



Prospective EFL teachers' perception toward teaching English vocabulary through poetry

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Poetry has been reported to promote language awareness and authentic learning sources. As poems are composed in carefully arranged words to form rhyming sounds with beautiful rhythm, the present study aimed to reveal EFL students' perceptions of using poetry to teach English vocabulary. As a qualitative research, the present study observed eighty-seven short essays on using English poems for improving students' vocabulary written by students in an English Language Education Department in Bali. It was revealed that the student-teachers perceived poetry to help improve students' acquisition of word form, use, and meaning. Forty-four students wrote poems that could improve students' understanding of English word forms; twenty-three students argued that poetry could improve students' pronunciation. Twenty-one participants believed poems could improve students' spelling. In terms of word meaning, a total of thirty vouched for the use of poetry for introducing figurative languages (twenty-three students), enhancing students' acquisition of colloquial vocabulary (eleven students), and familiarizing students with unfamiliar words (eleven participants). Nine students insisted that poems could be used to improve students' word use, whereas six students believed poems could display grammatical functions. At the same time, three participants recognized the use of poems for acquainting students with collocations. These results imply that future EFL teachers recognize the potential of bringing English poetry as a medium for improving their EFL students' vocabulary, hinting at the need for further research on the systematic procedure of how to implement poetry into EFL classrooms.

Keywords: EFL, perceptions, poetry, student-teachers, vocabulary

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INTRODUCTION

Literary works have been acknowledged as authentic sources for language teaching and learning (Ghofur, 2022; Gönen, 2018; Hismanoğlu, 2005; Nanda & Susanto, 2020; Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022; Senawati et al., 2021; Sukmawan & Setyowati, 2022; Wijaya et al., 2021; Yeasmin et al., 2011). Ashirbaeva (2020) highlights that using literature is an advantageous way to involve the learner as a whole person and a good opportunity for revealing their opinion, reactions, and feelings through integrating appropriate methods and approaches for increasing their language and literature competency. Furthermore, students can acquire from literature examples of values and insights for building their characters (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Puspawati et al., 2021; Riris et al., 2023; Suwastini et al., 2020; Suwastini, Pebriyanti, et al., 2023; Suwastini, Saraswati, et al., 2023). From all the literary works students learn, poetry has been commonly taught in English (Amri & Basthomi, 2022; Antika, 2017; Mahmud, 2017; Rahimipour, 2020).

[Mart \(2021\)](#) argues that poetry is a semantic learning source that develops language knowledge for all levels and engages students' imagination effectively. There are several advantages of using poetry as a learning source in EFL classrooms, such as providing students with a different point of view of language, motivating students to explore the interpretation of the language context, making students familiar with figures of speech, and improving basic language skills ([Baharuddin et al., 2022](#); [Beaumont, 2022](#); [Rahimipour, 2020](#)).

English language teachers have consideration in selecting materials to achieve the EFL learning goal, which can communicate in a foreign language fluently ([Concannon-Gibney, 2021](#); [Keshavarzi, 2012](#); [Lee et al., 2019](#)). Teachers also have to be aware of students' difficulties in learning. [Alamri & Rogers \(2018\)](#) reveal that the learners' most significant challenge is learning new words. Further, [Harmon et al. \(2018\)](#) emphasize that vocabulary is an essential language feature used to create various topics in different subject matter areas. Relating to the importance of learning vocabulary and poetry as useful teaching media, previous research already found that poetry is an influential media for improving students' vocabulary ([Abida & Kuswardani, 2018](#); [Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017](#); [Antika, 2017](#); [Marcus-Quinn, 2016](#); [Suwastini & Dewi, 2023](#)). Poetry is seen as authentic and flexible material that will provide students with various activities with its integration with teaching strategies. [Muthmainnah et al. \(2020\)](#) emphasize that most students prefer learning English with poetry because they need material with a rich vocabulary and know word meaning and use of English words.

