

An investigation of teachers' attitudes towards poetry

A questionnaire study of upper-secondary English teachers in Sweden



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Abstract

Research has shown that teachers' attitudes towards poetry have the power to affect their teaching ability and impact education. International studies suggest that teachers possess mostly positive attitudes towards poetry and view it as an important part of English language education. However, a lack of research within the Swedish context has left us reliant on conclusions drawn from international studies. This thesis aims to add to that context and contribute knowledge about three constructs: Swedish English teachers' attitudes towards poetry, their attitudes towards teaching it, and their perception of their knowledge of it. Through a quantitative questionnaire containing twenty-one close-ended questions, the attitudes of fifty-one English teachers in Sweden were explored. The findings show that most of the responses on all the constructs were positive. Most teachers valued poetry, both in general and in terms of its teaching benefits. The results simultaneously show that poetry is one of the most difficult topics of English language education to teach according to the respondents. Consequently, while many of the findings are in line with international research, they give nuance to the Swedish context and highlight some lesser-known factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards poetry.

Keywords: poetry, teacher attitudes, English language education, Swedish upper secondary school.

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1. Introduction

The comprehensive topic that is poetry possesses the power to evoke a wide range of feelings in teachers (Sigvardsson, 2020; Munden & Skjærstad, 2018). When looking at what international research on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' attitude towards poetry has to say, it is fairly unanimous. Teachers' attitudes towards poetry are mostly positive and they view the teaching of poetry as an important and valuable part of English language education (Benton, 1999; Young, 2016). While most teachers appear to be comfortable in their ability to teach poetry, some have reported a lack or perceived lack of knowledge in poetry that has affected them and their teachings negatively (Benton, 1999; Ofsted, 2007; Weaven & Clark, 2013). However, there is not a lot of research that has been done on poetry in education within a Swedish context and it has for a long time been an understudied part of literature pedagogy in Sweden (Sigvardsson, 2017). Therefore, it is the ambition of this study to strengthen the Swedish field of research by accounting for English teachers' attitudes towards poetry in Sweden.

The pedagogical potentials for using poetry in English language teachings have been studied and encompass positive impacts on language acquisition and cultural understanding in students amongst other things (Kilag et al., 2023). In Sweden, poetry is a compulsory part of the English subject in upper-secondary schools and teachers are expected to teach it regardless of their feelings towards it. However, despite being mandatory, poetry is only briefly mentioned in the syllabus for English 6 in connection to other text genres that teachers are supposed to teach as well (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023). The absence of syllabus instructions means that teachers for the most part are left fending for themselves. Thus, this study intends to help teachers by providing a better understanding of their own attitudes towards poetry and shed light on potentially overlooked aspects related to poetry education.

This might help teachers going forward since teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards poetry hold value and could affect their performance (Benton, 1999).

This questionnaire-based study interests itself in the attitudes towards poetry among upper-secondary EFL teachers in Sweden. The study will explore teachers' attitudes towards poetry in general, the teaching of poetry, as well as teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry. Additionally, there is the possibility of finding several interesting correlations in the results. The findings of this paper will aspire to help create a better understanding of teachers' attitudes towards poetry, an otherwise understudied field within the Swedish educational context.

1.1 Aim and research questions

This paper aims to contribute to knowledge about Swedish EFL teachers' attitudes towards poetry, their attitudes towards teaching poetry, and their perception of their knowledge of poetry.

1. What are the surveyed teachers' attitudes towards poetry itself?
2. What are the surveyed teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry?
3. What are the surveyed teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry?
4. What are the connections between the results of the previous three questions?

2. Background

The background section is divided into six parts. The first one covers the central definitions of this study. The following section accounts for the benefits of poetry or why poetry is taught in the first place. The third section will account for poetry in the Swedish upper-secondary English Syllabus that teachers are required to abide by. That is followed by three sections closely tied to the initial three research questions of this paper featuring previous research on them: A section dedicated to teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry, a section dedicated to teachers' attitudes towards poetry and lastly, a section dedicated to teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry.

2.1 Definitions

This section aims to clarify three constructs identified by the author on the topic of poetry that are central to this study: Teachers' attitudes towards poetry itself, teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry, and teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry. To successfully explain each construct, it is essential to first define attitude within the context of educational research. Attitude can be defined as "learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a favourable or unfavourable way" (Fishbein, 1967, p. 257, as cited in Richardson, 1996). Based on Fishbein's definition, within the context of this study attitude would then refer to the way that teachers have been influenced to think regarding poetry. The way teachers have been influenced to think can be accredited to a number of different factors. Three prominent factors mentioned by Richardson (1996) are subjective experiences, pre-service teacher education and knowledge agreed upon within a community.

Now that attitude has been defined and explained it is time for the three constructs to be more clearly identified. The first construct, Teachers' attitudes towards poetry, relates to teachers' views on poetry on a personal level and in society. On a personal level, it refers to teachers' relationship with poetry and how they interact with it on their own time as well as their level of interest and enthusiasm in it. On a societal level, it refers to teachers' views of the importance of poetry in society and how useful and present it is. The second construct, teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry, relates to teachers' views on the importance of poetry as a part of English language education as well as their outlook on the actual teaching of poetry. The third construct, teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry, relates to teachers' self-image and poetic proficiency. Teachers' self-image and poetic proficiency refer to teachers' views of their knowledge and proficiency in poetry as well as their ability to successfully teach it as a part of English language education.

2.2 Why teach poetry

There are a number of educational benefits that have been linked to the teachings of poetry. As vocabulary is a central part of English education, it is understandable that studying how poetry might impact vocabulary learning has been of interest to researchers. Poetry-based vocabulary teaching activities have been shown to be an effective way to learn unfamiliar words in comparison to traditional glossary work (Özen & Mohammadzadeh, 2012). The meaningful contexts in which you encounter unfamiliar words through poetry seem to have a positive impact on the vocabulary learning outcome (Panavelil, 2011). Moreover, benefits in terms of grammatical aspects such as punctuation have also been documented (Gönen, 2018) and through poems, there is also the potential to expose students to features such as synonyms, antonyms, and collocations (Özen & Mohammadzadeh, 2012). However, the benefits of studying poetry are not only restricted to the aspects connected to language learning such as vocabulary and grammar.

Through the break from regular classroom routines, studying poetry has been shown to be beneficial for developing students' creativity (Panavelil, 2011). Studying poems has also been documented to enrich emotional growth and motivation in students as poetry is an effective way to engage with feelings and has the potential to generate a vast array of emotional reactions in learners (Panavelil, 2011). The emotional element of poetry also stimulates learners' cognitive engagement as well as contributes to a positive environment for language learning (Kilag et al., 2023). Moreover, studying poetry can increase students' cultural awareness by introducing them to other cultures through poems and poets from all over the world (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014). As demonstrated throughout this section, if teachers were to include a wide variety of thoughtfully selected poetry that featured different themes as well as cultural aspects in their practices it could provide several benefits to learners. For instance, learners could benefit from the opportunity to target both language learning objectives and

cultural awareness while simultaneously eliciting students' motivation to increase. Whether it is as a tool for vocabulary acquisition or a way to enrich students' cultural knowledge, it is evident that there are many benefits to studying poetry.

2.3 Poetry in the Swedish upper-secondary syllabi

There is not a lot of research that has been done on poetry in education within a Swedish context. Sigvardsson (2017) states that poetry has for a long time been an understudied part of literature pedagogy in Sweden. Yet, poetry is a compulsory part of the English subject and something that every EFL teacher in Sweden must incorporate in some way. In the Swedish syllabus for English 6, it is stated under reception, "Contemporary and older literature, poetry, drama and songs" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023). The receptive skills are reading and listening, meaning that both syllabus goals related to reading and listening are included there. The sentence from the reception part of the English 6 syllabus is the only mention of poetry in the entire English syllabi, which includes English 5, 6, and 7. English 5, 6, and 7 are the three courses of English being taught in Swedish upper-secondary schools. The absence of guidelines given to EFL teachers in Sweden leaves them often to structure their poetry education themselves or rely on colleagues' experiences to succeed. Furthermore, little attention is paid to poetry teaching in teacher education and few textbooks exist in Sweden that support teachers in their work (Sigvardsson, 2017).

A lack of directives in regard to poetry education may have some negative impacts on the quality of education and teacher perceptions (Ofsted, 2007; Young, 2016). An English survey found that students' experience of poetry education varied from class to class and that was partly due to a lack of clear directions from the curriculum (Ofsted, 2007). Much like the lack of directives from governing documents in England, Swedish syllabi are also lacking when it comes to directions regarding poetry education. Furthermore, the lack of governing documents and the educational foundation they give have in some cases also affected teachers'

perception of the importance of poetry negatively (Young, 2016). Since teachers look to governing documents for guidelines in their teachings it is reasonable that they would feel hesitant towards poetry if it is only mentioned briefly. The negative impacts on the quality of education as well as on teachers' perception of the importance of poetry that has been exhibited, is partly due to a lack of governing documents. While there are undoubtedly several reasons that contribute to the negative impacts experienced, it begs the question of the state of poetry in Swedish EFL education as well.

