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## Travelling to the top of the mountain: Research investigation through found poetry as means of data analysis, presentation and dissemination

*Fadel Alsawayfa*



FIGURE 4.1: Photograph and edit: Raquel Benmergui.

*Introduction*

The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the growing body of research on the use of poetry as a means of data analysis, presentation and dissemination. It is based on my doctoral thesis entitled ‘Travelling to the top of the mountain: The use of poetry to explore Palestinian and Arab teachers’ perceptions and the experience of their participation in a drama in education summer school’ (Alsawayfa 2019).

The aim of this chapter is to consider the potential of using found poetry as an alternative means of data analysis and re-presentation in qualitative research and share how an in-depth understanding of the drama summer school participants’ stories and lived experiences was gained through this approach.

*Context and rationale*

In 2007 I participated in a drama in education summer school in Jerash, Jordan and my participation was a life changing, professional changing experience. This experience had sparked the interest for me to explore other teachers’ perceptions and experiences and the implications of their participation in learning and teaching in the education systems in their countries.

During my research, I became increasingly interested in experimenting with alternative methods and ways of capturing participants’ voice and experiences in qualitative research. I came across qualitative studies that used found poetry as a means of data analysis and re-presentation (Pithouse-Morgan 2016). The data of these studies were re-presented evocatively in the form of found poems created from participants’ interview transcripts in participants’ own words. This inspired me to analyse and re-present my data using found poetry.

I approached this research as an arts-based researcher. Methodological pluralism is a characteristic of arts-based research. An arts-based researcher looks at things from multiple perspectives that may lead to an in-depth understanding of experiences. He or she may not adhere to one methodology or perspective. Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2008) contend that art should be part of methodology in arts-based research. In this qualitative research, I married case study with poetic research methodology to investigate teachers’ perceptions and gain deeper insight into their lived experiences, keeping their voice throughout the research phases of data collection, analysis and re-presentation.

According to Faulkner (2018), poetry itself is research. It is a way of seeing and knowing. Gouzouasis states that ‘[i]t is impossible to know without expertise’ (2018: 234). That is because this kind of knowing enables the arts-based researcher

to understand and interpret. I used poetry to disrupt the usual ways of knowing. I wanted to show my artistic identity through engaging in the processes of data analysis, presentation and disseminating the findings of this research. This issue is further discussed in the data analysis section.

Data in this study was collected through semi-structured interviewing with nine participants of the drama education summer school. Multiple contacts were made with the participants to gather data and gain a deeper understanding and richer perspectives into their perceptions of their participation in the drama in education summer school. To achieve this aim, pre-post semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted in Arabic (the participants' and my native language). Participants were asked open-ended questions and were given reasonable time and attention to freely speak without interruption. 'Attentive listening' (Clough and Nutbrown 2007) was used to honour participants' voice and encourage them to share their stories. Adopting these flexible approaches of interviewing enabled me to obtain rich data from the interviewees and gain deeper insight into their perceptions.

As I interviewed the participants, I was struck with the poetic and figurative language they used. The interviews were powerful and full of feelings and emotions. Butler-Kisber (2010) points out that there is no specific pattern or approach of data analysis to craft found poems. Some researchers use conventional methods of analysis, whereas other researchers use poetic analysis (Butler-Kisber 2002). I employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach of thematic analysis to gain in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions and lived experience: attentive listening and verbatim transcription, close reading of data, open coding for illuminating words and phrases, finding connections and relationships and organizing codes into themes, and looking for evocative words and expressions that represent the themes and putting them into poetic form, and writing up.

First, I attentively listened to the recordings of the interviews, and then transcribed them verbatim in their original language (Arabic). After the word by word verbatim transcription, I e-mailed the transcribed texts to the participants for verification and validation (Creswell 2013). When verification was received from the participants, I closely read and re-read the interview transcripts and went back and forth to highlight illuminating words, expressions and phrases from the research data. I returned to the text numerous times to select those extracts, which best captured participants' experience and portrayed the essence of their stories. Then, I blacked out the texts, leaving key words and extracts that illustrated themes illuminated. I used different colours in the highlighting process and each colour represented the words and expressions that seemed to be representative themes of experience (Van Manen 1990). As a result, chunks of data that explain teachers'

reasons for participating in the drama summer school, their feeling and how they make sense of their lived experience were selected and composed in a new text.