According to [Mudzielwana \(2016\)](#), teachers should develop a deep level of word knowledge and exposure to the meaning and form in communication for students. Besides, [Kalogirou et al. \(2019\)](#) mention the classroom principles for vocabulary learning, such as opportunities for incidental and

intentional vocabulary learning, active strategy to involve students' participation in vocabulary learning, and training new vocabulary for long-term memory. Aspects of vocabulary learning must be introduced to students ([Brown, 2011](#)). [Brown \(2011\)](#) divides vocabulary elements into word form, meaning, and word use. In teaching vocabulary, teachers have to reach the goals of vocabulary teaching, such as students know the written and spoken form of words, the meaning of a word based on the context, and word order to produce a meaningful sentence. Student teachers must prepare language teaching awareness for students.

In the meantime, English Language Education students have two roles: as student teachers and college students who learn poetry as literary works and teaching media. Therefore, it is crucial to know their view on using poetry as teaching media, especially teaching vocabulary as an essential language feature. It is crucial because they must develop their language competency, be exposed to the different teaching materials of a textbook, and engage students with creative learning activities.

The present research aims to analyze the perception of English Language Education students on using poetry as teaching media for teaching vocabulary. The present research used synthesized theory about classifying vocabulary elements from [Brown \(2011\)](#) and [Harmer \(2003\)](#). This study is expected to shed light on how future teachers view the role of literature, especially poetry, in improving students' vocabulary and their English proficiency in general.

METHODS

The present research used an analysis model from [Miles et al. \(2014\)](#). This interactive data analysis model occurred simultaneously, including data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion drawing, as shown in [Figure 1](#).

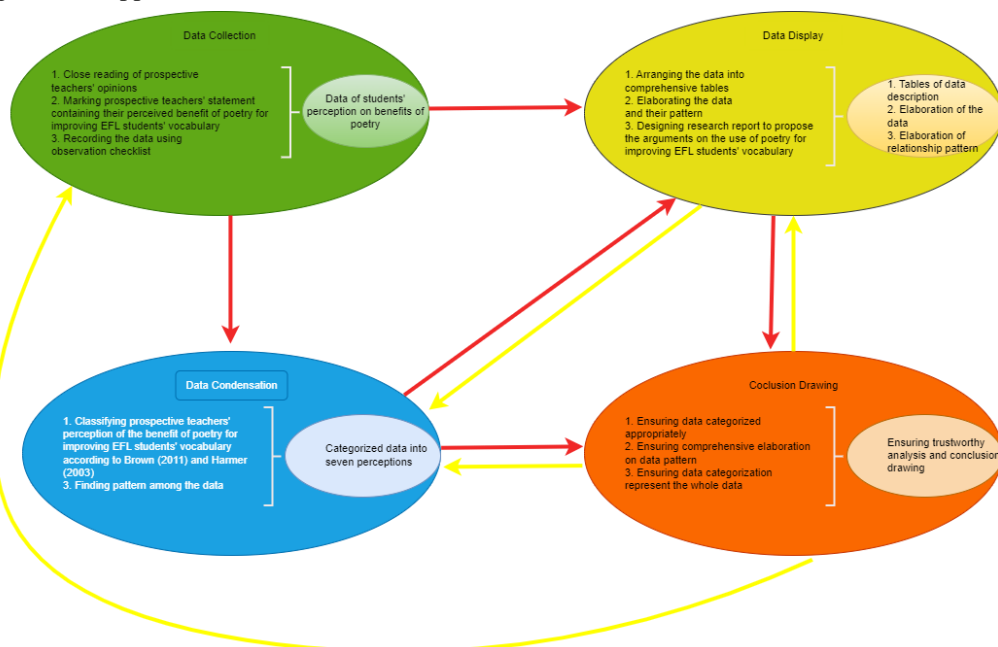


FIGURE 1 | Research procedure adaptation from [Miles et al. \(2014\)](#)

The data was collected from eighty-seven final essay projects from English Language Education students about their view on poetry to teach vocabulary. The researchers, as the main instrument, close-read the result regarding the students' opinions related to the perceived benefit of poetry for improving students' vocabulary.

