opportunity to

discover the correct pronunciation either by recalling it in their minds or relying on the

rhyme scheme as comprehensible input.

Another common sound device in poetry is alliteration. As Hollander so beautifully demonstrates, "*Alliteration* lightly links / stressed syllables with common consonants" (Hollander 13). This example shows the repetition of sound in alliteration. Repetition benefits students of all abilities in any subject area. Because ESL students are studying the English language, teachers should provide ample opportunities for students to experience repetition of English language sounds. Poems can present those opportunities. When students read poetry orally as well as silently, they have the added experience of producing consonant sounds repeatedly. Using alliterative poetry as pronunciation exercises builds muscle memory and gives the students extra practice with consonants.

Although this poem does not have strong examples of alliteration, Carl Sandburg's "Buffalo Dusk" provides several repetitions of words and consonant sounds.

> The buffaloes are gone.
> And those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
> Those who saw the buffaloes by thousands and how they pawed the prairie sod into
>   dust with their hoofs, their great heads down pawing on in the great pageant
>   of dusk,
> Those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
> And the buffaloes are gone.

In "Buffalo Dusk," the /g/ sound repeats throughout each line with the words "gone" and "great." The third line also highlights the /p/ sound with "pawed," "prairie," "pawing," and "pageant." By reading this poem out loud, students repeated opportunities to pronounce a single sound. This gives them more chances to succeed.

Similar to alliteration, consonance focuses on the repetition of consonant sounds. While alliteration refers to the initial syllable of words, consonance refers to middle and end syllables. Consonance has the same benefits of alliteration in that it gives students extra practice pronouncing consonants. However, consonance forces students to "spit out" the

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sound even in the middle of a word. This is slightly more difficult; thus, I suggest introducing consonance after alliteration.

One of the most beautiful uses of consonance is "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden.

> Sundays too my father got up early
> and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
> then with cracked hands that ached
> from labor in the weekday weather made
> banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.
>
> I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
> When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
> and slowly I would rise and dress,
> fearing the chronic angers of that house,
>
> Speaking indifferently to him,
> who had driven out the cold
> and polished my good shoes as well.
> What did I know, what did I know
> of love's austere and lonely offices?

In this poem, students face the challenge of pronouncing /k/ sounds in the middle of the word. This is more difficult than producing /k/ at the beginning of words as in alliteration. Take the second line of the first stanza for example. Speaking at a normal tempo, the /k/ in the word "clothes" is easier to pronounce than in "ached." I believe this is because the reader tries to focus on the initial sound and fades through the remainder of the word. This poem gives students the opportunity to pronounce the /k/ sound in the middle of the following words: "blueblack," "cracked," "ached," "weekday," "banked," "thanked," "wake," "breaking," "chronic," and "speaking." In this single poem, students produce the /k/ sound in the middle and end syllables of words ten times. This does not include the alliterative words either.

There is an innate connection between poetry and the reader created by rhythm. Readers of poetry don't just hear rhythm, they *feel* it. Rhythm is important not only in poetry but in everyday speech as well. Students whose native language is other than English encounter difficulty when it comes to demonstrating and finding the speech rhythm of English. When reading poems, many students move their feet or clap their hands to the beat of the poem "because rhythm is best learned through the body, not just through the brain" (Barton 21). When students are having a hard time finding the rhythm, the teacher can clap his/her hands to show the students the beat. Students then imitate the teacher and incorporate Total Physical Response into the lesson.

The benefits of using TPR to teach rhythm in poetry are two-fold. First it's used as an example. First it's used as an example. The teacher models the beat of the poem by clapping or snapping. Second, it's used as practice. Students employ both their auditory and physical senses to identify the rhythm by hearing and joining in with clapping. When students engage in TPR while reading poetry, they remember the rhythm. They also incorporate the rhythm into their reading of the poem by emphasizing words, spending more time on certain syllables, and blending short, unstressed syllables. Poetry becomes a "testing environment" where ESL students can experience and practice exaggerated versions of natural speech rhythm.