2.4 Teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry

What is enough poetry knowledge is a difficult question to answer and what actual knowledge a teacher possesses is one that does not concern this study for the same reason. However, the perceived knowledge of poetry that teachers believe they possess has been observed to affect them and their practises in negative ways (Benton, 1999; Weaven & Clark, 2013; Ofsted, 2007). While most teachers feel confident in their ability to teach poetry there appear to exist a number of teachers who question their knowledge about poetry. Peter Benton researched teachers' attitudes towards poetry in The United Kingdom in both 1982 and 1998. Both studies contained a question worded "I don't know enough about poetry myself to feel confident when teaching it." In the earlier 1982 study, 18% of the respondents were in agreeance with the statement and in the later 1998 study, 9% of the respondents agreed with the same statement. While those results indicate a positive and reassuring trend, a lack of poetry knowledge experienced by 9% of the studied teachers that could impact their ability to properly teach is still concerning (Benton, 1999).

The results from Benton's (1999) study are corroborated by a more recent Australian study conducted by Weaven and Clark (2013). Through a number of interviews with English teachers, it became evident that a lack of confidence towards the teaching of poetry existed among the participants. Weaven and Clark found that a perceived lack of poetry knowledge

among teachers affected their feelings towards teaching it negatively (2013). Moreover, teachers' perceived lack of poetry knowledge that is presented in both Benton (1999) and Weaven and Clark (2013) has in some other cases manifested itself in visible ways. It has been disclosed in an extensive report (Ofsted, 2007) based on data from 86 Schools in England that many teachers did not know enough about poetry. The deficiency of knowledge of poetry among the teachers was primarily reflected in a limited range of selected poems for classroom activities and a lack of quality feedback to students (Ofsted, 2007). The results from the studies presented are not necessarily accurate for the situation in Sweden with the most notable difference being that they are conducted in countries where English is the first language. However, it is mentioned by both Sigvardsson (2020) and Munden and Skjærstad (2018) that inexperience with poetry among English teachers has also been observed in Scandinavia. While the extent of this inexperience is not elaborated on it begs the question of how English teachers in Sweden feel about their knowledge of poetry.

2.5 Teachers' attitudes towards poetry

The teacher holds a major influence on whether the teaching of poetry is successful in class or not. While it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what makes a teacher successful, a contributing factor is a genuine interest in and enthusiasm towards poetry (Travers, 1984). Teachers' enjoyment of poetry is also essential when it comes to engaging students in poetry education (Sigvardsson, 2020). Additionally, in many cases, the teachers who engage the most with poetry in general are also the ones who perceive themselves as being the most effective at teaching poetry (Young, 2016). There seems to be a correlation between teachers' attitudes towards poetry and their perceived effectiveness in teaching it. While this is not true for every EFL teacher teaching poetry there are still supposed benefits to having a positive outlook on and general interest in poetry.

According to the study by Young, teachers' feelings towards poetry are mostly positive yet clouded by uncertainty that appears to be related to the educational aspect of it. She continues that many English teachers enjoy reading poetry and do so in their own time (2016). Yet, teachers in Scandinavia and internationally are oftentimes inexperienced with poetry and as a result feel uncertain about how to engage students in their poetry education (Sigvardsson, 2020). Despite having inexperience with poetry, Scandinavian teachers usually value poetry highly and see it as something desirable (Munden & Skjærstad, 2018). It would suggest that perceived knowledge of poetry and attitude towards poetry do not necessarily correlate. However, it is unclear whether a high regard for poetry among teachers stems from personal beliefs or something else. A Swedish study (Turner, 2020) examined correlations between knowledge and attitudes towards poetry in groups of students and pre-service teachers. Differences in the results led to hypothesising that there could be an internalised notion of the importance of poetry in the Swedish school system that affected the pre-service teachers. Regardless of the reason behind teachers' attitudes towards poetry, there seem to be benefits in having a positive attitude or general interest in poetry based on what was determined by Travers (1984) and Young (2016).

2.6 Teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry

Poetry is an integral part of English language education and has a meaningful role in the classroom according to a lot of teachers and both the reading and discussion of poetry are valued by many of them as an important part of English education (Benton, 1999; Young, 2016). In Peter Benton's 1998 and 1982 surveys on English teachers, only 3% of the respondents viewed the reading and discussion of poetry as unimportant parts of English education. Two of the most mentioned motivations behind the primarily positive viewpoints of the importance of poetry were benefits to language development and furthered appreciation of language (Benton, 1999). However, aside from the most mentioned motivations, the belief that

poetry is beneficial in extending one's understanding of life, or the world was stated by 9% of the respondents. On an adjacent note, teaching poetry was one of the aspects of English teaching that the surveyed teachers reported to enjoy the most (Benton, 1999). Additionally, as was established by Sigvardsson (2020) and Travers (1984), it was beneficial for teachers' performance to enjoy and have an interest in what they taught. The findings from Benton's studies on the value of poetry are further corroborated by a more recent study. Young (2016) established through interviewing English teachers that they all held a profound regard for poetry. The fact that teachers still hold a high regard for poetry is according to the author herself an expected result but also a confirmation that Benton's results still hold relevance.

The field of research in Scandinavia is slim but shares the already established premise that poetry is highly valued and viewed as an end for language learning by English teachers (Munden & Skjærstad, 2018). Munden and Skjærstad surveyed English teachers in Norway and observed similar reasonings behind their positive viewpoint on poetry in English education as were found by Benton (1999). The most common benefit of teaching poetry was centred around language learning, but the social aspects related to sharing poetry and the enjoyment poetry brings were also mentioned (Munden & Skjærstad, 2018). Since one Scandinavian study leaves much to be desired, it is the ambition of this study to strengthen the Swedish context.

3. Method

The method section is structured into four parts. Initially, "Questionnaires" will provide an analysis of the methodological choices that went into the decision to use a questionnaire for the study. That is followed by "Data analysis" which provides a description of the process that went into the data processing of the questionnaire responses. Subsequently, "Participants" which consists of "Sampling" and "Ethical considerations" is accounted for. Last of all is "Limitations" which discusses the potential limitations of the methodological choices of this study and how they were mitigated.

3.1 Questionnaires

The research method for this paper was a quantitative questionnaire with close-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale (Appendix A). The choice to use a questionnaire for the purpose of this study was made on the premise that it possessed the capability to quickly reach many respondents and provide the researcher with specific information on teachers' attitudes. As a research tool, the questionnaire does not intend to change attitudes, it aims to collect information which can be used as data for analysis (Denscombe, 2010). Since insights into teachers' attitudes and opinions of themselves were of importance, the questionnaire proved a useful research tool for collecting straightforward and relatively brief information. The close-ended questions in the questionnaire were based on a five-point Likert scale that aimed to disclose to which extent the respondents agreed or disagreed with statements. Likert scales are popular scaling procedures that are not as labour-intensive as other procedures and are straightforward for people to answer (Oppenheim, 1992). When using a Likert rating scale, it is essential to clearly explain what each of the five categories stands for (Dörnyei, 2010). Consequently, an explanatory introduction was created and presented for the respondents to view before partaking in the questionnaire to ensure that they would know what their answers meant. The categories were adapted from Oppenheim and correlated to either a favourable or unfavourable attitude: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, strongly disagree (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 196). The decision to include a middle "uncertain" option was made on the premise that it would be beneficial for the validity of the questionnaire since it made sure no respondents were forced to answer in a certain direction if they did not wish to. The decision to have only close-ended questions in the questionnaire was motivated by the fact that closed questions are objectively easier and quicker to answer for respondents as opposed to open questions (Oppenheim, 1992). A key aspect since the respondents were completing the questionnaire on their own and the more replies the better for the study. In addition, Closed

questions are also straightforward to analyse and compare in comparison to open questions (Nunan, 2010).