Data tabulation was made to map out the data. After that, the data were classified into seven perceptions, namely pronunciation, spelling, figurative language, colloquial language, unfamiliar words, grammatical function, and collocation in the data condensation. In the data display, the tabulation was arranged into comprehensive tables. At this step, elaboration was made following the data and their pattern regarding prospective teachers' opinions on the benefits of poetry for improving students' vocabulary. The previously classified perception was elaborated and interpreted in displaying the data based on [Brown \(2011\)](#) and [Harmer \(2003\)](#) theories. Those perceptions were grouped into word form, word meaning, and word use. The last was concluding the view on students' perception of using poetry to teach students vocabulary. During the conclusion drawing, the researchers went through the categorization and data categorization repeatedly to ensure trustworthy analysis. Thus, the research procedures were simultaneous conduct of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study revealed that eighty-seven participants had different perceptions of using poetry to teach English vocabulary. There were seven views on the use of poetry to teach vocabulary. They perceived that poetry could improve students' pronunciation, practice students' spelling, introduce the figure of speech, introduce colloquial language, help students analyze unfamiliar words, introduce grammar functions, and practice collocation. The present research classified each perception into three classes: word form, meaning, and word use. The data is presented in [Figure 2](#).

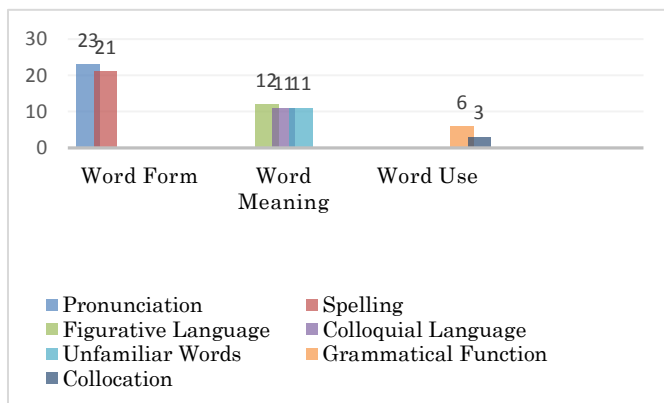


FIGURE 2 | English Language Education Students' Perception in Teaching Vocabulary with Poetry

Referring to the diagram above, most students believed poetry could train pronunciation. It means students can pronounce words better while learning to read poetry. Only three participants perceived that collocation in poetry could improve students' vocabulary. Few saw that the combination of words could develop students' vocabulary. Based on the diagram above, the perceptions were classified into three classifications based on the underlying theories used in this paper, which were from [Brown \(2011\)](#) and [Harmer \(2003\)](#). Further, the discussion of the results in the present study presented three aspects of vocabulary by Brown and Harmer.

[Mardali & Siyyari \(2019\)](#) reveal that teachers generally believe vocabulary includes lexical instruction in memory, meaning, and function. As a result, vocabulary-teaching activity emphasizes remembering with referential materials. This finding is supported by [Nanda & Susanto \(2020\)](#), who argue that most teachers rarely use authentic materials in teaching vocabulary even though the students need examples of the tangible form and use of the words. Further, in vocabulary knowledge, [Brown \(2011\)](#) emphasizes word form, word meaning, and word use, while [Harmer \(2003\)](#) highlights word meaning, word use, and grammar. [Brown \(2011\)](#) explains that the word form includes whether it is the spoken or written form of the words, while word meaning, concept, referents, associations, and word use contain grammar function, collocation, and register. [Harmer \(2003\)](#) mentions that word meaning includes its denotation and connotation, word use such as idiom and collocation, while grammar rules word use. Based on both theories, it can be synthesized that three elements in teaching vocabulary must be included: word form, word meaning, and word use.

Vocabulary elements such as word form, meaning, and use ([Brown, 2011](#); [Harmer, 2003](#)) were found in the participants' perception of teaching vocabulary through poetry. Their perceptions were classified into these vocabulary elements. Perceptions in improving students' pronunciation and spelling were classified into the word form. Introducing figurative speech, collocation, and unfamiliar words in poetry were classified into word meanings. In contrast, perceptions about grammar function and collocation were classified into word use. The discussion of those classifications was as follows.

Word Form

According to [Brown \(2011\)](#) and [Harmer \(2003\)](#), word form deals with how the word is formed into spoken and written language. The respondents' perceptions of improving pronunciation and spelling in writing were included in this definition. Twenty-three out of eighty-seven participants perceived pronunciation, and twenty-one of them viewed students' spelling in written form. [Hong \(2018\)](#) argues that poetry creatively integrates language and literacy learning in line with the participants' choices. It means that poetry

creatively supports students' vocabulary learning with the integration of language skills and literacy. Spelling and pronunciation are part of literacy learning. They are also included in receptive and productive skills because the students will produce a written text through spelling with their vocabulary and correctly pronouncing the poem.

