Building an Ethos of Poetry Pedagogy among Pre-service Teachers through Mock Lesson Experiences within the Poetry-Teaching (POT) Framework: Metrophobia or Metrophilia?

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Abstract

Despite the documented potential of poetry for emotional and personal development and expression in foreign language instruction, the genre is the least popular one. The side-lined nature of poetry pedagogy in English language instruction necessitates further studies exploring its systematic integration to revitalise it. The current case study is part of a larger-scale project on concrete teaching experiences, reflections, insights, new learnings, and realisations, as well as future intentions, of a convenience sample of 39 third-grade pre-service teachers (F=24; M=15). They conducted mock lessons within the six-stage Poetry Teaching Framework (POT) in a two-term required methodology course. POT initially covers six stages, namely, Tune-in, Basic Comprehension, Detailed Analysis, Cultivation, Bridge, and Reflection. The current case study partially focused on participants' possible evolution from metrophobia to metrophilia, namely love for poetry, as well as perceptions. The qualitative data were gathered with a final self-report in the form of an open-ended questionnaire, for such self-administered tools could offer the participants the freedom of expression, thereby resulting in in-depth and authentic data. The process was reported to transform pre-service teachers' existing indifference to poetry. Despite their emerging positivity, cautious and conditional optimism was tracked for several challenges, including complex and archaic language, irrelevance to curricular objectives, lack of teacher interest and related knowledge, perceived risk of resulting in student boredom, the challenging nature of the POT, and lack of real teaching experience. To alleviate teacher metrophobia, the study concludes with suggestions in line with the findings of the current research for pre-service teacher educators.

Keywords: Poetry pedagogy; metrophobia; metrophilia; literature; ELT

INTRODUCTION

Literature should be understood as "a kind of super-genre which can demand more of its readers – and offer more to them – than more predictable genres like the business letter

or a medical report where the function is clearer" (Hall, 2015, p. 44). Encompassing a wide variety of potential instructional materials for English as a Foreign Language (EFL, hereafter), literary texts are broadly divided into three main genres: prose (short stories and novels), drama, and poetry. The existing literature underscores the potential of such literary texts to enrich the process of English language learning by offering authentic input, ensuring cultural and linguistic enrichment, engaging learners personally, and increasing their engagement and motivation (Lazar, 1993).

Despite that widely acknowledged pedagogical potential, literary texts remain underused in EFL due to various challenges resulting from their structural complexity, unique language, learners' language proficiency, lack of immediate relevance to exam-oriented education contexts, need for teacher preparation and pedagogical expertise, and time-consuming nature, to name but a few (Lazar, 1993; Paran, 2008). Poetry is the most marginalised among those genres due to non-standard grammar, complex and unusual vocabulary, a condensed form, figures of speech, and cultural allusions, as well as the need for imagination and personal engagement (Cranston, 2003; Finch, 2003; Schultz, 1996). Among the factors contributing to the underuse of poetry in English language teaching, teachers' negative attitudes towards poetry stand out. Although their awareness of poetry's potential for foreign language instruction is high, they are afraid of poetry and lack the self-confidence to integrate it into their classroom practices (Küçükoğlu & Arıkan, 2011; Petriciuc, 2019; Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019). Situating the fear of poetry as one subtype of bibliophobia, which should be understood as fear of books, libraries, and the acts of visiting libraries, holding and reading books, Fritsicher (2023) coined the term metrophobia to refer to the phobia of poetry (as cited in Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019, p. 2). From a pedagogical perspective, the concept refers to learners' and teachers' apprehension toward poetry due to its perceived linguistic complexity and challenges in meaning-making (Akyel, 1995; Cranston, 2003). Metrophilia, on the other hand, refers to individuals' positive emotional responses to poetry who enjoy engaging with poems. Consequently, teachers who are positively oriented towards poetry are open to integrating it into their classroom practices, provided they follow specific procedures. In the current study, the term metrophobia is used to describe pre-service teachers' self-reported apprehension towards poetry pedagogy. The concept is not assumed as the initial condition of the cohort; instead, it guided the process of examining their affective orientations towards poetry-pedagogy.

The existing literature is limited to poetry pedagogy and related approaches, and much of it has documented chiefly those negative teacher attitudes towards poetry pedagogy. However, there is much room for further studies on how pre-service English teachers experience related approaches and how they shape their pedagogical trajectories. Addressing this gap, the current case study aimed to explore the experiences of a cohort of pre-service English teachers who engaged in poetry pedagogy using the six-stage Poetry Teaching Framework (POT), with particular focus on the development of metrophobia and metrophilia. The study is informed by the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) devised by Kolb (2015). As a four-mode idealised learning cycle, ELT covers both Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualization, and Reflective Observation and Active Experimentations. While the former two modes require gaining experience, the latter two should be understood as the acts of transforming that experience. These four cycles of the theory inform the current study, in which metrophobia served as a conceptual reference point rather than the

participants' assumed initial position, enabling exploration of their self-reported orientation. Participants were informed about the whys and hows of poetry pedagogy and were encouraged and supervised in their active engagement with it. In other words, having been informed about the specific POT framework, they were organised to devise lesson plans and execute them in front of their peers in pair microteaching sessions. They received peer and mentor (the researcher in this case) feedback and reflected on both their own and peers' microteaching performances weekly to gain future insights.

What is distinctive about poetry is that it "reorganises syntax, invents its own vocabulary, freely mixes registers and creates its own punctuation" as well as "draws creatively on a full range of archaisms and dialects, and generates vivid new metaphors" (Lazar, 1993, p. 99). Its challenging nature may yield to metrophobia, i.e., the fear of poetry, which Fritscher (2023) conceptualises as a subcategory of bibliophobia, i.e., the fear of related acts such as reading a book, holding it, or visiting a library. This may make the genre the least popular one among students, pre-service, and in-service teachers (Akyel, 1995; Cranston, 2003).