The time respondents are willing to spend on a questionnaire is limited and if you require too much of them chances are they will not complete it (Dörnyei, 2010). The optimal length of questionnaires in the second language acquisition field is quite short and should never require more than 30 minutes to answer (Dörnyei, 2010). The questionnaire questions were built around and aimed to answer the three constructs of this study: teachers' attitudes to teaching poetry, teachers' attitudes to poetry itself and teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry. Seven questions were designed in relation to each of the three constructs and amounted to a total of twenty-one that were not supposed to take more than a few minutes to answer. When measuring attitudes, we should not rely on single questions but instead have a set of questions as sets of questions are more reliable (Oppenheim, 1992). Hence, to not overly rely on single questions the choice was made to measure the constructs with several questions as opposed to measuring various aspects with each question. There are factors that may impact single items such as wording. However, by basing the results on a set of questions we cancel out the potential bias of single questions (Oppenheim, 1992). As mentioned by Oppenheim, it is important to be aware of the effect wording can have on the outcome of the responses. In order to not let potential errors as a result of wording occur questions asked should try to inquire one thing at a time and avoid being leading or confusing in any way (Nunan, 2010). To avoid leading the participants in any direction the questions were both positively and negatively worded. Additionally, the order in which the questions appeared in the questionnaire was mixed up and designed to keep the respondents on their toes, not being able to easily anticipate what the next question might be. A blueprint for what questions belonged to which construct, and which were negatively worded was held by the researcher to ensure proper structure and correct measurement at the later analysis stage. The blueprint was essentially a document that

contained information about the construct, wording, and order in which a question appeared in the questionnaire. To be precise, each question in the questionnaire had a corresponding number in the blueprint that ensured that the ones belonging to the same construct did not get mixed up with the others and which ones were negatively worded and needed to be flipped to be calculated alongside the others.

3.2 Data analysing

The collected data consisted of responses from fifty-one individual teachers and for each response there were a total of twenty-one questions answered. Out of the twenty-one questions, there were seven each that belonged to one of three constructs directly tied to a specific research question: teachers' attitudes towards poetry, teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry or teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry. The data processing of the questionnaire responses was straightforward as data collected from closed questions are normally easy to both analyse and compare (Nunan, 2010). The data collected from the questionnaire responses was initially transported from Google Forms where the responses were collected, to Google Sheets for analysis. The responses were then sorted into the correct construct using a pre-constructed blueprint and once the questions were divided the scores on the negatively phrased ones were flipped to ensure cohesion in the measurement. For instance, if responses to a negatively phrased question like "Poetry is not useful in today's society" would yield many negative responses it would be equivalent to a positive attitude towards the usefulness of poetry in today's society. The lower 1-2 responses simply switched places with the higher 4-5 responses on the negatively phrased questions to enable them to be compatible when calculating the results of entire constructs and when presenting each question alongside their mean score.

Oppenheim (1992) stressed that it is important to anticipate the data-processing aspects already during the piloting phase of the study. Consequently, a trial run was set up where

randomised answers were transported from Google Forms to Google Sheets. Once the transfer of data was completed the data was analysed using pre-existing analytics functions the software provided to illustrate the negative responses as well as the positive ones. A number of different diagrams and staples were constructed in order to figure out which ones worked best for the purpose of demonstrating the results. In the end, the pie chart proved to be the most advantageous for the purpose of illustrating the results of each construct as it clearly showed the entirety of positive and negative answers in contrast to one another. However, at a later stage to enable comparisons to be made between the three constructs, a bar chart proved to be more effective at illustrating the constructs alongside one another. In order to illustrate the either positive or negative impact each of the seven questions had within their certain construct a similar process was initiated. Subsequently, it was established that the clearest way to present each question also happened to be the simplest. Through 2x7 tables that presented each question numbered with the exact wording as in the questionnaire in the left column and an accompanied mean score on a scale of 1-5 that correlated to either a positive or negative attitude in the right column. That way each question could be examined and demonstrated in which way it contributed to the combined results presented in the pie charts. Once the illustrations were made it was straightforward to discover noteworthy findings in the data and clarify those in the accompanying writing. In some places, it was helpful to include a percentage to aid the illustration of a result or to give more nuance to a discussion. Percentages were calculated based on the number of the 51 respondents that answered in a certain way and in the places where they appear it is stated what is being measured. The choice to include percentages in this way and not in tables was made for the sake of both clarity and relevance. Such tables would have featured much information that not necessarily would have provided anything new to the findings. Thus, to instead include certain percentages, either positive or negative, where it would add to the findings was in this case the preferred choice.

3.3 Participants

3.3.1 Sampling

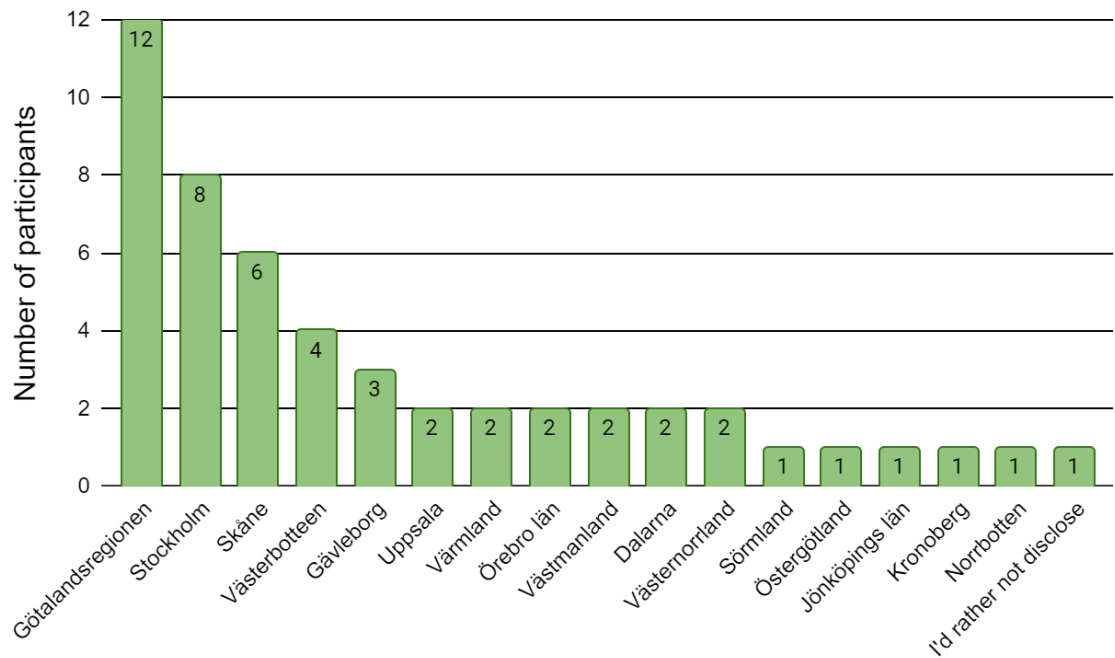
The questionnaire was created in Google Forms since it is user-friendly and free to use and distribute via the Internet, which served the purpose of this study well. Once the questionnaire was created it was piloted before it was sent out. The piloting was done by two acquaintances of the researcher and then by the researchers' supervisor for extra reassurance. The outcome of the piloting was that some optimising changes were made to the introductory part of the questionnaire. The sample question was removed and how to approach the questions was explained more conveniently.

The sampling method of this study was convenience sampling which is a popular sampling method for its benefits of being quick and easy (Denscombe, 2010). The questionnaire aimed to determine the attitudes of Swedish upper-secondary level English teachers, or to be precise, their attitudes towards teaching poetry, poetry in general, and their perceived knowledge of poetry. Because the quantitative questionnaire only contained closed questions a larger sample size would not necessarily cause a larger workload in terms of data analysis. That more respondents did not pose a problem just meant the more respondents the better and the most convenient way to reach many teachers was through an online group that functioned as a forum for English teachers in Sweden. The questionnaire was accessible over the course of two weeks so teachers who have quite busy schedules could take their time and answer the questions when they saw fit. A total of two posts were made in the group which along with the two-week response window increased the chances of getting plenty of feedback. As a result of the two posts made during the two weeks that the questionnaire was available a total of fifty-one responses were collected from upper-secondary level teachers. While it was not the primary objective of distributing the questionnaire in an online group, an additional

advantage was that the sample ended up consisting of respondents from all over the country (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Bar chart of the Swedish regions the participants were located in.



3.3.2 Ethical considerations

The discussion of ethical considerations has taken The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA, 2023) into consideration to ensure good research practices. Aspects including reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability have been carefully considered with reference to relevant literature. When constructing the questionnaire, it was necessary to initially provide the respondents with relevant background information and clear instructions to ensure successful responses. It was made to ensure that no deception of participants or misrepresentation of their answers would occur (Denscombe, 2010). Who was behind the questionnaire was stated and explained as it was part of a research paper at Lunds University in Sweden. It was important to show full transparency and that there was an actual person

behind the questionnaire for respondents to reach out to if they felt the need to ask anything. The purpose of the research was also explained by stating the aim of the research paper accompanied by definitions of the core concepts: poetry itself, teaching poetry and perceived knowledge of poetry. Consequently, the definitions were included to ensure that every participant entered the questionnaire on the same basis and worked towards ensuring the quality of the responses.