Improving Students' Pronunciation

Twenty-three out of eighty-seven students perceived that poetry could direct students in pronouncing vocabulary better. Most participants view poetry as a guide in pronouncing words because of its effectiveness and elements. A respondent argued, "The things that can improve students' pronunciation are the elements of the poem such as the rhyme, rhythm, and meter" (P. E19). While the other viewed "... reading poetry out loud train foreign language students to produce stressed sound appropriately." (P. F24). The elements of poetry in improving pronunciation are also stated by [Mart \(2021\)](#). Mart reveals that students' ears quickly catch rhythms and sound structures in poetry. Therefore, listening to or reading poetry develops new vocabulary and pronunciation. Further, a study from [Kanonidou & Papachristou \(2019\)](#) about using song, lyrics, and poetry supports the students' views in the present study. The study results reveal that vocabulary and pronunciation are the skills facilitated by song, lyrics, and poetry without minimizing the other aspects of language. It is because songs, lyrics, and poetry are seen as enjoyable and engaging, bringing creativity to classroom activities and connecting with students' daily lives. Besides, [Bowen & Marles \(1992\)](#) explain that speaking without rhythm and intonation in learning pronunciation is impossible. Therefore, they propose to give students a short poem or prose text to train students' rhythm and intonation in pronouncing words.

The other views from the respondents that can be highlighted were about the approaches to improving pronunciation by integrating poetry as a learning media. There were two different opinions about the approaches to teaching pronunciation with poetry. The first perceived "The approaches that the EFL teacher can use are 1) the communicative approach; listening and imitating; 2) minimal pair practice where we can provide examples of similar problematic sounds in the target language; 3) excessive pronunciation techniques to students who are lacking in pronunciation" (P. E13). The other participant argued, "Using poetry in the classroom with listen and repeat the method and reading aloud method is an effective way to improve students' pronunciation" (P. F27). Based on those previous argumentations, even though there were examples of repeating pronunciation, they tried to construct and produce proper pronunciation. Relating to this construction, constructivism can be integrated with poetry as

media to teach pronunciation to produce proper pronunciation ([Suwastini & Dewi, 2023](#); [Ugwuozor, 2020](#)). The opposite explanation was found by [Jones \(1997\)](#), who states that the pronunciation teaching approach is not only about listening and repeating but beyond the instructional method. [Jones \(1997\)](#) mentions two aspects of teaching pronunciation that must be addressed. They are psychological and sociological dimensions. It must be noticed because students' personality, emotion, value, and socio-cultural environments affect their pronunciation of words. Further, Acton in [Jones \(1997\)](#) adds that preparing students with those dimensions is necessary because how individuals pronounce has much to do with their personality and emotions at any given time.

Referring to the opposing arguments above, poetry as media in pronunciation teaching activities can give a solution in integrating those previous argumentations. Literary text can help students imagine fictional people, events, and even their own experiences through language, and they can feel part of the text ([Cushing, 2018](#)). [Williams \(2018\)](#) also reveals that the spoken form of poetry can help students encourage their expression, honor their voices and experiences, and support cultural pedagogy. Through poetry, as media to learn pronunciation, they can construct their emotion using rhythm and intonation. Besides, [Jones \(1997\)](#) also argues that speakers can control their nerves or inner states by training their pronunciation with a familiar text based on their daily context.

Practicing Students' Spelling

[Kreiner et al. \(2002\)](#) state that spelling is a component of writing skills. Their findings indicate that spelling errors are perceived as lower writing ability. It means that spelling affects students' writing skills. In the written language, the sensitivity of word occurrence frequency, letter sequences, and spelling patterns ([Brown, 2011](#); [Weth & Wollschläger, 2019](#)). [Kelly & Gaytan \(2020\)](#) mention that five writing stages align with students' spelling development. The first stage is the 'precommunicative stage' in which students write random letters that do not represent sound or meaning. The second stage is the 'semi phonetic stage' when the spellers know the letters that represent sound. The third is the 'phonetic stage,' in which the spellers spell the word in the way of its sound. The next stage is the 'transitional stage,' where the spellers start to think about how the word appears visually. The last stage is 'correct' or 'dictionary' spelling, which is the stage where the spellers have already developed over the years with good writing. Creative, flexible, and interactive sources are needed to make spelling ability a good writing skill. Poetry provides a source to train students' spelling ability to gain good writing and vocabulary ([Finch, 2003](#)).