The well-documented multidimensional potential of integrating poetry into ELT includes promoting language acquisition, cognitive gains, skill development, cultural appreciation, emotional engagement, and aesthetic appreciation (Efendi et al., 2024; Khan, 2020; Kilag et al., 2023; Reazul, 2022). Experimenting with the language can enhance learners' linguistic awareness of its unique uses, which contributes to their language acquisition (Mart, 2021). That conscious awareness of the formal features contributes to meaning construction, thereby aiding language learning (Hanauer, 1997). Cranston (2003) sums up the cognitive and emotional potential when he writes, "poetry not only provides small, manageable units for introducing the art of reading, but also serves to develop, along with the intellect, imagination and sensory awareness, so essential to a love of poetry and literature in general" (p. 955, emphasis in original). As noted by Suwastini and Rahmayanti (2024), lexis enhancement occurs at form, meaning, and use levels. While poems featuring rhyme, rhythm, and meter were found to enhance pronunciation and spelling, the analysis of their figurative and colloquial language—including unusual vocabulary—was found to contribute to the development of word meaning. Lastly, grammatical structures and collocations were found to contribute to world use. Better and critical reading could be enhanced in having learners decode the smallest units and then reach the bigger picture, i.e., bottom-up skills and intensive coding that require focusing on grammar, syntax, and vocabulary (Schultz, 1996). In addition to bottom-up reading strategies, top-down strategies also develop, as learners are expected to make interpretations utilising their existing knowledge and contextual clues (Schultz, 1996). It also supports creative writing development, as learners are finally encouraged to express themselves, such as by adding a stanza to the poem (Schultz, 1996), thereby fostering personalization and self-expression (Gönen, 2018). Various activities such as reading poems aloud in diverse ways, creating alternatives, and responding to poems could offer opportunities to practice oral language skills, i.e., listening and speaking as two primary communication and essential life skills (Hadaway et al., 2001). In particular, its positive impacts on vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation could be summarized as a contribution to the development of speaking skills (Suhadi, 2023). Poetry, in general, and dramatization, in particular, can help learners infer meaning and engage in dialogue with the poet through language and action (Elting & Firkins,

2006). Encouragement of cultural understanding and appreciation is equally well-established (Civelekoğlu & Saka, 2018; Uyumaz et al., 2023). It could develop cultural competence, i.e., empathy and non-judgmental evaluation of cultural differences, through activating both affective awareness and cognitive flexibility (Scott & Huntington, 2002). Poems encourage learners to revise their preconceived cultural ideas, help eliminate biases, promote sensitivity towards others' feelings and ideas, discourage monolithic perspectives, lessen disrespect towards other cultures, and counter discriminatory ideas, attitudes, and behaviours (Rodríguez & Puyal, 2012). Serving "as non-direct agents" (p. 101), poetic texts could increase familiarity with new cultural codes, thereby helping learners get a sense of particular cultures (Cudak, 2004). Besides, particularly in teacher education, poem-writing activities could yield aesthetic creations that are "containers of complex emotional and cultural experience, vital expressions of displacement, joy, connection, frustration, and cross-cultural critique" (Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2017, p. 94). Overall, various potential benefits of poetry pedagogy, including linguistic empowerment, cognitive gains, skill development, cultural appreciation, emotional engagement, and aesthetic appreciation, have been highlighted. However, there is much room for exploratory studies that move beyond such learner-oriented outcomes to gain insight into how teachers experience poetry pedagogy, particularly in pre-service teacher training contexts.

By connecting the documented viewpoints with the traditional Stylistic and Reader-Response approaches (Collie & Slater, 1987; Hall, 2015), scholars have offered practical frameworks that facilitate this integration. One belongs to Dinçer and Koç (2020), who offer a four-step framework, including warm-up/motivation, poem presentation, internationalisation, and production. In the first step, teachers draw students' attention and familiarise them with related concepts. Later, utilising multimedia, teachers introduce the poem and ask some basic comprehension questions. The third step requires making inferences and exploring the underlying meanings. The last stage, on the other hand, promotes productive, skill-based outcomes, develops higher-order thinking skills, and fosters creativity. Another framework, which inspired the current research, belongs to Gönen (2018), who devised The Poetry-Teaching (POT) Framework to encourage the implementation of poetry into both pre-service training and English language instruction by aiming to foster positive orientation towards poetry pedagogy among pre-service teachers and turn them into verse-loving teachers, i.e., "to bridge the gap between literature and language teaching methodology" (p. 28). Its scope as poetry rather than literature in general makes it unique. The framework could be regarded as an amalgam of earlier approaches and models, combining stylistic and reader-response approaches and integrating three models: language, culture, and personal growth. The concept of meaningful literacy, devised by Hanauer (2012), also aligns with the framework, which proposes that integrating life experiences and reflections on them through literary texts can contextualize language learning, thereby resulting in a meaningful process. The framework encourages the integration of all four language skills utilising poems in a six-stage process: tune-in, basic comprehension, detailed analysis, cultivation, bridge, and reflection.

Overall, despite the well-documented potential of integrating poetry into English language teaching in the relevant literature, the hesitancy towards poetry pedagogy remains a persistent issue in ELT. What complicates the matter further is that frameworks with intended positive outcomes, including the POT that specifically target the cultivation of a

positive disposition towards poetry pedagogy, require additional empirical evidence from actual implementations. Such evidence could offer pedagogical insights for the future through documenting teachers' affective trajectories. Therefore, the current case study aimed at exploring the role of the POT as a potential tool rather than a deterministic one in shaping the cohort's self-reported orientations toward poetry.