The information asked in the questionnaire was not of a sensitive nature, but the protection of the participants' interests was still of utmost importance. One of the most effective ways to ensure this is by guaranteeing the anonymity of the participants (Denscombe, 2010). The confidentiality of the respondents was ensured, and motivations were given to the storage of information as timestamps. Furthermore, it was disclosed that the collected data would become part of statistical information where answers from several anonymous English teachers would form the results. It was made so that none of the participants would feel the risk of having their responses be singled out or used in other ways than intended. For participants to be able to give informed consent three criteria had to be fulfilled: Make it clear that participation is voluntary, provide adequate information about the study and specify what kind of commitment is being required by the participants (Denscombe, 2010). The background information of the questionnaire informed the participants about the study as well as that for which the results would be used. In addition, as an extra guarantee that participants were aware of what they participated in, a mandatory consent question was asked at the beginning of the questionnaire. If the respondents disagreed with the consent question they could not move on with the questionnaire. That also solved the potential issue of not being able to offer any retractions as the replies were completely anonymous. To conclude, the questionnaire information was ended with a humble thank you from the researcher out of respect to the respondents as they partook in the study voluntarily and without compensation or recognition.

3.4 Limitations

The primary limitation of convenience sampling is that it does not regulate who answers the questionnaire. The aim is simply put to reach as many respondents as possible in the least demanding way. It means that the results may not be an accurate representation of all English teachers' attitudes in Sweden. Nor can the results be used to represent regional opinions of English teachers. However, an initial freestanding question was asked in which the respondents disclosed their location if they felt secure doing so. The responses showed that by utilising convenience sampling the questionnaire was able to reach teachers from all over Sweden. Furthermore, a limitation of offering the respondents complete anonymity was that there was no way to verify their authenticity. However, measures were taken to ensure that the respondents only consisted of upper-secondary-level English teachers. The online group was private and meant only for teachers of English and the researcher's posts made it clear that only upper secondary level English teachers were supposed to respond. An additional question about the participants' status as teachers was considered but ultimately not included as it was already clearly stated in the introduction who the questionnaire was meant for.

An additional limitation that is tied to the sampling of the study is the selection bias of the respondents from the online group. Since participation in the study was broadcast to every member of the group chances are that the people responding felt more strongly about the topic being researched than the ones who did not choose to respond. It is important to be aware of selection bias and to mitigate the impact of a potential bias, two posts were made in the group. Aside from being an effective way to gain additional responses, posting twice also had the benefit of giving teachers who might have thought about participating but not done so a second chance.

Whilst the directness of the close-ended statement questions and the predetermined constructs made the analysis of the responses straightforward, there is a potential limitation to

it as well. Oftentimes, responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondents want to say (Nunan, 2010). There could have existed interesting views among the responding teachers that the questions and constructs of this study did not investigate. However, one could argue that if more extensive personal accounts were desired a qualitative research method such as the interview would have been more suitable in the first place (Dörnyei, 2010).

4. Findings

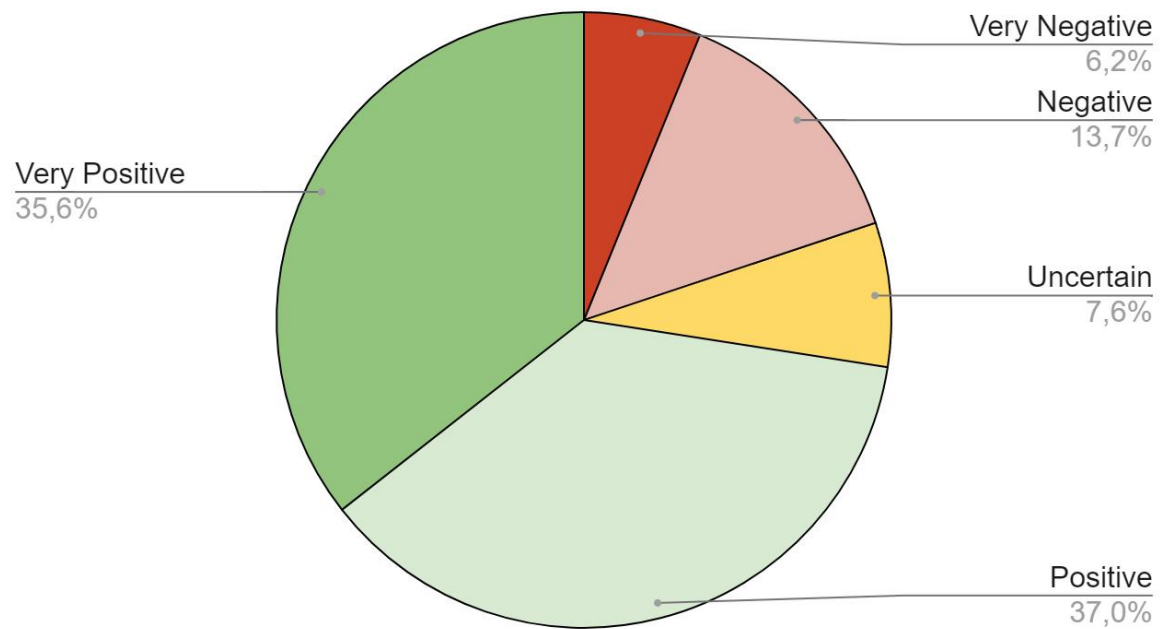
The following sections are outlined in accordance with the research questions of this paper and feature the three constructs explored in the questionnaire. The findings from each of the three constructs will be accounted for alongside a discussion that puts the results into the perspective of previous research. Lastly, a comparative section will display the three constructs alongside each other and highlight some key similarities and differences.

4.1 Findings of teachers' attitudes towards poetry

The findings presented in this section are all related to construct 1 of the study and are made up of the results from the questionnaire responses regarding teachers' attitudes towards poetry.

Figure 2

Pie chart of the combined attitudes of the respondents based on all questions belonging to construct 1 (teachers' attitudes towards poetry) of the questionnaire.



As shown by Figure 2, the respondents of the questionnaire mostly show a positive attitude towards poetry to at least some degree. More than two-thirds or 72,6% of the responses are either very positive or positive within Construct 1. In contrast, 19,9% of the responses displayed either a very negative or negative attitude towards poetry. This leaves a mere 7,6% of uncertain responses.

Table 1

Table of the individual questions belonging to construct 1 of the questionnaire with accompanying mean scores. The mean scores are calculated based on a scale of 1-5 where 1 correlates to a very negative attitude and 5 correlates to a very positive one.

1. When I have time, I like to read poetry on my own accord	2,9
2. Poetry is not useful in today's society	4,3
3. Poetry is important to me personally	3,3
4. Poetry is for everyone	3,8
5. Poetry is a thing of the past	4,5
6. Poetry has influenced my perspective on life	3,7

7. Poetry is not very relatable	4,3
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Table 1 shows each of the seven questions that made up construct 1: teachers' attitudes towards poetry. The mean scores presented alongside the questions demonstrate to what degree each question either contributed to a more positive or negative overall result on the construct. The questions' focus lies either on the importance of poetry according to the teachers themselves through questions 1, 3 and 6 or the teachers' view of the importance of poetry on a more general level through questions 2, 4, 5 and 7. The questions yielding the lowest mean score, questions 1 and 3 relate to the teachers' attitudes towards poetry on a personal level. On the contrary, the questions yielding the highest mean score, questions 2, 5 and 7 focus on the importance of poetry in a more general way. This indicates that while teachers see the value of poetry and find it important in general, they do not necessarily view it as highly for themselves. Yet, the lowest mean score recorded on question 1 is 2,9, which is still higher than the threshold for a negative score of 2,5.

Research has disclosed that many English teachers enjoy reading poetry and do so on their own accord (Young, 2016). However, the results of this study, while in line with what is observed by Young (2016), show a slightly more nuanced version of that picture. The first question of the construct directly asked if the respondents liked to read poetry on their own accord and only managed to get a mean score of 2,9/5. While that still indicates that most of the teachers enjoy reading poetry on their own time, it simultaneously means that 45,1% did not, which is quite a few. However, one could argue for the exclusion of question 1 from the construct as it can be interpreted in diverse ways that not all necessarily measure attitude towards poetry. As the question reads "when I have time" and not plainly "I like to read poetry on my own accord" it gives room for unwanted interpretation from the respondents. It is possible that some of the respondents do not have the time to read poetry and others that might

have the time are forced to prioritise other activities. Uncertain aspects like that may have influenced the otherwise positive construct, which is why Figure 3 has been created.

Figure 3

Pie chart of construct 1 (teachers' attitudes towards poetry) without the first question.