Poetry contains creativity, flexibility, and various formats to develop students' ability to record descriptions and visualize ideas, which links them between content and concept of writing ([McWhorter & Bullion-Mears, 1997](#)). Some respondents also mentioned the reflection of ideas. The first argued, "... they could reflect their ideas, their emotions or sense, and their vocabularies into a good writing" (P. B29). The following respondents viewed "... poem provides EFL students with opportunities to enrich their vocabulary by presenting words not included in L2 textbooks. While in many language classes, students are generally asked to learn vocabulary through memorizing and translating, poetry can be a valuable pedagogical tool in the EFL classroom that introduces the creative language and allows the combination of teaching form and content to the real-life context" (P. E3). [Liao \(2018\)](#) shows several pieces of evidence of poetry writing in EFL classrooms related to the real-life context that the participant mentioned. Liao mentioned that EFL students tend to write poetry based on their voices, such as their experiences and significant events. It can be said that they usually write descriptive, direct, emotional, and personal poems. [Nanda and Susanto \(2020\)](#) also support that this kind of literature provides broadly written material covering human issues and social background. Therefore, word numbers, word features, word frequency, and word form can be explored by students' ideas and their vocabulary production ([Amri & Basthomi, 2022](#); [Liao, 2018](#)).

The other arguments from the respondents in improving students' spelling were about small group discussions and feedback on their writing. A respondent revealed, "... determining vocabulary in writing a poem is important. Some strategies that can be used are think-pair-share and Vocabulary Self-Strategy (VSS). In think-pair-share, the students can discuss some vocabulary they have prepared, while in VSS, they can elaborate their vocabulary, and later, they will get some new vocabulary through their friends' poetry" (P. F11). From both strategies, there were activities of exchanging information in exploring their vocabulary lists. It was in line with [Issitt & Issitt \(2010\)](#), who stated that small group interaction is appropriate for guiding students to write poetry. Interaction with balanced chemistry will give them the freedom to explore vocabulary. Most students usually feel comfortable discussing with their pair or in a small group ([Issitt & Issitt, 2010](#)). Besides, [Moolman \(2015\)](#) adds that giving attention to the vocabulary in the poetry writing process is essential for developing coherent lines and good rhymes. Conversely, a respondent argued, "The teacher must provide feedback on students' writing. The teacher also has to explain that they can use any words that can express themselves in poetry." (P. F26). The study about poetry writing assessment by [Sundusiah et al. \(2019\)](#)

highlights the importance of feedback on students' work. They explain that reinforcement from the teacher can be delivered orally or in writing. This feedback shows appreciation, suggests whether their diction and language style imitate others' work, and engages their ideas in forming their poem.

According to [Mudzielwana \(2016\)](#), EFL teachers should stimulate learning activities with practice in producing words within a social context that promotes vocabulary learning. It can be reflected in using poetry to produce their own words through a writing activity. Further, [Marcus-Quinn \(2016\)](#) emphasizes that poetry is a short and simple text to illustrate language mechanics. It showed that in poetry writing, the students must think and decide about their topic and content, exploring their vocabulary and generating whole sentences in every line. In writing a poem, the students not only produce a written form of words but also relate to its spelling and their look to form a meaning ([Brown, 2011](#)).

Word Meaning

[Antika \(2017\)](#) states that poetry contains powerful and sharp pictures in painting images and senses through language. Poetry offers meaningful activities that provide multi-interpretation to give students a chance to give critical reasons while interpreting the content based on its language features ([Gönen, 2018](#); [Herlina, 2016](#); [Nishihara, 2022](#)). During the interpretation, vocabulary knowledge must be improved because the students must know the meaning of each word in the line. Dealing with this point, language features in poetry can create meaningful analysis activities. [Brown \(2011\)](#) and [Harmer \(2003\)](#) explain that in learning about word meaning, the students will identify the meaning of a word and the association of a word or the possibility of its synonym, antonym, connotation, and denotation. Based on the results of the present study, word meaning was perceived by 39% of the respondents. The reasons and discussion about kind perceptions in word meaning are seen below.