The poetry pedagogy has been documented to be sidelined (O'Neill, 2006); however, the issue focusing on particularly pre-service teacher aspect, i.e., their lived experiences, emotional engagement, and affective orientations from metrophobia to metrophilia, is worth investigating further (Masbuhin & Liao, 2017; Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019). Concentrating on these constructs, the current study explores participants' positions toward poetry, self-reported orientations, and pedagogical readiness. The well-established role of methodology courses in changing teacher mindset to ensure future integration (Peacock, 2001) points to the room for further studies investigating the effectiveness of such pre-service training snapshots. There are recent calls to explore systematic use of poetry in language classrooms and pre-service teacher perceptions (Gönen, 2018; Suwastini & Rahmayanti, 2024) to contribute to the validation of suggested poetry incorporation frameworks and models (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014) as well as to the attempts of teacher trainers to support future teachers. Such studies could also be regarded as attempts to revitalise the no longer valued poetry pedagogy (Creely, 2019; Hadaway et al., 2001; Hanauer, 1997).

Reacting to the recent demands for a thorough investigation of the controversial poetry pedagogy (Bagherkazemi & Alemi, 2010), a case study was devised to investigate the concrete teaching experiences, reflections, insights, and new learnings and realisations, and future intentions of pre-service teachers in a teacher training course accompanied by the six-stage POT Framework (Gönen, 2018). A part of that major teacher training-oriented study, the current study is guided by the following research questions aimed at investigating pre-service teachers' perceptions of the implementation with a focus on their possible evolution: What are the perceptions of pre-service teachers towards poetry pedagogy within the POT Framework? This question is explored through several interconnected sub-questions: 1.1. how participants' self-articulated orientations toward poetry evolved during their engagement with poetry-informed pedagogy; 1.2. what they thought about the use of canonical and non-canonical content; 1.3. how they perceived the relationship between their microteaching experiences and the theoretical potential of poetry pedagogy, including the factors that shaped these perceptions; and 1.4. how participants conceptualised poetry pedagogy through metaphorical representations that reflected their microteaching experiences.

METHOD
Research Design
The current study adopted a qualitative research design (Dörnyei, 2007) because the research questions guiding the study required in-depth answers regarding participants' experiences and perceptions. Rather than quantifying predetermined variables or validating hypotheses, qualitative inquiries allow researchers to examine participants' experiences, insights, and affective trajectories in depth (Dörnyei, 2007). Among qualitative research methods, case study research was chosen to study pre-service teacher perceptions, which should be understood as an attempt to answer how and why questions and to focus on

contemporary events without controlling behaviours (Yin, 2018). It focused on the experiences and insights of a single cohort of pre-service English teachers engaged in poetry teaching through microteaching, guided by the POT as a course requirement. More specifically, among three types of case studies, namely illustrative, exploratory, and collective ones, the current study fits as an illustrative case study, i.e., an intrinsic case study, for the researcher aimed at understanding the specific experiences and perceptions of a single case in detail rather than exploring overarching issues or early-stage hypotheses (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019). In the current study, the "case" refers to the cohort of 39 pre-service English teachers enrolled in a poetry pedagogy-oriented methodology course, of whom 29 volunteered to return the final self-reports on their experiences and perceptions. Overall, the research design aligns with the current study's focus on the experiences, insights, and affective trajectories of the cohort in a contextual procedure.

Setting and Participants

A 4-year full-time pre-service English language teacher training programme at a public higher education institution in Türkiye was the setting for the current study. The programme, which selects teacher candidates through a nationwide standardised exam, offers courses in content knowledge (48%), pedagogical content knowledge (34%), and general culture knowledge (18%) (CoHE, 2018b). Chosen via convenience sampling, a total of 39 3rd graders (F= 24; M=15) constituted the study sample. They were supposed to take and complete a two-term required methodology course addressing content knowledge, i.e., Literature and Language Instruction I and II in the 2023- 2024 academic year as a curriculum requirement (CoHE, 2018a). They were equipped with knowledge and skills to incorporate novels and short stories into ELT, as well as poetry and drama in the first semester. The data were gathered in the second term for the poetry pedagogy coverage.

While 39 pre-service teachers served as the cohort in the present instructional intervention, only 29 voluntary participants completed the final open-ended questionnaires, which served as the primary data source for the study. The analysis of the background questions showed that the study's total sample consisted of 29 voluntary participants, ages ranging from 21 to 30 years (the youngest 21 years old and the oldest 30 years old). The average age of the participants was 24.17 years. Additionally, while 81% (n=22) reported rarely reading Turkish poetry, 19% (n=5) reported sometimes reading Turkish works. Similarly, the frequency of English poetry reading was low: 89% (n=24) read rarely, and 11% (n=3) read sometimes. Regarding poetry writing experience, 48% (n=13) reported having Turkish poem writing as a school requirement, and 26% (n=7) did so for personal enjoyment. The remaining 26% (n=7) were found not to have experience with Turkish or English poem writing.

The Research Process and the Poetry Pedagogy within the POT Framework

The study procedure included thirteen weeks, including two input weeks, ten concrete experience and reflection weeks, and one follow-up week. The entire weekly procedure, including activities, their descriptions, and the roles of the researcher and participants, is visually organised and tabulated in Appendix I.