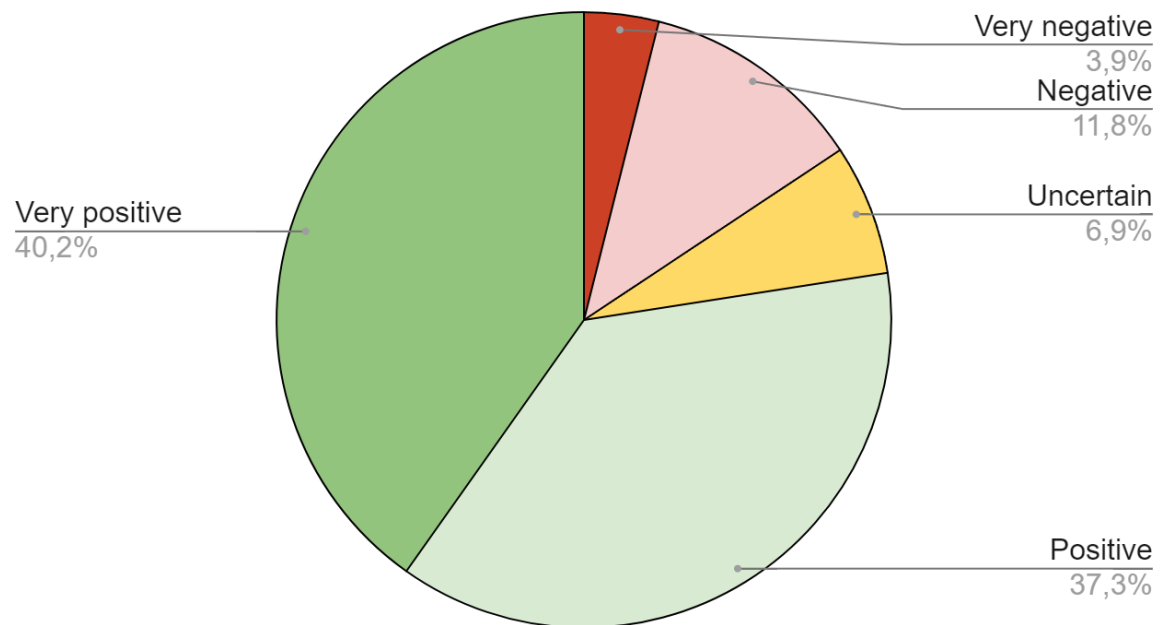


Figure 3 displays construct 1 calculated without question 1 and the results are now slightly different. The number of very positive responses has increased and the same can be said for the positive ones. On the contrary, the number of uncertain, negative, and very negative responses has decreased as a direct result of the exclusion of question 1 from the construct. While the respondents were originally still primarily positive towards the construct this alteration shows that their attitudes could potentially be even more positive if the questionnaire were calculated differently. On an adjacent note, it has been shown that it is beneficial for English teachers to have a genuine interest in poetry in order to successfully teach it (Travers, 1984). Moreover, teachers' enjoyment of poetry can influence students and as a result make them more engaged in learning (Sigvardsson, 2020). The probable connection between teachers' enjoyment of poetry and their success when it comes to teaching indicates that this is

an aspect worthy of further investigation. However, in light of the potentially ambiguous interpretation of question 1, this construct cannot without some level of uncertainty contribute to that discussion.

The divided opinions on the respondents' relationship to poetry as displayed in question 1 are further displayed in question 3 which directly asks if poetry is important to them personally. With a mean score of 3,3/5, it is the second lowest-scoring question of the construct. Most of the teachers still feel that poetry is important to them personally but 33,3% disagreed to some extent. Question 6 asked the teachers whether poetry had influenced their perspective on life or not and managed to acquire a slightly higher mean score of 3,7/5. That would amount to 58,8% of the responding teachers, a distinct difference compared to what was previously recorded. In Benton's (1999) study 9% of the responding teachers had mentioned that poetry could benefit one's understanding of life, however, with contextual differences such as how the answers were obtained the results of this study and Benton's might naturally differ to some extent. In Benton's study, the participants consisted of 170 English teachers which is more than the fifty-one teacher participants in this study and possibly means that his study has higher reliability. Moreover, it is important to be aware that the question of whether poetry could benefit one's understanding of life was not asked directly in Benton's study but merely observed as a recurring answer.

Research on teachers' views on the importance of poetry, while fairly limited, seems to indicate that teachers usually value poetry highly and as something desirable (Munden & Skjærstad, 2018). The findings from this study are in line with those results and indicate that teachers do indeed hold a high regard for poetry. To be more precise, the questions yielding the highest mean scores, meaning the questions that the respondents were most positive towards were: "If poetry is useful in today's society", "If poetry is relatable", and "If poetry is a thing of the past". They all scored highly with mean scores ranging between 4,3-4,5/5 and

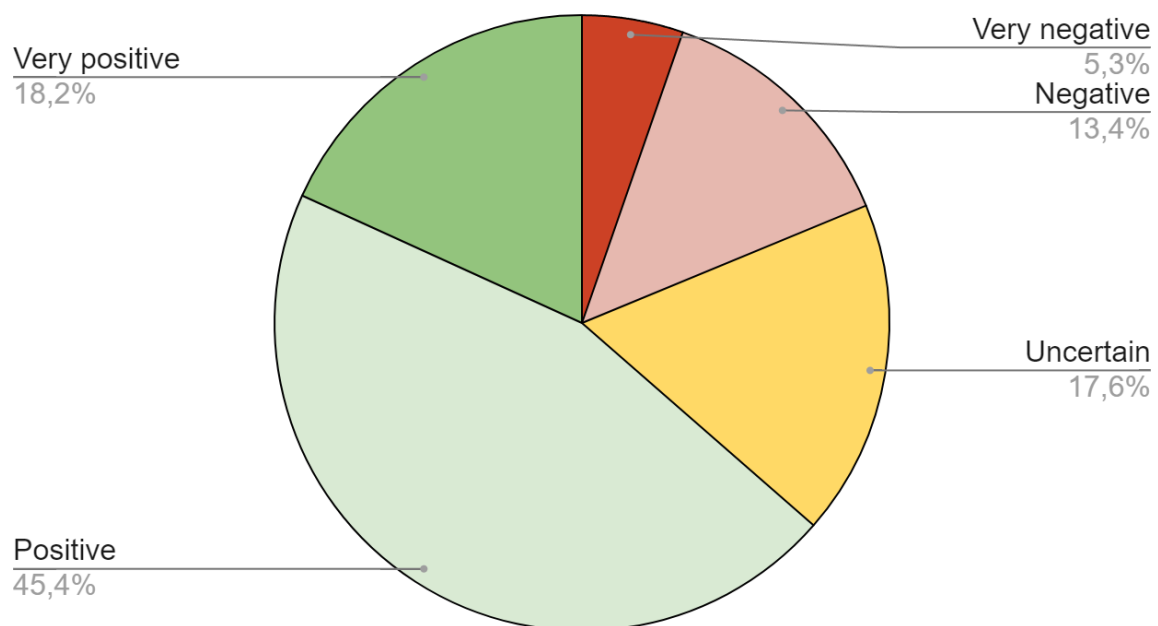
since the third question was negatively phrased most respondents thought poetry was not a thing of the past. Interestingly, the responding teachers while viewing poetry as something important are open about their less enthusiastic personal relationship with poetry as is displayed in the question “poetry is important to me personally” which only managed to acquire a mean score of 3,3/5. It could, however, indicate that much of teachers’ high regard for poetry does not stem from their personal enthusiasm for it. It could be as hypothesised by Turner (2020), an internalised notion from their teacher education that is behind their viewpoint on this particular topic.

4.2 Findings of teachers’ attitudes towards teaching poetry

The findings presented in this section are all related to construct 2 of the study and are made up of the results from the questionnaire responses regarding teachers’ attitudes towards teaching poetry.

Figure 4

Pie chart of the combined attitudes of the respondents based on all questions belonging to construct 2 (teachers’ attitudes towards teaching poetry) of the questionnaire.



As illustrated in Figure 4, the respondents' attitudes towards teaching poetry are mostly positive. Almost two-thirds of the respondents' answers or 63,6% are to some extent positive with a vast majority exhibiting a positive attitude. In contrast, 18,7% of the respondents' answers displayed either negative or very negative attitudes on the questions within the construct. However, a staggering 17,6% of the respondents were uncertain of their stance on the questions in this construct. It could potentially indicate that some respondents had either no strong opinions on the specific construct or found some questions difficult to answer.

Table 2

Table of the individual questions belonging to construct 2 of the questionnaire with accompanying mean scores. The mean scores are calculated based on a scale of 1-5 where 1 correlates to a very negative attitude and 5 correlates to a very positive one.