Introducing Figurative language

[Pollio et al. \(1990\)](#) mention the principal maxim of figurative language such as the figures of speech (i.e., metaphor, simile, irony, idiom), figurative language is not conceptually functional, figurative language in literal usage and figurative language that exists across languages, historical era, cultural grouping. Poetry contains rich figurative language to beautify language expression in poetry ([Anggiamurni, 2020](#)). As a way to say something other than an ordinary way ([Anggiamurni, 2020](#); [Pramling & Samuelsson, 2007](#)), poetry must contain a broad vocabulary to express a particular meaning. Therefore, figurative language provides students with knowledge about its type and vocabulary used in expressing something differently.

According to [O'Brien \(2010\)](#), the ability to interpret figurative language reflects vocabulary knowledge and the association of relevant subschemata. Referring to that point, the respondent also highlighted that "... asking students to analyze a poem and playing games by mentioning the example of figurative language whether it is personification, hyperbole, metaphor, or simile. Then students also mention examples used in everyday language" (P. F9). From that view, figures of speech contain broad word meanings in the form of various symbolic language meanings. The other view respondent also supported that "Language in poetry is full of figures of speech, idioms, have hidden meaning, and other elements. So that students must use high abilities or harder effort to understand poetry" (P. A29). Figurative language can give language models systematically and methodically of specific linguistic features ([Antika, 2017](#)).

The other view toward improving vocabulary in the figurative language of poetry was in the integration of teaching strategy. A respondent viewed "Strategy that can be used to enhance students' knowledge in studying figurative language is by reading. Reading is a way of thinking to analyze the content of a text" (P. G24). Even though the way of thinking can be gained through reading, [Burklund \(1955\)](#) offers techniques to help students learn about figurative language, such as removing misconceptions, offering the relation of art to reality, and rationale of figurative speech. The last is preparing exercises that are assimilated with the imaginative association. Through that strategy, students may be able to train their figurative competence ([Pramling & Samuelsson, 2007](#)).

Students can understand figurative language by analyzing the literal meaning of the sentences before transforming the meaning behind the sentences by deriving an interpretation ([Gibbs et al., 1993](#)). Therefore, a process of vocabulary interpretation is based on its literal meaning and hidden meaning. An argument from a respondent revealed, "Students will remember the new words that exist in the poetry because of the unique and beautiful words that have hidden meaning which is challenging to be analyzed by them" (P. F20). It showed that figurative language could also attract students' learning process. Figurative language is a way to develop vocabulary and students' cognitive processes in learning.

Introducing Colloquial Language

Colloquial language means informal English, often used in daily communication ([Hasanah, 2020](#)). Colloquial can be found in poetry since this literary work is a medium to communicate or express someone's expression. In its use as language in daily communication, eleven participants perceived that vocabulary in poetry could be practiced in daily communication for the students. A respondent viewed "... with difficult words we will be able to increase our

knowledge of vocabulary if we can enrich our vocabulary, that will make us more effective in communicating using English" (P. C19). The other view also perceived that "... asking learners to read poetry ... could make them familiar with the vocabulary used in poetry and make it possible to use in real life. Finally, poetry also sharpens English learners' understanding of the meaning of each word used in the English language...." (P. F4). Thus, poetry provides media to learn about communicative language differently.

Regarding colloquial as an informal language, there must be a question about students' academic language for academic purposes. A study by [Imamović-Topčić & Weger \(2017\)](#) provides evidence of the relationship between colloquial language and academic language acquisition in EFL classrooms. It shows that academic language has more special linguistic performance ability; besides, in this study, the students can adapt and differentiate the use of academic and colloquial language. Colloquial language is needed in socialization; the classroom usually provides formal materials that contain formal academic language. In this case, teachers' guidance in providing students with contextual media on language learning colloquial language can also be acquired in a formal class setting ([Imamović-Topčić & Weger, 2017](#)).