After the researcher provided information on the nature of poetry and its stylistic elements, the theoretical foundations of this integration, and the POT Framework, she

presented a sample lesson on the poem "Warning" by Jenny Joseph, accompanied by all activities and materials. Later, she informed the participants about the 12-week process, tasks, and the roles of both parties and assigned both canonical and non-canonical poems, i.e., contemporary ones written by poets from diverse origins, to pre-organised pairs from the classroom list. After the pairs conducted their mock lessons, she offered feedback and asked them to reflect on both their peers' and their own experiences (the ones who conducted lessons on that particular week). In other words, while all participants reflected on their peers weekly, they wrote one self-reflection on their concrete experiences and uploaded it to the institution's Learning Management System. In the final week, the researcher shared the final self-reports on the same LMS and expected the participants to fill in and return them within the deadline limits.

The POT Framework, devised by Gönen (2018), comprises six stages: Tune-in, Basic Comprehension, Detailed Analysis, Cultivation, Bridge, and Reflection. While the Tune-in activates schemata, the Basic Comprehension aims to help learners understand the poem's overall meaning. In Detailed Analysis, learners are expected to analyse the language and meaning of the poem and identify the underlying social and cultural factors and values. In Cultivation, learners are expected to cultivate their takeaways into their lives. However, in the last two stages, learners who adopt the role of teachers attempt to utilise poems to teach English in their mock lessons (the Bridge stage) and to reflect on their experiences (the Reflection stage). Following the same path, the participants devised their lessons, conducted mock lessons, observed their peers, and reflected on self- and peer-performance, possibly touching upon their experiences, understanding, new insights, and future inclinations.

Exploration of the cohort's experiences, insights, and affective trajectories required structuring such a deliberate investigation process. Peer and self-reflections every week, along with teaching artifacts, the researcher's field and microteaching observation notes, which were reported elsewhere, aimed at capturing their affective development. However, the self-reported feelings gathered through the final questionnaire reported in the current research were assumed to help explore their self-reported transformed or sustained metrophobia and metrophilia. The broader study, in this way, aimed at exploring their trajectories through the iterative cycle of input, enactment, feedback, and reflection.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Although final open-ended questionnaires, i.e., self-reports, reflective journal entries, documents, and researcher observations served as the multiple sources of the qualitative data of the larger study, the current paper analysed and interpreted the primary data from the self-reports (Newby, 2014). Those final self-reports in the form of open-ended questionnaires with blank spaces to be filled in in Turkish were assumed to yield in-depth data, as they offer participants the freedom of expression (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023). The total number of items was twelve. Six background questions and six open-ended clarification questions were devised to explore their background and perceptions thoroughly.

Manual coding (Gupta, 2024; Julien, 2008) was used to analyse the qualitative data. In the first cycle, learning the textual data, the researcher read it several times to familiarise herself and organise the raw data into concepts as the basic meaningful units, i.e., codes. Later, in the second cycle, she reached higher levels and more abstract categories (Miles et al., 2014; Neuman, 2014). To enhance the analytical rigor of the process, the researcher

compared those manually generated codes with those computed by ChatGPT, a popular Artificial Intelligence software reported to conduct satisfactory qualitative data analysis and capture codes, themes, and categories reasonably well (Morgan, 2023; Sen et al., 2023; Wachinger et al., 2024). AI served as a reflective and complementary tool rather than a substitute for the researcher's insights. That comparison allowed the researcher to see the codes agreed upon and those not, and encouraged her to check and revise her manual data analysis again. While overlapping coding was allowed in the first round to capture data richness, in the second stage, contrasting categories were operationalised as mutually exclusive, with participants' dominant orientations taken into account. Additionally, while reporting, the researcher shared representative excerpts from the self-reports to support her interpretations and the themes (Gupta, 2024).

Lastly, regarding ethical issues, the researcher received approval from the departmental administration after informing them of the research. Coercing no one into participating, she gathered data from volunteers who provided written informed consent after being informed about the research aims, outcomes, their roles, and rights (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019). Twenty-nine participants filled in and uploaded their reports into the LMS (F=18; M=11). Additionally, the final report was anonymous, with participants assigned codes. Furthermore, all those self-reported data were fully anonymised before they were shared with AI to confirm the manually generated codes. Furthermore, based on the principles of non-maleficence and beneficence, the researcher suggested sharing the initial results with relevant parties to foster a sense of belonging and obtain honest, detailed answers (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023; Gupta, 2024; Miles et al., 2014). Lastly, the researcher avoided research fraud through correctly reporting the data (Neuman, 2014). Although access to data is restricted due to participant privacy concerns, the raw data and codes may be available from the author upon request, as suggested by the methodology literature (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Participants' Perceptions of Poetry and Its Perceived Role

Participants were asked to comment on their personal feelings about poetry as a literary genre and its role in their lives. The findings reflect their self-articulated perceptions and reflections rather than empirical evidence of evolution. Four themes were derived from their self-reports: indifference to poetry, self-reported orientations toward poetry, importance for personal/emotional development and expression, and contribution to cognitive and intellectual development, as tabulated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Self-reported Feelings towards Poetry

Themes/Categories	Indicators	Participant Codes
Indifference towards Poetry	-Lack of personal interest in poetry	-P1, P3, P6, P9, P11, P14, P19, P22, P23, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29
Self-reported orientations toward poetry	-From motorphobia to metrophilia	-P2
Personal/Emotional Development and Expression	-Growth in emotional maturity, self-awareness, and emotional expression	-P4, P5, P8, P12, P13, P15, P16, P17, P18, P20, P21, P24

Cognitive and Intellectual Enhancement	- Growth in thinking abilities	-P7, P10, P20

As seen above, most participants (n = 15) were generally indifferent to poetry, although they acknowledged its potential to benefit those who manage to understand and internalise it. However, many (n = 12) highlighted its importance for emotional and personal development and expression. To illustrate, the following excerpt points to those potential contributions, yet it lacks personal concern for the genre: *I think poetry is a very effective tool for conveying emotions. I find some poems, especially those with clever wordplay and implicit meanings, very successful. When I read it, I am surprised by how the poet expresses this (...). Although I even find it wonderful, I cannot say that it has an important place in my life. Sometimes, even though some lines or stanzas make me feel like I have experienced them or were written for me, I do not remember that line or stanza again after it makes me feel emotions for a second.* (P16)

To explore their reflections on their orientations towards poetry, the participants were asked whether their views on the use of poems as language-teaching materials changed before and after the process. Their responses were categorised into two broad categories: positive attitudinal transformations and negative attitudinal shifts, as tabulated below.