1. Poetry education has a meaningful place in the classroom	4,1
2. Teaching poetry is difficult in comparison to other aspects of English education	2,8
3. Teaching poetry is one of the aspects of being an English teacher that I enjoy most	3,2
4. I find no enjoyment in teaching poetry	4,1
5. Poetry education is important as a means for language learning	3,6
6. Poetry can be an important tool to develop emotional competences	4,1
7. It is important to teach poetry analysis in the classroom	3,6

Table 2 shows the individual seven questions that made up construct 2: teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry. The accompanying mean scores indicate to what extent each question contributes to a more positive or negative result in the construct. The questions focus either on the importance of poetry education through questions 1, 5, 6, and 7 or on how the responding teachers regard poetry teaching through questions 2, 3, and 4. Out of the seven

questions of this construct the ones yielding the lowest mean scores are questions 2 and 3. This indicates that many of the responding teachers find poetry to be difficult to teach within the realm of English education and have other topics that they prefer over it. However, just like in the first construct, the lowest recorded mean score within construct 2 is still above the threshold for a negative score of 2,5 or lower. The questions yielding the highest mean scores are questions 1, 4, and 6 all share a mean of 4,1 out of 5. This reveals that teachers value the importance of poetry, not only to themselves but also to students and see educational benefits occurring from teaching it in class.

Through the findings in construct 2, it is shown that poetry seems to be an important part of English language education for most respondents. These findings are in line with already recognised research that has stated that many English teachers value poetry as an important part of language education (Young, 2016). Question 1 initially asks quite bluntly if the teachers think poetry education has a meaningful place in the classroom, with which the respondents almost unanimously agreed. Merely 4% of the respondents disagreed with that statement while an overwhelming 86,3% agreed. While it is completely reasonable to accept such a result considering the nature of the question, it concurrently begs the question of whether wording influenced the outcome. It could be that the word “meaningful” was leading the respondents to reflect in a certain way that made most lean towards a more favourable attitude.

On an adjacent note, question 7 is in many ways similar to the first question and asks if the respondents find it important to teach poetry analysis in the classroom. Poetry analysis is slightly more specific as opposed to poetry education but both questions specifically asked the respondents to reflect on classroom practicality. Question 7 with a mean score of 3,6/5 struggled to reach the same level of positive attitudes in its responses as question 1 which obtained a mean score of 4,1/5. While that could be accredited to a potential leading element in the wording of question 1 it is conceivably just as likely that the wording of question 7 is the

cause. As question 7 uses the word “important” as opposed to “meaningful”, the respondents might have felt that the question asked them to take a more aggressive stance and as a result led to more divided opinions. Subsequently, if the wording were switched for questions 1 and 7 the results might have been different and the latter of the two would have ended up yielding the more positive responses.

The reading and discussion of poetry have been observed to be valued by many teachers as important parts of English education (Benton, 1999; Munden & Skjærstad, 2018). In both Benton's (1999) and Munden and Skjærstad's (2018) studies it was disclosed that what teachers primarily thought students gained from poetry education was language development. The social aspects that sharing poetry brings to a classroom were highlighted by the subjects of Munden and Skjærstad's (2018) study as well, however, not to the same extent as language learning benefits. The results from this study can support the claims that language learning aspects are something that teachers value greatly when it comes to poetry education, primarily through the results on question 5 which yielded a mean score of 3,6/5. However, the benefits of language learning were not what teachers valued the most when it came to poetry education. Instead, it was the question about poetry as an important tool for developing emotional competencies that managed to get the most positive responses with a higher mean score of 4,1/5. It is an interesting finding that shows what could potentially be a change in attitudes among teachers concerning what the primary focus of poetry education is over the years. However, whether the cause behind this finding is the result of a shift in attitudes or a difference in opinions of teachers in Sweden cannot be said.

Research has previously shown that teaching poetry is one of the aspects of English teaching that teachers enjoy most (Benton, 1999). However, that might not be the case anymore as the findings from this study contradict this claim. While poetry education obtained a high mean score of 4,1/5 on question 4 which asked whether the respondents found enjoyment in

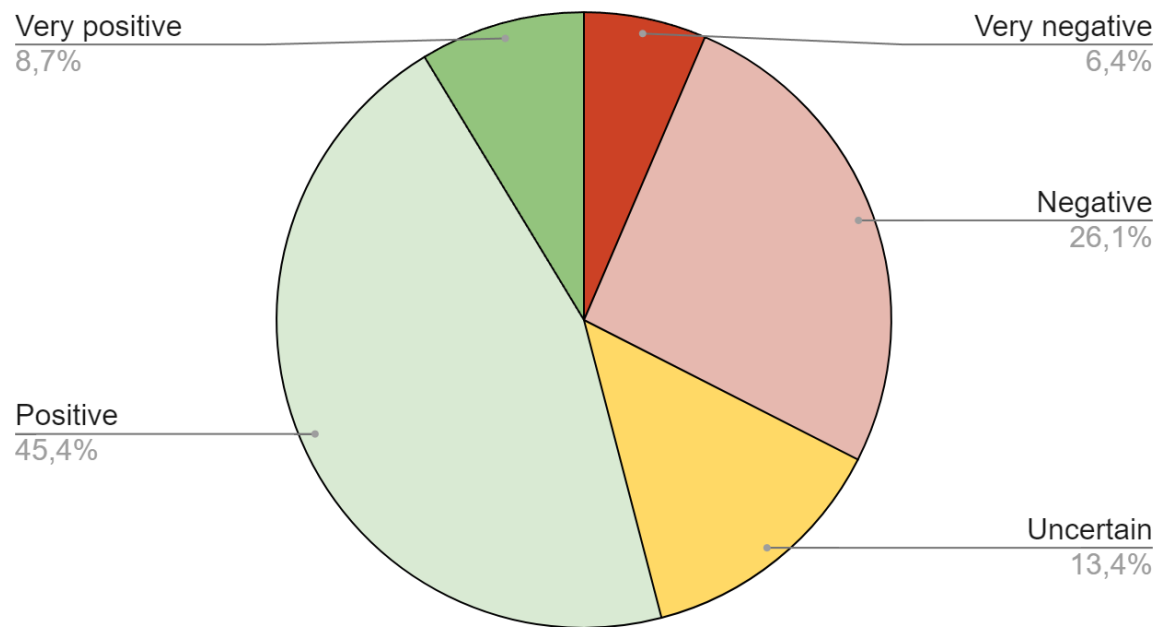
teaching poetry or not, it was a different story once a comparative aspect was added into the mix. Question 2 which only managed to acquire a mean score of 2,8/5 shows that many of the respondents found poetry to be difficult in comparison to other aspects of English education. Furthermore, only 33,3% of the respondents agreed with question 3 and found teaching poetry to be one of the aspects of English teaching they enjoyed most. When put in comparison to other aspects of English teaching, poetry did not do that great. It was one of the more difficult topics to teach and was not among most of the respondents' favourite topics to teach either. However, without taking other aspects of English teaching into consideration most respondents still reported that they found enjoyment in teaching poetry which adds an interesting nuance to the construct.

4.3 Findings of teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry

The findings presented in this section are all related to construct 3 of the study and are made up of the results from the questionnaire responses regarding teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry.

Figure 5

Pie chart of the combined attitudes of the respondents based on all questions belonging to construct 3 (teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry) of the questionnaire.



As illustrated in Figure 5, the respondents' attitudes towards their own perceived knowledge of poetry are quite divided. Around half of the responses, or more precisely, 54,1% are on the agreeing side and indicate a favourable perception of their knowledge of poetry. However, most of the reported attitudes show a degree of moderation as they tend to be positive rather than very positive. Approximately one-third of the responses or 32,5% are on the negative side and highlight the negative perceptions teachers have concerning their knowledge of poetry or their ability to teach it. Much like with the positive responses, the negative ones were also heavily dominated by negative attitudes as opposed to very negative ones. Consequently, because most of the respondents chose to stay away from the far ends of either side of the spectrum in construct 3 the individual mean scores of each question will naturally be more alike. Moreover, 13,4% of the respondents displayed uncertain attitudes within the construct.

Table 3

Table of the individual questions belonging to construct 3 of the questionnaire with accompanying mean scores. The mean scores are calculated based on a scale of 1-5 where 1 correlates to a very negative attitude and 5 correlates to a very positive one.