Helping Students Analyzing Unfamiliar Words

Eleven participants perceived that unfamiliar words in poetry could increase students' vocabulary by finding unfamiliar words in poetry. A participant viewed, "The teacher can teach the students by asking them to read a book, and ask them to open their dictionary to find the meaning of the words..." (P. E8). On the other hand, a contradictory argument was found. [Knight \(1994\)](#) argues that a dictionary is discouraged from guessing a word's meaning; its use is suggested only as a last tool in finding the word's meaning. It causes a distraction during reading activities. Meanwhile, [Lin et al. \(2017\)](#) suggest providing students with contextual text in order to give students a chance to analyze the meaning of unfamiliar words directly. Based on the argumentation above, it does not mean that using a dictionary to analyze word meaning distracts learning, but it is a tool to improve learning autonomy. Further, relating to the contextual text, poetry provides contextual text that students can read and guess unfamiliar words before they find them in the dictionary.

The other participant perceived that the "... 'Engage, Study, and Active' method supports teaching vocabulary in EFL classrooms. ... in the 'study' stage, students analyze the poetry by underlining and listing the types of vocabulary they found in poetry. In 'active' phase, students find the meaning of word of poetry that their friend read in the front of the class" (P. F30). It can be seen that the respondent highlighted students' active learning. Finding unfamiliar

synonyms or antonym vocabulary supports student-centered learning ([López Campillo, 1995](#)). The students actively create their meaning while teachers confirm their interpretation of an unfamiliar word they found.

Word Use

In the recent teaching activities about word use, teachers usually went straight to the textbook sources in using words and formed them into sentences. On the other hand, [Cushing \(2018\)](#) reveals that teachers have started to use literary work in teaching word use, especially grammatical function and collocation, which the present study highlighted. [Cushing \(2018\)](#) explains that poetry hits the chance in teaching practice from teachers as "gatekeepers to meaning" in the conceptual context of poetry that is "puzzled," which gives students right and wrong answers. In short, poetry gives accurate word use to be understood by the students through puzzled meaning in its figurative features. The following explanation shows the use of poetry to facilitate grammar learning.

Introducing Grammatical Function

According to [Brown \(2011\)](#), activities in analyzing grammatical function are explaining the pattern in a sentence, rearranging word position, and using the items in writing to create a structured and meaningful sentence. A book by [Master \(2017\)](#) discusses the components of grammar, such as a group of words, the verb tense system, nouns, adverbs, and sentence combining. Mastering those elements will improve the grammatical competence of students. Authentic material is an effective teaching medium for teaching the elements of grammar. [Arindora et al. \(2021\)](#), [Suwastini, Aryawan et al. \(2023\)](#), and [Suwastini & Dewi \(2023\)](#) argue that poetry can give direct exposure to grammatical, lexical, and syntactic knowledge besides poetry analysis; it also supports effective grammar learning before students have the automatic production of their sentences. They can analyze the use of grammatical functions before they produce and use the grammatical rules.

Six out of eighty-seven respondents perceived that poetry could improve students' grammar. Some views could be highlighted about the activities and strategies in learning to improve students' grammar. The first respondent revealed, "The activity of acquiring the things that happened in poetry will improve students' vocabulary and their ability to know sentence structure" (P. B25). The other respondent perceived, "The teacher can use stylistic, reader-response, form-meaning response approaches to teach a lexical item or grammatical structure so the students can have a meaningful context." (P. E7). Concerning this, strategy in teaching grammar is based on teachers' view on "what grammar is" ([Cameron, 1997](#)). Students can be helped to discover its use for themselves if they are allowed to apply different

possibilities and propose a solution that might be 'wrong' rather than give the 'right' answer in advance to be applied mechanically ([Cameron, 1997](#)). It means the students must construct their structure by using the word by the possibility of using various words to produce several lines in poetry.

In learning word use, some possibilities can be caused by 'puzzled' information for students, such as various patterns used in a word, types of words to be used, and where, when, and how often this word is used ([Brown, 2011](#)). It engages creativity and critical thinking in grammar learning through poetry from those possibilities. A process of gaining receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge might occur during this process ([Suwastini & Dewi, 2023](#); [Suwastini et al., 2023](#); [Zhong, 2018](#)). Learning about language use is recalling and using multiple aspects of a word that contain receptive and productive vocabulary. [Zhong \(2018\)](#) explains that receptive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to recall multiple aspects of word knowledge in reading and listening, while productive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to use multiple aspects of word knowledge in writing and speaking. Thus, poetry as the medium for learning grammar offers an opportunity to elaborate on other interrelated language skills.

Practicing in Using Collocation

[Brown \(2011\)](#) states that although EFL students have already learned many useful grammatical features, their vocabulary structures make their sentences unacceptable for the content words. Therefore, Brown adds that it is crucial to increase the knowledge of collocation, where students can use any words together to create an acceptable context and meaning. A participant said, "Through analyzing poetry, the students' language awareness and critical thinking skills have improved." (P. D9). It means that through poetry analysis, students are trained to be aware of the use of words. [Garba \(2021\)](#) argues that collocation in poetry is unique because it is a deviation seen as an aesthetic device. Further, collocation can be defined as an arbitrary or conventional combination of words that can be divided into lexical and grammatical features ([Futagi et al., 2008](#); [Huang & Tsao, 2021](#); [Moehkardi, 2002](#)).

Relating to the types of word combinations, in learning vocabulary through poetry, they must decide the correct combination of words, whether it is a lexical collocation or grammatical collocation, to form a correct meaning. Besides, they also need to consider the aesthetic derivation of particular collocations in poetry. A respondent said, "Teaching students to read and evaluate each word of a text can also use short poetry. it is aimed for students to be able to understand the meaning of the poetry they make." (P. D25). Based on that argumentation, it might be hard for the students to decide the derivation in the literary work, but teachers must be able to give their students a suitable level of poetry. [Brown \(2011\)](#) supports that in giving exercises for

collocation, teachers give flexible variety and let the students feel the helpful group of words. Further, [Brown \(2011\)](#) adds that sentences of a foreign language are immediately learned when placed in a meaningful sequence. As poetry contains contextual meaning, [Nanda and Susanto \(2011\)](#) highlight that poetry exposes various norms of language use and awareness through its uniqueness.

This research implies using poetry and songs to improve students' vocabulary, especially in English language education. Moreover, referring to related articles from [Suwastini et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Suwastini & Dewi \(2023\)](#), poetry is also considered to improve speaking and reading skills. Considering that vocab is very crucial for supporting speaking and reading skills, the arguments of the two studies above underlie the argument for the importance of involving poetry in EFL textbooks in Indonesia. At the university level, especially in the English Education Study Program, prospective EFL teachers need to know how to use poetry to teach English. Hence, to be able to teach English with poetry, at least the English language education curriculum at the undergraduate level must include basic knowledge about poetry, its elements, and how English poetry is read (related to pronunciation, speed of speech, intonation, and accent through good rhythmic emphasis).

CONCLUSION

Poetry is considered contextual material for teaching English, especially vocabulary for students. The elements in poetry, such as its rhyme, figurative language, and diction, engage students in learning activities. Based on the present study, students believe poetry can help students learn vocabulary creatively. They viewed that vocabulary can be improved through pronunciation, spelling, figurative language, colloquial language, unfamiliar words, grammatical function, and collocation in poetry. These perceptions are classified into the elements in poetry. The vocabulary elements are synthesized from [Brown \(2011\)](#) and [Harmer \(2003\)](#). They propose that vocabulary contains three elements: word form, word meaning, and word use. Therefore, pronunciation and spelling are classified into word form because they are in the form of spoken and written words. Figurative language, colloquial language, and unfamiliar words are distributed into word meanings. It is because those elements are language features in the poetry that have hidden meanings based on its context. The last is grammatical function and collocation grouped into word use because it is the stage when the students use vocabulary to produce sentences. Further, poetry can be integrated into other learning strategies to create exciting activities for improving vocabulary. However, in using poetry to teach vocabulary, teachers must consider the types of poetry and

students' level. They will learn vocabulary in a short text with rich features. Thus, they learn all elements of vocabulary within contextual sources.

While vocabulary helps students comprehend receptive skills (i.e., reading and listening), it also helps students' productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing). More specifically, using poetry in EFL class could positively affect students' writing skills because of the improved comprehension and the consumption of the complex written text. As writing is the practice of jotting down ideas, having ideas from understanding poems can support students' writing process. In the meantime, exposure to the complex use of English in a poem could improve students' eloquence in their writing, affecting the quality of their writing results.

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