Like other qualitative data analysis approaches, poetic analysis is an effective means of data reduction without losing meaning, and at the same time, capturing the essence of participants' feelings and experiences (Furman and Dill 2015). Using poetic analysis, a large amount of data can be compressed in a line of poetry. In this study, data from pre-post interviews with nine participants were compressed into 42 poems. The process of data reduction not only helped me narrow down the data, but also enabled me to return to interview recordings, listen and listen, and read and read the texts until I identified representative themes. I then arranged the extracted words and phrases selected from the interviews transcripts into poetic form. I did not add any words of my own to participants' extracted words and phrases (Butler-Kisber 2005). Two themes from the compressed data started to emerge: space and place and the power of drama. The next step was to select words and phrases that represented the emergent themes. I returned to the interview texts several times to select lines of poetry that came under the key themes.

Poetic techniques such as rhythm, rhyme and punctuation, and word re-arrangement were used to create the found poems (Butler-Kisber 2005). Although the objective of writing the poems was to distil what I understood to be the essence of the meaning the teachers conveyed, my decisions about which words, extracts or phrases to choose, and how to arrange them, reflect my own interpretations. According to Fernández-Giménez (2015), like in other methods of data analysis in qualitative research, methods of data coding and reduction in poetic analysis are researcher's decisions and his or her reflection of those decisions. Lines of poetry were created and punctuation marks were added to convey meaning and allow the reader to share the participants' lived experience. Found data poems were created in Arabic. I read and re-read the poems and re-arranged words and lines in some poems to make salient participants' lived experiences.

The created found poems were e-mailed to the participants to ensure that their experience was accurately represented in the poems. This was a crucial step in the process and it opened spaces for participants to engage with the crafted poems and give suggestions. This flexible approach offered participants an opportunity to engage in reflexive dialogue with me the researcher, which minimized my influence on the production of the data derived from participants' texts (Breckenridge and Clark 2017). Rice (2011) has argued that such approach might create tension that is used productively through welcoming and appreciating different viewpoints. Valuable feedback was received from the participants and some poems were edited.

Research often involves translation between languages for publication and dissemination purposes (Van Nes et al. 2010). For the purpose of my thesis,

and for readers to have an idea about how the poems were created, I translated the original interview transcripts into English. I also translated the created poems into English to communicate participants' felt experience to readers. However, translation in research can be problematic. Steiner addressed the challenges and problems of translation of experience in qualitative research. Loss of meaning is a major challenge that researchers face when translating between different languages. In his book *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (1998), Steiner offered a nonconventional concept to translation. He has famously argued that every act of communication is a translation. In his words 'human communication equals translation' (Steiner 1998: 49). In other words, translation involves interpretation.

I am not a machine. I am a human being. As a translator of the poems, I wanted to play a communicative role. I wanted to move beyond the surface meaning of words and communicate participants' felt experience, which machines cannot easily do. I was aware that I was translating the poems to readers from a culture different from my own. When translating the poems into English I found myself faced with the challenge of finding accurate words that represent participants' emotions and felt moments. Additionally, some expressions are not easily understandable for non-native Arabic speakers. For example, the expression *Masri Yamma Ya Bahiyya* مصر يما يا بهية is used in Egyptian colloquial language. Therefore, I re-worked the poems frequently to hopefully communicate participants' thoughts and emotions to the reader without losing the meaning.

### *Theme 1: Space and place*

The notion of space and place was one of the most recurring themes that arose from the analysis of participants' transcribed data. When reflecting on their experiences, almost all participants gave emphasis to space and place. It should be noted that the majority of drama summer school participants come from conflict zones such as Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Some others come from countries that are politically unstable, e.g. Egypt and Sudan. They had to get permissions and wait several hours on borders in order to attend the drama summer school. They viewed the summer school as a space and place where identity is negotiated and constructed. This view resonates with Bhabha's (1994) notion of 'third space', which is crucial to understanding the significance of space and place in shaping individuals' identities.