Table 2. The Self-articulated Contribution of the Process on Perceptions

Themes/Categories	Indicators	Participant Codes
Positive Attitudinal Transformations	-Substantial perspective reorientation towards a favourable mindset	-P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P14, P15, P16, P17, P19, P21, P27, P29
	-Conditional embrace with concerns	-P5, P9, P13, P18, P22, P23, P24, P26, P28
	-Marginal contribution to favourable outlook	-P1, P25
Negative Attitudinal Shifts	-Adverse attitudes towards poetry pedagogy	-P6, P20

The first category, i.e., attitudinal transformations, reflects participants' self-reported perceived reorientation towards poetry. While all participants (n = 27) pointed to the transformative role of the process in cultivating more positive attitudes towards poetry pedagogy, a few cases remained negative. Those who reported a significant contribution constituted 55% of the cohort (n = 16), while those reporting conditional acceptance accompanied by concerns accounted for 31% (n = 9). The proportions of participants reporting only a slight shift and those maintaining adverse attitudes were equal, at 7.5% each (n = 2). The following excerpt best exemplifies the widely shared positive perceptions: *Before this theoretical and practical course, I had some doubts about the use of poems in language teaching, but after the course, my views changed for the better. I realized that in addition to improving language skills, poems also enrich students' emotional and aesthetic experiences. Additionally, during the lesson, I observed how effective poems were in increasing creativity and self-expression skills. This experience showed that using poems as language teaching material offers students multiple benefits.* (P29)

On the other hand, several participants (n = 9) acknowledged the development of a more positive attitude while also voicing various concerns, such as poetry's suitability for older rather than younger learners due to its complexity, a perceived lack of teacher interest

in the genre, its limited contribution when used solely for vocabulary development, and the need to employ poetry for shorter periods or as extracurricular activities to add variety to classes. One participant reflected: *I was prejudiced before the classes and still have concerns. Even as English majors, we sometimes had difficulty in understanding and internalising the assigned poems. I believe poems could be integrated as brief segments rather than fully integrated.* (P24)

Metrophobia to Metrophilia?
It was also explored whether the participants had a fear of poetry or developed one, and whether the idea of integrating poetry into their future classes scared them. Table 3 presents the themes, their indicators, and the participant codes.

Table 3. Metrophobia or Metrophilia?

Themes/Categories	Indicators	Participant Codes
Lack of Metrophobia	-Absence of fear of poetry	-P2, P4, P6, P10, P11, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P26, P27
Metrohobia	-Fear of complex language	-P3, P5, P8, P9, P22, P23, P24, P25, P29
	-Fear of allusions and references	-P3, P28
	-Trepidation to express personal feelings	-P8
	-Fear of being judged while reciting poems	-P7
	-Fear of archaic language	-P1
	-Lack of personal interest	-P16
Metrophilia	-A strong fondness for poetry	-P12

Out of 29 participants, 15 (52%) reported that they did not experience anxiety associated with poetry. To illustrate, P5 stated that he did not label his feelings as fear, yet his positive attitudes towards other genres made him feel hesitant: *"No, but I still have some uncertainty; this uncertainty results from the question of 'why should I use poetry?' This is because there are alternatives, such as novels and short stories. I believe integrating them into the lesson is easier."* On the other hand, 45% of all participants (n = 13) stated that they felt anxious and uneasy when they were confronted with poetry for mainly five reasons, namely complex language, literary allusions and references to historical events and cultural values that require reading between the lines, trepidation about expressing personal feelings and ideas while analysing poems, the use of archaic language, and fear of being judged by others while reciting poems. The remaining participant was found to be neutral. To exemplify, P22 referred to the difficulty of understanding what poems really mean when she wrote, *"I generally struggle to understand the main idea, and when I read poetry, the emotion of the poem does not reach me; even if I understand the poem overall, I cannot grasp the deeper meanings within it."* Additionally, P16 touched upon a lack of personal interest in poems: *"The verb 'to worry' rather than 'to fear' would be more accurate for my case. Poetry is not a part of my life in any way. I do not read poems. If asked to name some Turkish or international poets or to list significant poems by important poets, I do not think I could name many."* Only one participant was found to demonstrate metrophilia, that is, a fondness for poetry, which he

had made an important part of his life. He stated that *"he read poems every day,"* as he considered the genre a way to become more aware of oneself and to express personal feelings and ideas.

Additionally, the analysis of the item, whether the idea of integrating poetry into their future classes scared them, yielded four broader themes, as tabulated in Table 4.

Table 4. Perceptions towards Poetry Pedagogy

Themes/Categories	Indicators	Participant Codes
Confidence in Poetry Pedagogy	-Feeling assured and self-reliant	-P2, P4, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P19, P27
Apprehension about Poetry Pedagogy	-Concerns about language complexity	-P3, P18, P24, P29
	-Irrelevant to the curricular objectives	-P6, P21, P25
	-Lack of personal interest and knowledge	-P3, P16, P22, P23
	-Being tiresome for students	-P26, P28, P29
	-Challenging nature of integration	-P21
	-Lack of teaching experience	-P16
Cautious Optimism	-Lack of student interest	-P1
	-Lack of technological infrastructure at schools	-P7
	-Need for initial student preparation	-P9
	-Careful material selection	-P10
	-Utility scepticism	-P5
	-Limited non-linguistic objectives	-P8
Indifferent Attitude	-Opposition to the use of poems	-P20

As the table above demonstrates, the number of participants who expressed confidence in poetry pedagogy (n = 10; 35%) and those who developed apprehension (n = 12; 41%) was relatively similar. The qualitative analysis pointed to the role of the course in providing both theoretical foundations and example activities and materials, as well as opportunities to practise and reflect on their own and their peers' actions and decisions: *The idea of integrating poetry does not seem scary to me in any way because I learned in detail how to use poetry in a 40-minute lesson in the Literature and Language Instruction course in this semester. There is a saying that the unknown scares people, and the reason why I am not afraid of poetry is that I know what kind of weapon poetry is and how to use this weapon.* (P11)

Participants who raised concerns reported various issues, including the complexity of poetic language, perceived irrelevance to curricular objectives, a lack of personal interest in poetry and related knowledge, the risk of boring students, the challenging nature of the POT framework, and limited teaching experience. To illustrate, P29 touched upon condensed poetic language, her lack of interest, and the perceived lack of student interest as follows: *The idea of integrating poetry into English instruction makes me very nervous. The poems' dense, complex language can make them difficult for students to understand, negatively*

affecting their motivation. I also think not every student will enjoy poetry equally, and this method may be boring for some. I believe that more practical and direct methods should be preferred in language teaching.

Beyond these two categories, several participants (n = 6; 21%) expressed cautious optimism, in which a hopeful outlook was combined with an awareness of potential risks such as limited student interest, inadequate technological infrastructure in schools, the need to prepare students emotionally and cognitively, the importance of careful poem selection aligned with curricular aims, and the limited utility of poetry for non-linguistic rather than linguistic objectives. To illustrate, P10 noted the following considerations: "I am not afraid of integrating poetry, but I do have minor concerns." *For example, students' wishes and attitudes are paramount. I should choose a poem that suits them, and I should draw their attention at the beginning of the lesson. It is not an easy job, but it is important.*

Utility of Canonical and Non-canonical Poetry from Various Nationalities

The participants' perceptions of the inclusion of canonical works by English and American poets, as well as non-canonical poetry from various nationalities, were also explored, yielding two broad themes: supporters of multicultural and monocultural content.

Table 5. Perceptions towards Content

Themes/Categories		Indicators	Participant Codes
Multicultural Supporters	Content	-Intercultural awareness and understanding	-P4, P5, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P21, P22, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29
		-The importance of poem clarity	-P3, P5, P8, P9, P24, P28, P29
		-Potential for cognitive, emotional, and personal development	-P7, P15, P19, P22, P25
		-The importance of compatibility with curricular objectives	-P5, P28
		-The importance of choosing well-known poems for materials availability	-P14
		-The importance of values and meanings	-P23
Monocultural Supporters	Content	-Poems by local poets (Turkish)	-P1
		-Poems by British poets	-P20

As shown in Table 5 above, almost all participants (n = 25) welcomed the use of poems by poets from around the world rather than canonical works, mostly by American and British poets. Only two voiced the need to use poems by Turkish poets to preserve and transmit local values to future generations, and by British poets to expose students to the purest variety of English. Those who supported multicultural content pointed to the potential of variety to increase cultural awareness and understanding (n = 21) and to promote cognitive, emotional, and personal development (n = 5). Among these supporters, some (n = 7) reported that what mattered was poem clarity rather than the poet, arguing

that simple poems aligned with students' levels and free from excessive abstraction and figurative language were key. For some participants (n = 2), compatibility with curricular objectives was the primary concern, while for one participant, the thematic content of poems addressing values and diverse meanings was of utmost importance. Another participant highlighted the importance of selecting poems by well-known poets, noting that this could facilitate access to rich textual and audiovisual materials. The following excerpt by P16 exemplifies the perceived importance of variety for (inter)cultural development: *While teaching a global language in the globalised world, I do not think it is right to focus on a single nation and only cite resources from there. Art is one of the best ways to spread culture. Since works of art from different nations contain the cultural elements of that nation, they are one of the most important tools in adding cultural awareness to students. I am in favour of selecting and presenting works by artists of different nationalities. It is an excellent method for both the education provider and the education recipient to improve themselves. Of course, it is always better to go and experience the culture on the spot, but examining the works that give voice to those who cannot be visited and seen in the classroom is a great way to open different windows for students.*

Perceived Alignment Between Theory and Practice

Participants were also asked whether their practical experiences in the microteaching sessions reflected the well-documented potential of poetry pedagogy. The identified codes of participants' perceived orientations fell into three main themes, namely (1) alignment with theory, (2) cautious positivity, and (3) theory–practice gap. The first theme encompassed sub-themes of cultural enrichment (P3, P15, P16, P27), vocabulary development (P3, P4, P8, P10, P12, P27, P29), promotion of oral production skills (P4, P8, P10, P12, P16, P22, P29), enhancement of higher-order thinking skills (P4, P8, P12, P22, P29), personal and emotional development (P3, P12, P15, P22, P29), and learner motivation (P4, P8, P15, P27, P29).

The second theme, cautious positivity, included the following sub-themes: the unpredictable nature of the classroom (P7, P19, P21, P25, P28), the need for careful teacher preparation (P11, P14, P23), careful material selection (P13, P18), low student proficiency (P5), crowded classrooms (P5), and perceived learner reluctance (P5). The final theme, theory–practice gap, covered the sub-theme of discrepancy between what is expected and what is experienced in practice (P1, P6, P20, P24, P26).

The number of participants who were cautiously positive about the benefits of poetry pedagogy (n = 11) slightly exceeded the number who highlighted alignment between theory and practice (n = 10). Five participants explicitly stated that the benefits of poetry pedagogy documented in the literature could not be fully observed in practice. Those expressing cautious positivity could be described as holding a balanced stance: while they acknowledged the potential benefits, they emphasised the necessity of real classroom conditions and identified several factors essential for successful implementation, including careful teacher preparation (n = 3), careful material selection (n = 2) aligned with student level, interests, and curricular aims, and classroom size (n = 1). To illustrate, P23 clarified some of these reservations as follows: *If the teacher devises good lesson plans and prepares activities that students can enjoy in line with the POT framework, they can realize the advantages mentioned in the book. However, unfortunately, it will be impossible to achieve*

those benefits with poorly prepared lesson plans. Thus, these two align with each other, but lessons must be prepared with attention to the students' characteristics and needs. (P23)

Conceptualisation of Poetry Pedagogy through Metaphor Analysis

Lastly, to explore participants' overall attitudes towards poetry pedagogy, they were asked to create a metaphor and justify their choice. The participants produced 27 valid metaphors, which were analysed in terms of their source domains and entailments. The metaphors fell into three source domains—experience (n = 13), object (n = 8), and situation (n = 6)—with positive, negative, neutral, and ambivalent connotations. Overall, the metaphors could be categorised into four broad themes—positive, negative, neutral, and ambivalent—which are presented in Appendix II in descending order.

The positive metaphors (n = 8) highlighted the role of poetry pedagogy in enriching the teaching process and enhancing lesson quality, often conceptualised as a catalyst for growth. Metaphors with ambivalent entailments (n = 7) suggested that poetry pedagogy offers valuable outcomes widely documented in the literature, while also being demanding and requiring patience and careful preparation. Negative metaphors (n = 7) expressing dissatisfaction foregrounded the complex nature of the poems, which may not be suitable for all learners and may necessitate challenging, meticulous planning. Finally, neutral metaphors (n = 5) reflected the layered meanings of poems and the need for a step-by-step instructional approach supported by appropriate training and materials. Overall, the findings point to a stance of cautious optimism among the participants, which is aptly captured in the metaphor articulated by P18: *Integrating poems into English teaching is like swimming in the ocean, because it is as mysterious, admirable, effective and useful as opening up to a different world, but at the same time, this puts you in danger of drowning if you are not careful. Poetry offers different worlds, perspectives, vocabulary, knowledge, etc. to everyone, young and old. However, teachers should be careful when integrating poetry into their lessons, take grade level, subject, and language knowledge into account, and definitely support this with engaging and useful activities.* (P18)

Overall, these metaphors suggest that participants conceptualised poetry pedagogy—drawing on their theoretical readings and microteaching experiences—as a multifunctional pedagogical strategy that addresses linguistic, cognitive, and affective dimensions, albeit with certain limitations. This conceptualisation closely mirrors the perspectives reported in the existing literature.

DISCUSSION

The current study, as part of a larger teacher–training–oriented project considered for publication elsewhere, attempted to explore pre-service teachers' perceptions of poetry pedagogy within the POT framework, focusing on their possible evolution and transition from metrophobia to metrophilia as well as their overall views. The findings showed that more than half of the participants, who had previously expressed indifference towards poetry as a literary genre in their personal lives despite recognising its potential for emotional and personal development and expression, came to understand the potential of integrating poems into foreign language instruction. Despite this conceptual and attitudinal awareness, cautious optimism and positivity were observed, as participants voiced concerns about complex language, irrelevance to curricular objectives, lack of personal interest in

poetry and related knowledge, the perceived risk of boring students with poems, the challenging nature of the POT framework, and limited teaching experience. In other words, participants who demonstrated an understanding of poetry's pedagogical potential, rather than outright rejection, still exhibited pedagogical hesitation due to the nature of the genre and the Turkish educational context. Briefly, although the methodology course functioned effectively in reshaping attitudes and acceptance of poetry pedagogy, it did not fully resolve concerns related to classroom implementation.

These findings partially support the well-documented teacher trepidation surrounding poetry pedagogy, particularly due to its perceived complexity (Akyel, 1995; Cranston, 2003; Fritsicher, 2023; Lazar, 1993). Additionally, positive perceptions—attributed mainly to poetry's potential to encourage cultural understanding and appreciation (Civelekoğlu & Saka, 2018; Cudak, 2004; Rodríguez & Puyal, 2012; Scott & Huntington, 2002; Uyumaz et al., 2023) and enhance lexical development (Suwastini & Rahmayanti, 2024)—align with existing literature. Furthermore, the positive impact of the poetry pedagogy–oriented methodology course supports the findings of Çetinavcı and Tütüniş (2012) and Gönen (2018), who reported transformed pre-service teacher perspectives and increased motivation. However, this contrasts with the findings of Kaşlıoğlu and Ersin (2018), who identified limited effects of such training programmes.

Taken together, the findings indicate a self-reported shift from distance to appreciation towards poetry pedagogy. Participants demonstrated emerging awareness of poetry's pedagogical potential; however, this change appeared to remain largely at the level of awareness. Their cautious optimism, alongside a range of concerns, suggests that this shift did not translate into complete pedagogical confidence in authentic classroom contexts, particularly within the Turkish education system. In other words, while the methodology course targeting pedagogical confidence and readiness through the POT framework increased awareness, lingering uncertainty points to the need for further modelling practices, scaffolding, and experiential learning opportunities during pre-service teacher education.

Overall, although such training initiatives have the potential to transform pre-service teachers' perspectives, cautious acceptance in the presence of diverse concerns is unsurprising. Consistent with the literature, many teachers do not readily embrace poetry pedagogy. This reluctance may stem from the requirements of the Turkish education system, which prioritises a standardised, content-heavy language curriculum, potentially pressuring teachers to focus on coverage rather than experimentation. Administrative and parental expectations may further intensify this pressure. Nevertheless, gradual change is possible, beginning with shifts in teacher mindset so that such transformation can eventually influence classroom practice. To alleviate teacher metrophobia, several recommendations aligned with the current study's findings can be offered.

First, teacher awareness needs to be strengthened, as teacher beliefs play a central role in shaping instructional behaviour and learning outcomes (Borg, 2011). Despite the controversial nature and reported limited impact of poetry-integrated English methodology courses (Kaşlıoğlu & Ersin, 2018), such training can still reshape pre-service teachers' views and enhance motivation (Gönen, 2018). However, these courses must be carefully designed to combine theoretical grounding, experience in poetry analysis, sample lesson plans, teaching materials, and field experience. In this regard, teacher educators may draw on

frameworks with reported effectiveness, such as the POT framework developed by Gönen (2018), which fostered teacher motivation, creativity, self-expression, real-life connection, interaction, and understanding through mock lessons and reflective practices, ultimately supporting poetry appreciation. Nevertheless, challenges identified in the literature—such as the time and effort required to develop materials and the difficulty of identifying clear linguistic focuses in poems due to their limited pedagogical explicitness—must be addressed (Gönen, 2018). Teacher educators can support future teachers by providing exemplar lesson plans, classroom-ready activities and materials aligned with K–12 contexts, conducting demonstration lessons, offering opportunities for teaching practice, and encouraging systematic reflection.

Second, as stylistic analysis of poems in initial training courses has been shown to promote engaging language-awareness activities, reduce fear of integrating poetry, and increase learner interest and engagement (Akyel, 1995), pre-service teachers should be equipped with robust poem-analysis skills. One possible approach is posing poems, in which learners unpack poetic texts and express the main idea in their own words, thereby making poetry less intimidating and helping students *"unpack the poetic texts in a less daunting way as they can rely on their English mastery without having cognitive block"* (Amri & Basthomi, 2022, p. 201). In addition, pre-service teachers should be encouraged to adopt the Formeaning Response Approach (form + meaning) proposed by Kellem (2009), which integrates stylistic and reader-response traditions (Collie & Slater, 1987; Hall, 2015) by balancing attention to linguistic form with personal engagement and meaning-making.

Furthermore, combining macro- and micro-level strategies, Creely (2019) proposes four principles to reimagine poetry as *"pedagogical ideas that are actionable in classrooms"* (p. 21): modelling, integrating, re-centring, and challenging. Modelling involves teachers writing, performing, and reflecting on poetry themselves. Integration refers to embedding poetry not only within English lessons but across the broader curriculum. Re-centring encourages poetry engagement beyond the classroom into personal spaces. At the same time, challenging entails questioning traditional views of poetry as an elite cultural form and repositioning it as part of everyday popular culture.

Finally, the current study is not without limitations. As it relied partly on self-reported data, the possibility of social desirability bias cannot be excluded. Future studies should therefore incorporate data triangulation through classroom observation and document analysis to enhance credibility and validity. In addition, the case study design limits generalisability; however, it offers valuable pedagogical insights for teacher educators. Future research employing cross-cultural designs could further enrich the understanding of poetry pedagogy across diverse educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore pre-service English teachers' perceptions of poetry pedagogy within the Poetry Teaching Framework, with particular attention to perceptual change, affective orientations toward poetry, content preferences, theory–practice alignment, and conceptualisations of poetry pedagogy. The findings indicate that participants' initial relationships with poetry were primarily characterized by indifference and uncertainty rather than overt resistance or metrophobia. Through systematic engagement with poetry pedagogy—supported by staged instruction, microteaching

experiences, and structured reflection—participants developed more informed, critical, and pedagogically grounded perspectives on poetry as a viable resource in EFL instruction.

Rather than producing widespread metrophilia, the intervention fostered cautious openness and heightened pedagogical awareness. Participants became increasingly able to articulate both the affordances and the constraints of poetry pedagogy, signalling the emergence of professional judgement rather than affect-driven acceptance. Poetry came to be viewed as a resource with potential to support linguistic development, cultural awareness, emotional engagement, and higher-order thinking, provided that instructional design, material selection, and learner readiness were carefully aligned with curricular aims and classroom realities. The relative rarity of intense emotional attachment to poetry underscores the importance of cultivating pedagogical confidence and instructional competence over affective enthusiasm in pre-service teacher education.

In addition, participants' preference for non-canonical and multicultural poetry reflects a growing sensitivity to the global and intercultural dimensions of English language teaching. At the same time, their emphasis on poem clarity, curricular compatibility, and classroom feasibility reveals a pragmatic orientation towards instructional decision-making. Reflections on theory–practice alignment further demonstrate that, while many of the theoretical benefits of poetry pedagogy were recognised during microteaching, they were perceived as conditional and highly context-dependent. Collectively, these findings suggest that poetry pedagogy is not rejected by pre-service teachers but approached with measured caution, shaped by awareness of institutional constraints, learner diversity, and limited teaching experience. Consequently, teacher education programmes need to move beyond advocating the potential of poetry pedagogy and explicitly address its practical challenges through sustained modelling, scaffolded practice, and opportunities for contextualised experimentation.

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