Rhythm is also an important component of poetry that can aid ESL students in acquiring pronunciation skills. There are four basic types of feet, or groups of syllables, in meter. The first two, iambs and trochees, contain two syllables in each foot. Iambs have an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable such as the name Nicole. The emphasis is place on the second syllable. Trochees are just the opposite. Trochees indicate a stressed

syllable followed by an unstressed syllable as in Michael. Dactyls and anapests are the last

two types of feet. These both contain three syllables. Dactyls contain one stressed syllable

followed by two unstressed syllables. An example of a dactylic name is Joshua. Lastly,

anapests have two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable (Hollander 8-10).

Although it is not necessary for students to memorize or learn this information, it is vital that

teachers understand it. A solid knowledge of the different types of feet in meter can help

teachers better demonstrate the rhythm of a poem. The following poems are bolded to show

syllabic stress. The first two lines of Emily Dickinson's poem demonstrate iambs:

> 1263
> Tell **all** the **truth** but **tell** it **slant** –
> Suc**cess** in **Circ**uit **lies**

Here, lines 34-37 of Poe's poem show anapests.

> "Annabel Lee"
> For the **moon** never **beams** without **bring**ing me **dreams**
>   Of the **beaut**iful An**nabel Lee**;
> And the **stars** never **rise** but I **feel** the bright **eyes**
>   Of the **beaut**iful An**nabel Lee**;

When teachers can find the rhythm of a poem, they can teach it to their students by

demonstrating or by using TPR. Students can clap their hands with the teacher to find the

beat of the poem. The beat or the rhythm gives the students a key to pronouncing the words

in the poem. Students follow the rhythmic pattern and discover, on their own, which

syllables to stress and which to blend.

Though poetry incorporates the input hypothesis, affective filter hypothesis, and total

physical response, it also lends itself well to Whole Language. Carrasquillo states that

"poetry is very important in whole language classrooms" (Carrasquillo 12). Although

Carrasquillo does not mention why poetry is beneficial in Whole Language, it is fairly

simple to see the connection. A central theme of Whole Language is that texts are used for "real-world" purposes. Poetry, in general, focuses on the human aspects of life—emotions, relationships, and problems that occur in real life. Although you won't find many people reciting poetry at the grocery store, properly chosen poetry does fill the role of "real-world" texts. This is because its topics and subjects relate to real world problems.

Poetic form and style allow readers of all abilities to find occurrences of real world problems in poetry. The syntax of poetry sets it apart from other texts. It can go to either extreme. Some poems are syntactically complex and ambiguous. Others are strikingly simple. I have found, though, that simple syntax in poetry does not water down its message. Rather, it is an excellent tool for ESL students. The simple syntax is easy to understand. It draws students in and encourages them by giving them the opportunity to succeed. Students can focus on the meaning of the poem, without being bogged down with flowery sentences and confusing vocabulary. Poems with simple syntax are not necessarily simple in meaning. Gwendolyn Brooks' poem, "We Real Cool" is an example of this.

THE POOL PLAYERS. SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

Though there are some unfamiliar words in this poem, students understand the meaning of it due to simple syntax and real world themes. Students feel that they can master this poem because of its simplicity. This, in turn, lowers the affective filter.

Incorporating poetry into the classroom "enables students 'to succeed at learning— daily.'…Exposing students to poetry enhances their academic skills, including reading, writing, and critical thinking" (Burkhardt 3-4). Though this writer is speaking of mainstream students, I believe that poetry helps every student, even ESL students, succeed. Beyond the realm of producing oral language, poetry helps students in the other academic skills listed. Students who study a variety of poems are exposed to many different forms and styles of writing. Their experiences build reading skills and help them prepare for future readings. Students who read more tend to be better writers. When students study poetry, they experience rhythm, imagery, and sound devices that they can incorporate into their writing. Finally, poetry makes students think deeply about what they're reading. The beauty of poetry is that it does all this at once; yet, it is not overwhelming as long as good instruction accompanies exposure to poetry.

Poetry also helps students succeed at their own level and pace. The poems teachers introduce to their students are like individual staircases. What the student learns from or pulls out of the poem depends on the level and proficiency of the student. More advanced students tend to pull more advanced elements. This means that Beginning and Advanced ESL students can benefit from reading the same poem. One poem has the potential to benefit students of all abilities. Beginning ESL students can learn vocabulary and become familiar with the rhythm of the poem. Intermediate and Advanced students can use critical thinking skills to interpret the poem, as well as creative skills to compose a paper or essay discussing

the poem. This is another reason why poetry works well in an ESL classroom. Poetry is very versatile and flexible. With a little extra preparation from the teacher, poems can fit any learner.

Teachers should, however, be aware of the complexities of deciphering metaphorical meanings with ESL students. Metaphors are difficult for many middle school or high school aged students to grasp. Cultural and/or language barriers can further confuse the student. This does not mean that teachers should select poetry with little metaphoric meaning or ignore the metaphors in a poem. Rather, teachers should plan and prepare for possible obstacles. By selecting phrases that may cause confusion and focusing pre-reading activities on those phrases and meanings, teachers can set their students up for success.

Silently reading and studying poetry as a class is beneficial; however, ESL students need experience reciting poetry. Although L2 speech is a difficult skills to acquire, it is also the most important. Regular oral presentations by students can develop diction, pronunciation, and public speaking skills (Burkhardt 10). In order to become fluent in speaking the target language, students need to practice speaking in English within the ESL classroom. One non-intimidating way to have them practice is through poetry. The brevity of poems lowers the affective filter for Beginning as well as Advanced ESL students. This is because it is far less intimidating to read or study a poem than it is to read or study a novel or even a short story. There are fewer words in poems than in other texts resulting in fewer unfamiliar words or words the student needs to look up.

It is far easier to recite something that has been practiced and rehearsed than it is to ad-lib in front of an audience. Poetry is "safe" because students don't have to make anything up. The words are already before them. They can practice at school and/or at home. They

can perform either by reciting from memory, or by dramatic reading. With either or these options, students are practicing pronunciation and speech rhythm, while becoming more comfortable speaking in front of others.

Because students need to practice speaking English to each other, they need to feel safe taking risks (Athanases 95). Even though students are reading poems out loud to each other, they still need to feel comfortable with the risks they are taking. There are several ways a teacher can help students feel "safe" when performing. The poems the students perform should be simple and comprehensible for the student. They should be in the reach of the student, even if extra work needs to be done before the student completely understands and can perform the poem. Also, the teacher should provide ample time and assistance for preparation. Students should have time and opportunities to practice in class. Last, teachers can "shrink" the audience.

Whether students realize it or not, poetry is an exercise in pronunciation. Each poem offers intensified sound devices that the student practices speaking several times. The skills and knowledge students acquire through reading poetry aloud filters into the language acquisition part of the brain due to comprehensible input and a low affective filter. With practice, practice, and more practice, students can improve their English pronunciation. Although drills may do this as well, poetry is enjoyable and engaging to read. It tells a story or discusses a problem. Poetry is human and personal. It benefits students academically and enriches them personally.

Chapter 4

Methods, Results, and Conclusions

Hypothesis:

Based on my research of second language acquisition theories, pronunciation teaching approaches, and the benefits of poetry, I hypothesized that exposing ESL students to English poetry would improve their pronunciation of English. I theorized that by reading poetry aloud the students would be able to practice consonant sounds, vowel sounds, and natural speech rhythm. This extra practice would improve students' pronunciation of English.

Methods:

I conducted my research over a six week period at Valley Middle School*. The class I studied was composed of 15 seventh graders. The majority of the class was of Hispanic background and spoke Spanish as a home language. The other two were Asian students. This class was labeled "Advanced ESL." Every student was fluent in English.

Though I worked with all the students, my research focuses on an informal case study. A case study "looks intensely at an individual or small participant pool, drawing conclusions only about that participant or group and only in that specific context… emphasis is placed on exploration and description" (Becker et al). I worked with a student, Lupe*, who was slightly behind the other students in the class. It is important to note that my findings are specific for this individual.

Procedures:

The poems I chose to incorporate into this study were short and simple. They each provided the student with an exaggeration of rhyme, meter, or alliteration. I used "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe, "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks, "Rock 'n' Roll Band" by Shel Silverstein, and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

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* Names of both the school and the student have been changed to protect the student

Each day I worked with Lupe, we began class by reading or reviewing a poem. We moved slowly, looking at one aspect of the poem at a time. I also broke up the longer poems, focusing on one or two stanzas each class period. When I introduced a poem for the first time, I read the poem aloud while Lupe followed with her text. Next we defined unfamiliar words and cleared up any questions she had on the semantics or syntax of the poem. Throughout the next few days we studied the poem's use of rhythm, rhyme, and sound devices such as alliteration or consonance.

When studying rhythm, I tapped and emphasized the stressed syllables as I read to Lupe. Next, I had her tap along with me as I read. Once she mastered tapping along with me, I invited her to read with me as well. This step was usually the longest; we'd repeat this step for three or four days. When she felt comfortable with the rhythm, Lupe read the poem, emphasizing the stressed syllables. Occasionally I gave her a copy of the poem with the stressed syllables bolded. This was only given when she needed extra help finding the beat of the poem and was faded out as quickly as possible.

Incorporating rhyme and alliteration shared a similar process. When studying rhythm, I emphasized either the vowels sounds for rhyme or consonant sounds for alliteration as I read to Lupe. She followed along with a text that had the rhyming words or common consonants bolded. Next we practiced reading the rhyming or alliterating words in isolation from the text. This step was very short compared to the others. It only took us about a minute to review the rhyming or alliterating words. Once Lupe had felt comfortable listening to me and practicing the sounds in isolation, she practiced reading the poem with me. We then faded my prompts so Lupe read the poem by herself.

Because I worked one-on-one with Lupe, I based my measurement of improved pronunciation on changes I observed in Lupe's pronunciation of English. I focused on three areas: pronunciation of vowels, pronunciation of consonants, and natural speech rhythm.

Results:

Because my research period was short, I did not see huge or astounding changes in Lupe's pronunciation. I did, however, see little successes each day and several noticeable achievements at the end of my study.

Through working with Lupe on reading textbook material, I found that she struggled with words that had complex spelling conventions, especially words with "gh," or "ght." Although I provided the correct pronunciation when she requested it, Lupe had a hard time remembering the pronunciation of consonant cluster words. I decided to intervene with poetry.

We read "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" for five minutes each day for four days. Studying this poem helped Lupe learn, on her own, how to pronounce the word "high." As she read the first two lines, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, / How I wonder what you are," she discovered the rhyme scheme. She already knew the pronunciation of the end words in the first two lines. Because those two lines rhymed with each other, she inferred that the next two lines would also rhyme.

Lupe was not familiar with the pronunciation of "high" in the third line; however, she determined its sound based on her knowledge of the word "sky" in the fourth line. This was a prime example of comprehensible input at work in poetry. Upon being challenged with a new and unfamiliar word, Lupe used her current level of understanding to pronounce a new, unfamiliar word. Throughout the remaining weeks I noticed Lupe slow down when

she came across an "igh" or "ight" word in her text. She paused, as if recalling information, and proceeding to pronounce the word correctly. These pauses became shorter and shorter each day she read. The greatest success, though, was that she never again asked me for the correct pronunciation.

After the study, I discussed the research with Lupe. I asked how she felt about using poetry as a text rather than her grammar book. She expressed that poetry was more exciting and fun to read. She said, "The regular book is, you know, just boring and I don't know what it says. But I like the poems… they are fun and they are about things that are fun to read." She also recalled, "I like Mondays because I like to see the new poem. It's fun to see something new." Poetry helped Lupe become interested in reading and learning without her realizing it. I believe it successfully lowered the affective filter by providing Lupe with a text she felt comfortable reading and studying. The variety of poems and the change that each new poem brought also kept her engaged in learning.

Conclusions:

Based on my research I found that oral performance was an effective way for Lupe to practice her pronunciation skills. I also found that it took a few steps and a little time for her to feel comfortable speaking in front of an audience. By breaking down the process into teacher demonstration, choral reading, and student performance, Lupe was eased into what could be a high stress situation. Although she was nervous reading a poem in front of me, Lupe felt prepared and ready for her performance after working on each poem for about a week each. Another way to lower the affective filter during poetry presentations is to make the audience smaller. Lupe and other students I worked with at Valley Middle School felt

more comfortable reading to a group of three or four classmates as opposed to the entire class.

Through trial and error I found that short, frequent exposures to poetry were more effective and engaging in my research. My first day working with Lupe, I was nearly overflowing with excitement. I couldn't wait to share all my favorite poems with her. I wanted to explain alliteration and rhyme schemes, the difference between an iambic foot and an anapestic foot, and all the poetic knowledge I had that *I* thought was important. It only took me that first day to realize that not everyone loves poetry as much as I do. Rather than spend one class period a week on poetry instruction, I chose to spend the first five to ten minutes of each class period on poetry. This little "taste" of poetry each day kept Lupe's engagement, interest, and motivation up from day to day.

Just as important as choosing the correct amount of poetry instruction is selecting poems that keep students engaged. In my experience, when the poems introduced in class became boring and old, student interest and participation dropped. If poems are not interesting and appealing to students, using poetry in the classroom is no better than pronunciation drills. In working with Lupe, I was constantly changing and adapting my plans. I tried to provide a variety of poetic styles, forms, and themes to keep her engaged.

The beauty of poetry is that it's human. It provides students with a text other than worksheets or grammar books. It attracts students while it teaches them. It inspires while it challenges. It engages the heart and the mind. In short, it gives students the personal aspects of language they need to learn and enjoy learning English.

As I expressed earlier, my results and conclusions are specific to Lupe; however, I feel that poetry can be an effective tool for other ESL students as well. There is a need for

further, more extensive research to determine if poetry is a successful means of teaching and

practicing pronunciation.

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Appendix

Full Text
Poems

"Who Has Seen the Wind?"
Christine Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?
　　　Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
　　　The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
　　　Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads,
　　　The wind is passing by.

"Buffalo Dusk"
Carl Sandburg

The buffaloes are gone.
And those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
Those who saw the buffaloes by thousands and how they pawed the prairie sod into dust
　　　with their hoofs, their great heads down pawing on in the great pageant of dusk.
Those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
And the buffaloes are gone.

"Those Winter Sundays"
Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

1263 (or "Tell All the Truth")
Emily Dickinson

Tell all the truth but tell it slant,
Success in circuit lies,
Too bright for our infirm delight
The truth's superb surprise;

As lightning to the children eased
With explanation kind,
The truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind.

"Annabel Lee"
Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love-
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me-
Yes!- that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,

Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we-
Of many far wiser than we-
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

"We Real Cool"
Gwendolyn Brooks

THE POOL PLAYERS. SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

"Rock 'n' Roll Band"
Shel Silverstein

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,
We'd travel all over the land.
We'd play and we'd sing and wear spangly things.
If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,
And we were up there on the stand,
The people would hear us and love us and cheer us.
Hurray for that rock 'n' roll band.

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,
Then we'd have a million fans.
We'd giggle and laugh and sign autographs,
If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,
The people would all kiss our hands.
We'd be millionaires and have extra long hair,
If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

But we ain't no rock 'n' roll band,
We're just seven kids in the sand.
With homemade guitars and pails and jars
And drums of potato chip cans.

Just seven kids in the sand.
Talk'n and waven' our hands.
And dreamin' and thinkin' oh wouldn't it be grand,
If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

"Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.

Author's Biography

Kimberly Call Gleason graduated from Pleasant Grove High School in 2003. She attended Utah State University on a Dean's Scholarship and majored in English Teaching with a minor in Teaching English as a Second Language. While at USU, Kim tutored ESL students in local middle schools and worked with international students in the university's IELI (Intensive English Language Institute). Kim also expanded her teaching experience by working as an Undergraduate Teaching Fellow for English 3520 (Multicultural Literature), serving as an Honors Fellow, and working one-on-one with children with Autism at USU's ASSERT (Autism Support Services: Education, Research, and Training) program.

Kim looks forward to teaching English and ESL in the public school system. While teaching ESL, she hopes to further her research of poetry and ESL and take that with her as she works towards a Master of Arts in Teaching: TESOL.