The participants indicated that the drama summer school offered them an opportunity to cross borders and meet. The poem below, crafted from an Egyptian participant's interview transcripts, is an example of how she reflected on her

experience of being with other participants from the Arab region. The challenges she faced and the impact of meeting participants from diverse cultures and how that participant constructed her identity are captured in the poem below:

### أنا أنا

أحبنى الجميع في المدرسة الصيفية  
 أرادوا مني قول النكات والغناء طوال الوقت  
 مررت ببعض المشاركين وهم يغنون 'مصر بما يا بهية'  
 اعتقدوا أنني سأنضم إليهم فوراً وأشار لهم الغناء!  
 حقيقة، لا أحب هذه الأغنية، فهي تستفزني  
 فهي تصور مصر بالمرأة الفلاحية وأنا أرفض ذلك!  
 كان لدي شعور أن هذا ما يشاهدونه في الأفلام المصرية  
 لكن أنا لست فلماً،  
 أنا لست نكتة،  
 مصر جزء مني،  
 لكنها ليست كل شيء بالنسبة لي.  
 هويتي أكبر من أغنية،  
 أو فلم،  
 أو نكتة.

### I am Me

In the summer school everyone liked me,  
 All the time, they wanted me to tell jokes and sing!  
 I passed by some participants signing Masri Yamma Ya Bahiyya,  
 They thought I would immediately join them and sing,  
 In fact, I do not like the song, it provokes me,  
 It depicts Egypt as a peasant woman, which I reject  
 That is what they see in Egyptian films, I had a feeling.  
 But I am not a film;  
 I am not a joke,  
 Egypt is part of me,  
 But it is not everything to me,  
 My identity is larger than a song,  
 A film,  
 Or a joke.

For Bhabha, third space is a hybrid, mutual space where individuals from diverse cultures meet and work towards shared understanding, which leads to self-discovery through exposure to others. It is a place of connectedness and where something new is created (Bhabha 1990). However, travelling towards a new place can be complex and stressful. But tension can be reduced when people meet, communicate

and understand each other. All participants left their homes and families and travelled to Jordan for the drama in education summer school. Although the drama summer school is short and intensive, it seems that participants developed a sense of belonging to the new place.

Responses from the participants suggested that the drama summer school provided them a safe place and enabled them to develop a sense of belonging as they experienced in the new place. The following poem explores the Egyptian participant's experience of journeying to the summer school and how she felt in the new place. The notion of space and place and the participant's connection to the environment of the drama summer school are expressed in her view as follows:

#### نحو مكان جديد

مستلهمةً بأفكار كريشنامورتى الروحية حول الفراغ،  
غادرتُ أحياءَ مصرَ القديمة نحو مكانٍ جديدٍ؛  
هناك، على سفح الجبل شعرتُ أنني مخطوفة  
أحببتُ الفكرة، مُخطَّطٌ لها كانت أم عفويةً!  
قد يوحى المكانُ بالغرلة، وأنا لا أحبُّ الغرلة!  
لكن هناك حيثُ لا ضجيج ولا تشويش  
تعرفْتُ على أناسٍ من ثقافاتٍ مختلفة،  
كان على البعض المعاناة واجتياز الحواجز  
كغيري من أبناء جبلي، سمعتُ عن فلسطين عبر التلفاز  
أيقنتُ أن كلَّ ما سمعته وشاهدته مجرد أخبارٍ مفبركة.

#### Towards a New Place

Charged with Krishnamurtri's spiritual ideas of space,  
I left the old neighbourhoods of Egypt towards a new place,  
There, on the top of the mountain I felt like kidnapped,  
I liked the idea whether spontaneous it was or planned.  
The place may seem isolated, and I do not like isolation,  
But there, no noise and no external distraction.  
There, I met people from diverse cultures,  
Some people had to suffer and cross borders,  
Like other people of my age, I heard about Palestine on TV!  
Fabricated news is all you could hear or see.