1. My knowledge about poetry is sufficient	3,3
2. I think that my knowledge in poetry is lacking	3,3
3. I feel confident in my ability to teach poetry to students	3,3
4. I possess an adequate repertoire of poems that I use when teaching poetry	3,1
5. I find it difficult to construct classroom activities on poetry	3,4
6. When students ask about poetry I often feel ill-equipped to answer	3,5
7. When teaching poetry I mostly stick to a few poems I am already comfortable with	2,8

Table 3 shows the individual seven questions that made up the construct of teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry and the mean scores that demonstrate which questions contribute to a more positive or negative attitude within construct 3. The questions within this construct display rather similar mean scores with 6 out of the seven questions yielding mean scores between 3,1 and 3,5. While a mean score above 3,1 is still considered positive it also shows a potential hesitancy in regard to the extent of the teachers' confidence in their knowledge of poetry or ability to teach it. Out of all the questions in construct 3 the ones that yielded the highest mean scores were questions 5 and 6. Those questions concern themselves with the teacher's ability to create classroom activities or answer student questions on poetry. The questions that yielded the lowest mean scores were questions 4 and 7, which both relate to the number of poems teachers possess within their repertoire or feel comfortable teaching. The results on questions 4 and 7 could indicate that the responding teachers feel confident in their

ability to teach poetry but simultaneously recognise room for improvement in their knowledge of poetry.

Previous research has shown that teachers oftentimes feel confident in their ability to teach poetry (Benton, 1999). Contrarily, a lack of confidence in teaching ability has also been observed (Weaven & Clark, 2013) and inexperience with poetry among teachers is not unheard of in Sweden (Sigvardsson, 2020). In Benton's (1999) study it was reported that only 9% of the teachers felt that they did not know enough about poetry to be confident in teaching it, a decrease compared to the 18% reported back in 1982. The findings of the current study corroborate that most teachers do feel confident in their ability to teach poetry, but the percentage that feels insecure simultaneously transcends the numbers reported in previous research. Question 2 asks if the respondents think their knowledge of poetry is lacking and reveals that 37,2% of the teachers believe it does. In addition, question 3 follows up by asking if they feel confident in their ability to teach poetry, to which 29,4% of the teachers responded that they do not.

It has been reported that many English teachers in England do not know enough about poetry (Ofsted, 2007). The findings from this study reveal through question 1 that 58,8% of the teachers feel that their knowledge of poetry is sufficient. While that is far from all it still shows that many of the respondents are confident in their knowledge of poetry. The lack of knowledge about poetry in teachers has been shown to manifest itself in two primary ways, both through a limited range of selected poems for classroom activities and a lack of quality feedback to students (Ofsted, 2007). When asked if they found it difficult to construct classroom activities on poetry 25,4% of the respondents agreed to some extent. In addition, 15,7% of the teachers admitted that they often felt ill-equipped to answer spontaneous questions about poetry from students. The results affirm to some degree what was said in the Ofsted (2007) report regarding ways in which a lack of poetry knowledge usually manifests itself in teachers. While the Ofsted

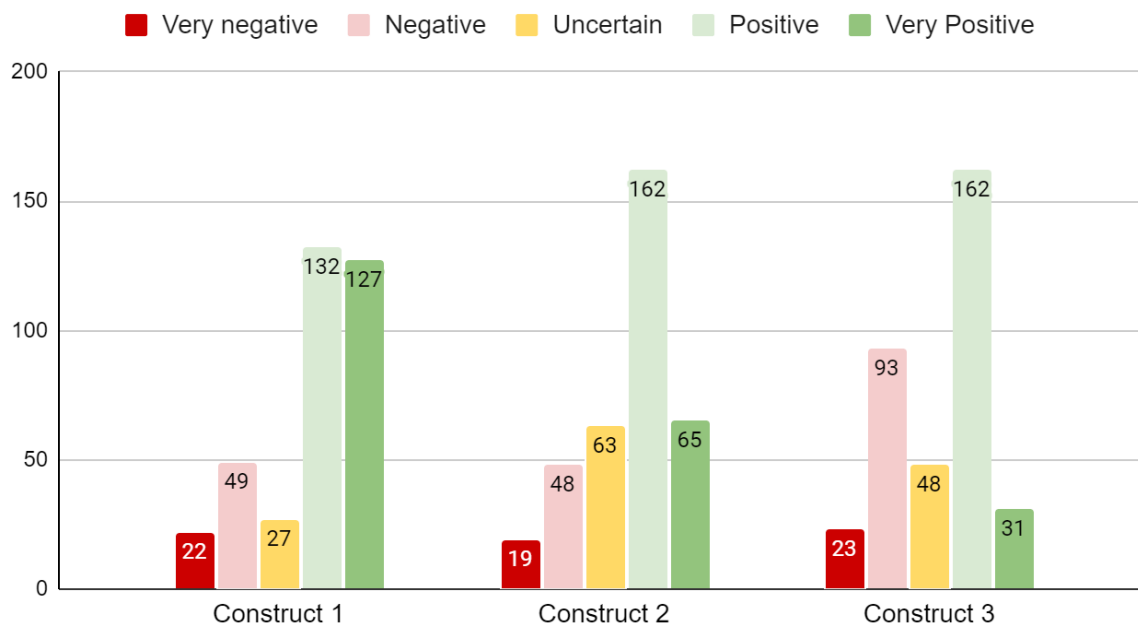
(2007) report was conducted in England the similar concerns displayed in the results show a degree of applicability to the Swedish context as well. Question 7 asks the teachers if they usually stick to a select few poems that they are comfortable with when teaching. The results show that with a mean score of 2,8/5 and 52,9% of the respondents agreeing that it is a fairly widespread practice for many to do. While sticking to a few poems is not necessarily something negative, it could indicate a lack of will to further develop poetic knowledge in teachers. Contrarily, the answers to question 4 reveal that a similar amount of 50,9% of the respondents feel that the repertoire of poems that they use for teaching is adequate. This could indicate that it is not necessarily a problem according to the teachers themselves to use fewer poems when teaching as long as the quality of the poems you do use is sufficient for what you aim to teach.

4.4 Comparing the three constructs

The findings presented in this section are made up of comparisons between the findings from the three constructs previously presented.

Figure 6

Bar chart illustrating the number of responses belonging to each category within the three constructs (Construct 1: teachers' attitudes towards poetry, Construct 2: teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry, and Construct 3: teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry).



As is illustrated in the Figure 6 bar chart, most of the responses in all of the constructs are to a certain degree positive. In constructs 2 and 3 there are no other options that are close to rivalling those of the positive ones. Moreover, in construct 1 the positive responses are only almost surpassed by the very positive ones. Contrarily, the option that managed to accumulate the least number of responses in every construct was the very negative option. If it were not for the fact that the negative option is the second most popular response in construct 3, a case could have been made saying that the respondents shied away from appearing negative. Even though the initial observation from the displayed constructs alongside each other is that there are a majority of positive responses. Out of the three constructs, the first and the second one are the most alike with a larger distribution of responses on the positive side. Construct 3 does not show the same linear distribution as it sees a spike in negative responses before the higher spike in positive ones.

Previous research has shown that in many cases the teachers who engage the most with poetry are also the ones who perceive themselves as being the most effective at teaching it (Young, 2016). Through comparisons made in this study between the construct that

investigated teachers' attitudes towards poetry and the construct that investigated teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry, a similar spread of responses was collected on two questions that can be connected to the statement by Young. Two of the questions that yielded the lowest mean scores which indicate a larger number of negative responses were: "When I have time, I like to read poetry on my own accord" with 2,9/5 and "Teaching poetry is difficult in comparison to other aspects of English education" with 2,8/5. While this could potentially be a coincidence, one explanation for it would be an existing link between exposure to poetry and perceived teaching ability.

Previous research also found that a perceived lack of poetry knowledge among teachers affected their feelings towards teaching it negatively (Weaven & Clark, 2013). On the contrary, the results of this study indicate that teachers' knowledge or interest in poetry did not affect their feelings towards the importance of poetry negatively. Many of the questions that yielded the highest mean scores indicate that teachers do see the importance of poetry and value it highly. The question if poetry has a meaningful place in the classroom scored 4,1/5 and the question if poetry is useful in today's society scored 4,3/5. Contrarily, the questions regarding the teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry usually bared slightly lower mean scores. For instance, the question asking if the respondents' knowledge of poetry was sufficient scored 3,3/5. This shows that the number of respondents who value poetry highly outweighs the number of respondents who perceive themselves to have less than adequate knowledge of poetry.

The teachers mostly agree that there are certain benefits to reading and discussing poetry as it helps develop emotional competencies alongside other language learning objectives. However, despite being aware of this, many of the respondents did not feel that poetry was of the same importance to themselves personally and did not engage with poetry on their own accord. Subsequently, the teachers' personal relationship with poetry could have

influenced their views on poetry in the classroom as there were many who did not find poetry to be among their favourite topics to teach. Additionally, it was also seen by many of the respondents as one of the more difficult topics to teach compared to other aspects of English language education. On a different note, many of the teachers reported that they use a smaller repertoire of poems when teaching poetry in class and a similar number of respondents also claimed that their repertoire was adequate. This could potentially mean that teachers who found success when teaching poetry have recognised their limited interest in the topic and chosen to put their effort into creating a small yet effective range of poems that they teach and are content with that.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to explore teachers' attitudes through a questionnaire directed at upper-secondary level EFL teachers in Sweden. The aim was to contribute knowledge about three constructs: teachers' attitudes towards poetry, their attitude towards teaching poetry and their perception of their knowledge of poetry. The findings from analysing as well as comparing the results optimistically aspire to create a better understanding of this often-overlooked topic within a Swedish context.