The approach adopted by the Qattan Foundation in managing the drama summer school appears to have had a positive impact on the teachers who gave their view of space and place. The management of the place, the learning content and dealing with the learners were all reflected upon by the participants who spoke of that

approach. Admiration of the Qattan Foundation's approach is illustrated in the following response by a Sudanese participant who describes this approach as follows:

### ثقافة المكان

لم اسمع عن مؤسسة تعمل مع المعلمين كالقطان؛  
 شعرت أننا نملك كل شيء: الفضاء والمكان  
 فالمحتوى واللغة جميعا عربية هناك  
 اعجبني هذا النهج الشمولي، بالروعة!  
 شعرت بأهميتي كمتعلم، فدائما كان لي دور  
 كان هناك مجالاً للإضافة والكشف والاستكشاف،  
 هذا الاحترام للمعلمين ولثقافة المكان  
 نهج يجب أن تتبناه كل المؤسسات.

### Culture of Place

I never heard of an institution working with teachers as Qattan does,  
 In the drama summer school everything belonged to us;  
 There, space, place, content and language were all Arabic,  
 I liked this comprehensive approach. It was fantastic!  
 I felt my importance as a learner, I always had a role,  
 There was always a room to add, discover and explore,  
 This respect to the teachers and to the culture of the place,  
 Is something, I think, all institutions should embrace.

As a space, the drama in education summer school is a temporary resting place where communication and dialogue begin and mutual understanding is achieved (Bakhtin 1994). In the context of the drama summer school, it can also be argued that the nature of place and space determined the conditions of learning and the nature of relationships between participants.

### *Theme 2: Power of drama*

A theme that consistently emerged through the analysis of participants' semi-structured interviews data was that of the power of drama in changing perceptions of the self and shaping world-views. The analysis indicated that all participants engaged in drama activities, entered in dialogue, improvised and took on roles that had positively impacted on how they view themselves and others. They described how drama improved their behaviour and became accepting of other people's opinions in the world in which they live. The following found poem provides insight into how a Palestinian participant, from Gaza

Strip, describes the impact drama had on his self-perception and behaviour, and his world-view:

### الدراما لكّ ولي

تعلّمتُ الدراما التكوينية وعباءة الخبير،  
 أدوات مهمة ساعدتني على تلمس السبيل.  
 هدّبت الدراما سلوكي و نظرتي للعالم  
 غيّرت انطباعي وجعلت من المحظور مُباح،  
 الدراما تجمّع العالم،  
 الدراما لبست عنا وحدنا في غزّة،  
 بل هي عن العالم أجمع ؛  
 عن الفقراء والمهمّشين ،  
 الدراما تزيل الألقاب وتحرّر العقل.  
 يسرّت ورشة عمل وشعرت أن الدراما حققت غايتها،  
 عندما نادتني إحدى الطالبات باسمي الأول ،  
 لم أتفاجأ في عام 2014  
 عندما حصلت على جائزة إلهام فلسطين لنشري الدراما في القطاع.

### Drama for you and me

I learnt Process Drama and Mantle of the Expert,  
 Important tools through darkness they help me penetrate.  
 Drama improved my behaviour and how I view the world  
 It changed my perspective, it made the forbidden allowed.  
 Drama brings people together, and it is in this case,  
 Not about us in Gaza only, but about the whole universe  
 It is about the poor and the marginalised,  
 It removes titles and frees the mind.  
 I facilitated a workshop and felt that drama fulfilled its aim,  
 When a schoolgirl called me by my first name.  
 In 2014 I was not surprised,  
 For disseminating drama, I received the Elham Falasteen Award.

The participants also talked about how drama had positively impacted on their perceptions of learning. From the participants' responses, there was a consensus that drama provided them with an opportunity to learn freely and express themselves. It was seen by some participants as an emancipatory tool. This is evident in the terms they used to express their feelings about learning through drama such as 'liberating' and 'emancipatory'. The following found poem encapsulates one participant's reasons for participating in the drama summer school and what he thinks of drama. In this poem, the participant spoke about the skills he needed to

acquire as well as the need to have confidence in himself to learn drama and use it authentically in teaching his pupils:

### تحرُّر

أعمل في مجال التعليم غير الرسمي،  
أنا مهتم بالاستراتيجيات التي تدعو للتحرُّر.  
استخدمتُ تربية المُضطَّهدين في التعليم،  
لكنِّي لا زلتُ لا أطبقه بشكلٍ جيِّدٍ.  
فلا تطبيقات محدَّدة لهذه البيداغوجيَّة!  
سمعتُ أن ميسري الدراما في المدرسة الصيفيَّة يستخدمونها بتطبيقاتها العمليَّة.  
أردتُ تعلم استراتيجيَّات على الطريقة الطبيعيَّة للتعلم مبنيةً،  
استراتيجيَّات أصيلة تُشرك المتعلِّم.  
الدراما أصيلة، فهي تستخدم الخيال  
الخيالُ فطريٌّ والدراما تدعو للتحرُّر  
عمقتُ من فهمي لعباءة الخبير والدراما التكوينيَّة  
الدراما نفسها معضلة أخلاقيَّة،  
العلم لا يُقولُ لك ما هو الأخلاقي فيما نتعلَّمه  
أن نصنع من المعادلة الكيميائيَّة شيئاً مفيداً للبشر أم نصنع قبلة!  
المعلِّمون في المدارس لا يطرحوا هذا التساؤل!  
الدراما تشجِّع المتعلِّم على طرح الأسئلة وتوفِّر سياقاتٍ للتعلم  
سياقاتٍ مرتبطة بحياة المتعلِّم،  
الدراما تربط المعارف بالتعلم.

### Emancipation

I work in the field of non-formal education,  
I am interested in strategies that call for emancipation.  
I used Forum Theatre in my teaching,  
But still I could not get my head around it when applying;  
This approach does not have precise applications!  
I heard in the summer school the facilitators use drama with active participation.  
I wanted to learn strategies that adopt the authentic way of learning,  
Strategies that are authentic, involve learners and participating.  
Drama is authentic, it uses imagination,  
Imagination is innate, and drama calls for liberation.  
I deepened my understanding of Mantle of the Expert and Process Drama,  
Drama, is itself, a moral dilemma.  
Science does not tell you what is moral about what you learn and education,  
Whether to make something beneficial or a bomb from a chemical equation.  
Drama encourages the learner to ask questions and provides learning contexts,  
Because it is relevant to learner's life, it connects knowledge and integrates subjects.

In addition to the impact that drama had on the participant's learning and teaching philosophies, it is also apparent that it had strengthened the bonds between

the participants. Some participants spoke about how drama enabled them to get together and establish good friendships. As mirrored in the following poem, one participant from Palestine, the Occupied West Bank, offers insight into how the drama summer school enabled him to meet other participants from diverse cultures and establish everlasting friendships:

أصدقاء وأكثر...

أعطتني الدراما فرصة التخيل والاكتشاف والاستكشاف،  
ومقابلة أناس من أكثر من ثقافة.  
لم ألتق بأحدٍ من غزة من قبل،  
هناك كنت صداقاتٍ مع مشاركين من غزة والسودان ومصر وغيرها  
كم كان جميلاً الجلوسُ سوياً والتحدث عن الدراما وتوتراتها،  
وفي نفس الوقت نتعرّف على مجتمعاتنا وثقافتها.  
هذه السنة، لم يتمكّن أصدقاؤني من غزة المشاركة،  
لم تسمح لهم سلطات الاحتلال الإسرائيلي بالمجيء!  
نتواصل عبر شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي،  
لكنها ليست دافئة وحميمية كما في جرش.  
منذ يومين وصلتني هدية من صديق،  
كم أحببتها!

Friends and More ...

Drama offered me an opportunity to imagine, explore and discover,  
And meet with people from more than one culture.  
I never met anyone from Gaza before,  
There, I made friends from Gaza, Sudan, Egypt and many more.  
It was nice to sit together and talk about drama tensions,  
And, at the same time, learn about each other's cultures.  
This year, my friends from Gaza were denied participation.  
They were not allowed by the Occupation!  
We communicate through social media networks,  
But it is not as warm as we were in Jerash.  
Two days ago, I received a gift,  
From a friend, and I really liked it.

Given that the overarching aim of my study was to explore the potential of using found poetry as a method of data analysis and re-presentation, a considerable proportion of this section was devoted to answering the fourth question: What is the potential of using found poetry as an alternative means of data analysis and re-presentation in qualitative research? I tried to address this question in conjunction with the literature and my experience of analysing and re-presenting the data in this research study.

*Space and place*

The participants in this study believe that the nature, location and environment of the summer school motivated them to engage, learn and develop a sense of belonging to the place. This finding is well supported in the literature by Bakhtin (1994) and Bhabha (1990) who gave significance to time, space and place. They argued that the nature of the geographical, historical and social conditions determines the nature of polyphony and interaction in third space.

The safe, supportive environment offered for the participants enabled them to develop a sense of belonging and attachment to the drama summer school. In contrast to their usual education experiences, they felt they owned the space and had control over their learning. As apparent in their responses, the summer school also opened up new spaces for the participants, which allowed them to engage in dialogue and develop shared understanding. Teachers' perceptions of a secure space in the summer school are reflected in the literature. Several studies have shown that providing learners with a safe environment can bestow advantages upon learners. These advantages include self-discovery and shared understanding (Bhabha 1994). For instance, Greenwood (2001) used drama as a creative practice to get teachers and practitioners from diverse cultures together. In that project, Greenwood found that drama created a safe space for participants, where they developed a shared understanding. Similarly, Hulme et al. (2009) studied learning in third spaces. The researchers found that secure spaces provided participants with a platform that enabled them to create and develop shared understanding.

Despite this attachment to the summer school and the enjoyment the participants felt, as apparent in their accounts, they also faced difficulties. Tension was apparent in participants' responses and reflections when they spoke about the challenges they encountered in the drama summer school. This finding is supported by several authors (Bhabha 1994; Aoki 1987) who believe that being in third space can be complex. Greenwood (2001) looked at this issue from participants' perspectives in her study, and it was found that some participants found it difficult to communicate in the new place. However, when tension and difficulties arise in third space, they can be reduced and productively used through meaningful discussions and dialogue. Greenwood (2001) describes third space as 'melting pots' where tension is reduced and a new hybrid collective space emerges.

*The power of drama*

The perceptions of the nine teachers about the power of drama was first highlighted in their responses to the second interview question: What impact did the drama

summer school have on you? The findings suggest that the drama summer school participants believe that drama has a positive impact on them personally, socially and professionally. The findings also concur with other research in the literature (Heathcote 1984; Al-Yamani 2004, 2009). This is supported by Doona's (2014) argument that drama engages the learner physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially.

The participants in my study talked about drama playing a crucial role in shaping their beliefs and attitudes (Takacs 2009). The findings reveal the development of imagination, self-confidence, self-discovery and multiple perspectives. They gained confidence and developed positive attitudes towards learning and others. Drama enabled them to enter in dialogue and establish good friendships. This finding resonates with similar studies in the literature. For instance, Al-Yamani (2009) found that the drama workshop strengthened the relationships between in-service teachers because of their participation in that workshop. Similarly, in her (2004) study with student teachers, Al-Yamani observed that drama strengthened the relationships amongst them. Al-Yamani's participants come from one country. What is unique about the relationships fostered at the drama summer school is that it was between participants from diverse cultures and countries that are politically unstable, and due to the restrictions on the freedom of movement within one country e.g. the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Gaza, and travelling to and from other countries, opportunities to meet up are rare.

The perceptions of the teachers also revealed that drama had given them a sense of empowerment. They lived tensions, expressed themselves and developed critical accounts. They became reflective and critical of their practices, their education system and culture as a whole. This finding is reflected in the reviewed literature. For instance, Heathcote and Bolton (1995) appear to support what the teachers are saying, that drama provides space for individuals and groups to develop unique perspectives. Equally important and relevant to the teachers' responses is Doona's (2014) argument that drama is a political act. This finding is reflected in the work of Al-Yamani who found that student teachers and teacher educators 'developed their critical faculties and were able to criticise their culture, society, family and the educational system' (2004: 265). Empowerment was a significant finding in relation to the power of drama and its impact on the participants. The sense of empowerment experienced by the teachers enables them to continuously reflect on their own practice. This has implications for democratic learning in the education systems of the participants' countries. It could have a beneficial effect on teachers and pupils. To ensure that the new democratic practice adopted by the teachers in the drama summer school is integrated into teaching, it is imperative that the teachers are given freedom and provided with adequate support to

integrate drama into teaching in their schools. This requires understanding and awareness from education policy-makers, curriculum designers, headteachers and educational supervisors to the significance of drama for pupils, teachers and society as a whole.

### *Experimenting with found poetry*

The process of analysing the interviews and creating the found poems allowed me to see data differently. It brought me closer to the research data. Just as Butler-Kisber (2005) found in her study, analysing data through found poetry brought her closer to data. Similarly, Fernandez-Gimenez's (2015) poetic analysis of social-ecological change and communication noted that poetry encouraged her to closely read participants' interview transcripts and search for meaning. Searching for illuminating words and phrases to create the found data poems forced me to read and return to participants' transcripts several times. Going back and forth to highlight key words and meaning from the participants' transcribed data not only helped me arrive at representative themes, but also opened up a space for feeling and connection. It made me think about the research process differently. This is supported by Glesne (1997) who argued that experimenting with found poetry makes the researcher more aware of his or her relationship with the text and research participants. It also enabled me to deal with a large amount of data. In the context of my research study, the eighteen interviews with the research participants resulted in a large volume of raw data. Found poetry helped me to reduce data into seven pages. This finding is supported by Furman and Dill (2015) who argue that poetic analysis is a potent means of data reduction while attending to the essence of participants' lived experience. This accords with other studies in the literature. For instance, in Pithouse-Morgan's (2016) work exploring professional learning through found poetry, she noted that she could compress excerpts taken from her participants' interview transcripts in one composite text. Similarly, in Meyer's (2008) study of teachers' identities, she was able to compress 60 pages of interview transcripts into 6 pages.

Experimenting with found poetry is not without challenges. Representativeness of participants' experiences and findings was a major concern for me in this inquiry. I was unsure of how accurately I was re-presenting their stories and lived experiences. Sending each participant their crafted found poems to check whether they were representative of their stories not only minimized my influence over data and enhanced my reflexivity but also enabled them to maintain their voice in the analysis as creators of meaning not just a source of data. The poems were received positively by the participants who liked reading their own words

in a poetic form. The overwhelming majority of the participants appeared to be satisfied with the outcome and they did not make any changes to the poems. One participant suggested changing a few words and his poems were edited accordingly. This participative approach of member checking is supported by Breckenridge and Clark (2017) who stress the importance of engaging research participants in the research process to minimize power and ensure reflexivity. This finding has close resonance with Amos's (2016) study who found that sharing the crafted poems with her research participants had positively impacted upon them: they found the poems powerful and representative of their lived experience. I do not think we would have engaged in such a participative process if I have not used found poetry in this research.

Poetry has a performative element (Prendergast 2009); I read the found poems at several events and they were perceived positively by the audiences. The performance included reciting the found poems first in Arabic then in English. I performed the found poems in Arabic with Arabic music playing in the background. From audiences' comments during the performances and their feedback afterwards, the found poems appear to have had a profound impact upon them. There is literature evidence to support this finding. For instance, Issac (2011) claims that found poetry has the capacity to communicate research participants' emotions and experiences and represent research data profoundly and artistically. This corresponds with Leggo's (2008) assertion that poetry is not a reporting of the experience, but it is the experience itself. Similarly, Furman argued, poetry is an engagement in a 'creative relationship' (2004: 163).

### *Concluding thoughts*

The findings of this research illustrated the potential of using found poetry as a nonconventional method of data analysis and re-presentation. The found data poems presented in this research study re-present the perceptions and lived experiences of many drama in education summer school participants. The use of found poetry offered me a deeper insight into each of the drama in education summer school participants interviewed in this study. The feelings expressed in the found data poems allow for a richer understanding of the participants' experiences. I wanted to explore other participants' stories and lived experiences to see how they resonate with my story and experience of the drama summer school. The found poems I had created from each participant's transcribed data resonated with my own experience. I had a feeling that I was writing my own experience in the poems. They spoke for me, but they were not about me.

Using found poetry in this study was an opportunity to experiment with an alternative means of data analysis and re-presentation. It offered me an opportunity to practise my creative account, and at the same time, have less control over the data and minimize the power relationship between the research participants and myself as a researcher in this study. The sample of found data poems presented in this research study indicate that found poetry provides a creative technique for exploring participants' perceptions and lived experiences. It can be said that found poetry offers a unique way of analysing and re-presenting qualitative data. I hope that the found data poems presented in this chapter encourage other researchers to use found poetry as an alternative means of data analysis and re-presentation in their research.

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