Looking at what the fifty-one respondents answered on the twenty-one questions that consisted of three constructs it was evident that most of the responses in all the constructs were mostly positive. Contrarily, the response option that yielded the overall least number of responses in all the constructs was the very negative one. On an adjacent note, the third construct, which measured teachers' perceived knowledge of poetry, consisted of more negative responses compared to the other two constructs. Through the seven questions of the questionnaire that made up the first construct that investigated teachers' attitudes towards poetry, two major findings were revealed. Most of the teachers viewed poetry as important on a societal level but their personal relationship with poetry was simultaneously more split as

many of them did not hold the same amount of personal regard for it. In other words, the English teachers saw the value of poetry to people and its place in the world. Contrarily, some admitted to not engaging with poetry on their own and downplayed the importance poetry had to them personally. It was an interesting contradiction that indicated that teachers' interest in poetry did not affect their feelings about the importance of poetry negatively. The second construct investigated the teachers' attitudes towards teaching poetry and yielded some interesting findings as well. The teachers' general opinions were that poetry is an important part of English education. The reading and discussion of poetry were both important tools for developing especially emotional competencies and also a way to achieve language learning objectives. The teachers also disclosed that they found enjoyment in teaching poetry but that it was simultaneously one of the more difficult topics to teach compared to other aspects of English language education. Furthermore, poetry was not usually among the teachers' favourite topics of English education to teach either. Consequently, the results seem to indicate that there are some differences between how teachers view the importance of teaching poetry as part of English language education and their feelings towards teaching it. The third and final construct investigated the teachers' perception of their knowledge of poetry. Through analysis of the questionnaire responses, it was discovered that a majority of the teachers felt confident in their knowledge of poetry and their ability to successfully teach it. However, some of the respondents and more than previous research has indicated admitted to not feeling confident in their knowledge of poetry and as a result, their ability to successfully teach it. Moreover, many of the teachers were content with a smaller repertoire of poems that they used when teaching.

It is the intention of the author that the findings presented in this study contribute to the field of research and provide insights towards the context of upper-secondary English teachers in Sweden's attitudes towards poetry. What follows is a section on the pedagogical implications

of the findings made in this study as well as a section that reflects on the potential for future research based on the limitations of this study.

5.1 Pedagogical implications

Through the convenience of an online questionnaire, it was possible to collect responses from English teachers all over Sweden and it was the ambition of this study that the sample of respondents was representative of them and their attitudes towards poetry. Viewing the results of this study as a teacher could potentially make them realise that their attitudes towards poetry are accounted for and feel that there are other English teachers in Sweden to relate to. Furthermore, it could even lead to discussions among colleagues and bring a potential issue experienced by some teachers to light. To specify, if teachers become aware of others' attitudes towards poetry, they might dare to voice their own opinions or concerns and through that get assistance from more experienced colleagues.

On a different note, the findings of this study could inspire educational publishers to include more poetry in their textbooks that cover a wider range of poets. Poetry is to be included in English 6 and could also be used in English 5 and 7. At the same time, poetry is a topic that is only briefly specified by the Swedish National Agency for Education for English 6. This could potentially mean that there is a gap for some teachers when it comes to how to approach teaching poetry, a gap that could be bridged by textbook creators if they choose to include more carefully selected poems. In addition, the fact that there are teachers in Sweden who struggle with teaching poetry could inspire the Swedish National Agency for Education to implement some changes in future syllabi. It is in the best interest of everyone that education works well, and part of the responsibility is on those in charge of the governing documents. Teachers have an obligation to abide by the steering documents and a lack of clear directives could possibly be a contributing factor to some of the uncertainties teachers feel surrounding poetry.

5.2 Future research

As for future research, there is potential to make a similar study but on a larger scale. That would require more time but since the nature of this study is quantitative and the questionnaire was distributed online, a larger sample size would not necessarily pose a greater workload for the researcher. Additionally, a larger sample size could also potentially showcase a more reliable result as long as the quality of responses is ensured. A different approach regarding the sampling process could have been to section respondents into regions which would enable for comparisons within Sweden to be made. Contrarily, other factors such as age or where teachers went to university might prove to be more impactful variables to investigate. For instance, if teachers' attitudes were to be dependent on their age the underlying reason could be generational differences in their educational circumstances. The sampling process could also be adjusted to be conducted on teachers from different countries or parts of the world. Since the questionnaire is already available for distribution digitally the process of reaching teachers abroad would simply be to reach out to other online groups. The study could be a comparison of neighbouring countries or between an English-speaking country and a non-English-speaking country. Regardless of what the motivation behind such a study could be, it would certainly contribute to the limited existing field of research. Furthermore, the current study interests itself in teachers' attitudes, but this concept could just as easily be applied to students. A future study could choose to investigate students' attitudes towards poetry and add another interesting piece to the puzzle that along with the results from this study could say something more.

By adapting a more advanced data analysis method there is the potential to enable more intricate comparisons to be made. This would require a more advanced data analysis but be completely reasonable for a researcher to attempt. If more focus were placed on the specific responses from each respondent, comparisons in search of interesting correlations could have been made. A hypothetical discovery could be that a large majority of respondents who answered

a question in a certain way also answered a different question in a certain way. Additionally, inquiries into the distribution of responses to different questions or even entire constructs could have been highlighted. A potential compromise with an approach like that compared to the procedures of this study would be the risk of overlooking some of the more general and overarching attitudes of the respondents. However, such a study would simultaneously have the potential to find many fascinating correlations and, in a way, present the opportunity to do much more with the same amount of data.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire: Teachers' attitudes to poetry

B I U ↺ ✕

Background information

This questionnaire is part of a research paper made by a student at the Teacher Education Programme at Lund University in Sweden. The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the attitudes towards poetry of English teachers in Swedish upper secondary schools (gymnasium). It includes attitudes towards poetry in general, teaching poetry and perceived knowledge of poetry. Your answers will become part of statistical results based on several anonymous English teachers answers. If you have any further questions about the study do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Researcher

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Instructions

This questionnaire consists of 21 questions and will only take a few minutes to complete. The questions are statement questions which intends to uncover English teachers' attitudes towards poetry. You will read a statement and answer to what extent you either agree or disagree with it. If you feel that you neither agree or disagree you can always answer "uncertain".

Confidentiality

The questionnaire is web-based and the responses are anonymous. No information besides your answers are being stored. By answering "I consent" to the initial mandatory question you agree to partake in this study anonymously.

Lastly, I would like to give a huge thank you to everyone who takes the time to answer this questionnaire. It is greatly appreciated and I am eternally grateful.

By answering "I consent" you consent to partake in this study *

☐ I consent

In which Swedish region are you located?

- ☐ Stockholm
- ☐ Uppsala
- ☐ Sörmland
- ☐ Östergötland
- ☐ Jönköpings län
- ☐ Kronoberg
- ☐ Kalmar län
- ☐ Gotland
- ☐ Blekinge
- ☐ Skåne
- ☐ Halland
- ☐ Götalandsregionen
- ☐ Värmland
- ☐ Örebro län
- ☐ Västmanland
- ☐ Dalarna
- ☐ Gävleborg
- ☐ Västernorrland
- ☐ Jämtland Härjedalen
- ☐ Västerbotten
- ☐ Norrbotten
- ☐ I'd rather not disclose

When I have time, I like to read poetry on my own accord

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry education has a meaningful place in the classroom

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

My knowledge about poetry is sufficient

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry is not useful in today's society

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Teaching poetry is difficult in comparison to other aspects of English education

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I think that my knowledge in poetry is lacking

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry is important to me personally

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Teaching poetry is one of the aspects of being an English teacher that I enjoy most

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I feel confident in my ability to teach poetry to students

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry is for everyone

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I find no enjoyment in teaching poetry

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I possess an adequate repertoire of poems that I use when teaching poetry

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry is a thing of the past

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry education is important as a means for language learning

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I find it difficult to construct classroom activities on poetry

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry has influenced my perspective on life

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry can be an important tool to develop emotional competences

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When students ask about poetry I often feel ill-equipped to answer

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Poetry is not very relatable

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

It is important to teach poetry analysis in the classroom

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

When teaching poetry I mostly stick to a few poems I am already comfortable with

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree