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**Carrera de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa**

**The Use of Poetry for Developing the Productive Skills in EFL/ESL Students**

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención  
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**Autora:**

Camila Alexandra Orellana Morales  
CI: 0105840722  
camilexa2008@hotmail.com

**Director:**

Magíster Juan José Santillán Iñiguez  
CI: 0301916144

**Cuenca, Ecuador**

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**Resumen:**

Las destrezas lingüísticas productivas de la escritura y el habla se consideran difíciles de desarrollar; especialmente para los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) o como segundo idioma (ESL) quienes aprenden en ambientes escolares que se han considerado deshumanizados por su falta de atención a la dimensión emocional de los estudiantes y su énfasis excesivo en el desarrollo de habilidades observables. No obstante, la poesía puede utilizarse como un instrumento para contrarrestar esta deshumanización y ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar su experiencia educativa, desafortunadamente, los profesores de idiomas aún desconocen los beneficios que el trabajo con poesía puede traer a los estudiantes. Por lo tanto, esta síntesis investigativa exploratoria pretende describir los efectos de la poesía como una herramienta para desarrollar las habilidades productivas en los estudiantes de EFL / ESL. Además, la síntesis también presenta información relacionada con las percepciones que tienen los estudiantes hacia el uso de la poesía. Se revisaron quince estudios empíricos, realizados mayoritariamente a nivel universitario, y que emplearon diferentes instrumentos para la recolección de datos. Los resultados extraídos del análisis demuestran que la poesía tiene principalmente efectos positivos/beneficiosos sobre el desarrollo de las destrezas de escritura y orales. Además, los resultados muestran que los estudiantes consideran la poesía como una herramienta positiva para su aprendizaje y se sienten cómodos mientras trabajan con poesía durante sus clases. La información obtenida en esta síntesis de investigación puede servir como referencia para futuras investigaciones e implementación de la poesía en el aula EFL / ESL.

**Palabras clave:** Poesía. Destrezas productivas. Escritura. Habla. Efectos. Percepciones. EFL/ESL.



**Abstract:**

The productive language skills of writing and speaking are considered to be difficult to develop; especially for EFL/ESL students who learn in classroom environments that have been regarded as dehumanized because of their inattention to the emotional dimension of students and their overemphasis on the development of observable skills. Nonetheless, poetry can be used as a tool to retaliate this dehumanization and help students improve their learning experience; unfortunately, language teachers are still unaware of the benefits that working with poetry can bring to students. Therefore, this exploratory research synthesis intends to describe the effects of poetry as a tool to develop the productive skills in EFL/ESL students. In addition, the synthesis also presents information related to the perceptions that students have towards the use of poetry. Fifteen empirical studies, conducted majorly in university level, and that employed different instruments to gather data, were revised. The findings drawn from the analysis demonstrate that poetry mostly has beneficial effects on the development of the writing and speaking skills. Additionally, the results show that students perceive poetry as a positive tool for their learning and feel comfortable while working with poetry during their classes. The information drawn in this research synthesis can serve as reference for future research and implementation of poetry in the EFL/ESL classroom.

**Keywords:** Poetry. Productive skills. Writing. Speaking. Effects. Perceptions. EFL/ESL.



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Camila Alexandra Orellana Morales

C.I: 0105840722





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### **Dedication**

*To you, Mama and Pipo, for your perusing eyes that have always taken care of me with selflessness, bravery, and a patient heart.*

*To you, Willy, for your unconditional support and our constant bickering that always ends up in guffawing.*

*To you, Jay, my forever keeper, whose love and innocence are so infinite as the vast universe.*

*To you, Mara, one of the loves of my life, your beady eyes will forever remain in my mind even if you are not here anymore...*



## Introduction

At the moment of learning a foreign language, students should be able to engage and participate in an environment which promotes self-confidence and intellectual growth (Srisermbhok, 2017). Nonetheless, for many students, the task of learning a language becomes difficult since most of the methodologies and materials used in an ELF / ESL classroom are still within the traditional frame of language teaching (Aladini, Farahbod, & Arjomandi, 2015). The use of traditional materials and pursue of mainly academic objectives that try to set students in high levels of language proficiency have taken away their condition of humans (Hanauer, 2012). Consequently, in an attempt to make the process of English language learning and development easier for students, and above all holistic, some researchers propose the use of literature as a valuable resource to be used inside the EFL classroom (Lazar, 1993; Hess, 2003; Hall, 2005; Hughes, 2007; Kirkgöz, 2008; Hanauer, 2011; Iida, 2011, 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Khatib, 2011; Khatib, Rezaei & Derakhshan, 2011; Liao, 2012; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Aladini et al., 2015; Antika, 2016; Widodo, Budi & Wijayanti, 2016; Mahmud, 2017; Srisermbhok, 2017; Gönen, 2018; Cronin & Hawthorne, 2019; Santillán & Rodas, 2020). Even though there is relatively little research that validates and gives a guide on how to use literature in the language classroom (Iida, 2012), the available empirical research has demonstrated that in the field of EFL learning, poetry works as useful material that helps students develop their productive skills through the use of poetry-based tasks such as oral discussions about poetry, and written personal compositions (Kirkgöz, 2008; Hanauer, 2011; Iida, 2012; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Aladini et al., 2015; Mahmud, 2017; Gönen, 2018; Ali, Khan, & Amin, 2019) Accordingly, poetry presents beneficial effects on the development of the productive skills since it serves as a motivating material that promotes self-expression in students and encourages



them to gain confidence to be more involved in their English language skills development (Hughes, 2007; Kirkgöz, 2008; Hanauer, 2011; Kuśnierek, 2015; Ali, Khan, & Amin, 2019).

Therefore, the following research synthesis aims to describe the effects that poetry has on the development of the productive skills in EFL / ESL students; and report the perceptions that EFL / ESL students have towards the use of poetry to develop their speaking and writing skills. The report of this study consists of the following chapters:

**Chapter I.** This chapter presents the background, statement of the problem and justification of the study. In addition, the research questions and objectives are stated.

**Chapter II.** In this chapter the theoretical framework is developed. This section contains the most important definitions of terminology and theories that support the study and provide context for the better understanding the of content.

**Chapter III.** The literature review is presented in this chapter. An account of the empirical evidence on the subject, as reported in 15 research articles. This data is organized according to various categories of analysis that were extracted from the studies themselves.

**Chapter IV.** This chapter covers the methodology of the study. The approach of the study and the inclusion and exclusion criteria used for data collection are explained.

**Chapter V.** This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of results gathered from the revision of literature. The information is presented in two sections, the first section deals with the research design of the studies, and the second section is related to the two research questions proposed in this synthesis. In addition, taking into account the information in the literature review and theoretical framework, inferences derived from the analysis are discussed.



**Chapter VI.** This section covers the conclusions and recommendations that were obtained from the analysis of the 15 research articles and the connections that derived from the theories in the theoretical framework. Furthermore, Recommendations of a pedagogical and a research-related nature for future research are presented.



## Chapter I

### Description of the Research

#### 1.1. Background

In educative history, several methodologies have been implemented in the field of English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning (Deshors, Götz, & Laporte, 2016). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the main method to learn a language was translating literature from the target language to attain high proficiency (Benati, 2018; Sapargul & Sartor, 2010). This method was known as Grammar Translation and it was used as a medium in which students would read and appreciate literature through the understanding and translation of the grammar of the target language while they developed reading and writing skills (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Chang, 2011; Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014). Nonetheless, learning a language demands more than memorizing and applying grammatical rules to achieve communicative competence (Sapargul & Sartor, 2010). As part of the response to these language demands, the Task-based Approach was introduced for students to learn through useful tasks that are revised by the teacher to achieve natural learning through a process of escalating activities and interaction among peers which provide a different approach to the target language (Anwar & Arifani, 2016; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Further investigation regarding language teaching methods led to the introduction of the Audio Lingual Method by Charles Fries who proposed this oral-based instruction to learn the target language (as cited by Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Additionally, Alemi and Tavakoli (2016), and Mart (2013) describe the Audio Lingual Method as a type of learning through drill exercises in which learners are stimulated to respond correctly to certain patterns by means of reinforcement and memorization through the use of dialogues. Next, the Flipped Classroom Method appeared as a modern



approach where traditional teaching stays outside the classroom and content practice happens at home allowing the classroom to be a space for collaborative work and engagement with resources that allow students learn by themselves (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2014; Chen, Wu & Marek, 2016). In the same token, in the 1980s the Communicative Language Teaching appeared to promote effective and authentic communication amongst students (Sapargul & Sartor, 2010). This method tries to focus on communicative competence as students develop the four language skills and display their individuality during conversations (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014).

Khatib (2011) notes that throughout this long history of pedagogical methodologies, scholars have tried to find new resources to improve classroom environment; consequently, the use of literature has been considered (Khatib, 2011). According to Antika (2016) literature is a resource with great potential to be used inside the classroom. To illustrate, poetry, as a part of literature, has been demonstrated to be a useful alternative for language teaching and learning (Hughes, 2007).

Kramersch has mentioned that literature is being accepted again into schools' curricula (as cited in Hess, 2003). Thus, literature, poetry in this case, can be implemented in the English language classroom to teach the four language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Kuśnierek, 2015). Golkova and Hubackova (2014) has emphasized that these language skills can be grouped into two, the receptive or passive skills and the productive or active skills. The authors described reading and listening as part of the receptive skills since they do not oblige students to participate actively in class, they only receive information. The productive skills are constituted by the writing and speaking skills (Golkova & Hubackova, 2014). These involve



active participation and transmission of information either orally or in a written manner (Kuśnierek, 2015; Golkova & Hubackova, 2014).

A more extensive definition of the productive skills has been proposed by Cole and Feng (2015) and Kellogg (2008) as they have described the writing skill as the ability to present vocabulary and grammatical structures in a coherent manner that demonstrates good understanding of the language with the portrayal of logical chains of thought. The speaking skill can be perceived as the one that asks for more openness since it requires great amounts of practice to produce the language accurately and effectively to reach a fluency level that denotes correct management of the language (Kuśnierek, 2015).

In regard to the use of poetry in EFL lessons, Hall (2005) and Iida (2012) mention the lack of empirical evidence on the use of literature in the classroom. Nonetheless, available research has demonstrated that poetry might be an important tool to develop the necessary motivation to learn English, due to the fact that it increases the levels of competence and performance in many students as they broaden their understanding of the meaning and uses of different linguistic structures (Aladini et al., 2015; Ali, Khan, & Amin, 2019; Hanauer, 2011). Poetry possesses a load of emotional content that can motivate students to express themselves and progress their learning experience as they create meaningful relationships between them and the learned content (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014). Kirkgöz (2008) states that students who work with poetry have acknowledged having increased their motivation, imagination, and confidence. With the help of poetry, learners are able to practice and improve their pronunciation, their writing abilities, and their understanding of content (Aladini et al., 2015; Ali et al., 2019;





Kirkgöz, 2008). In this light, recent research has shown that poetry might be a good tool to be used for English language teaching and learning (Aladini et al., 2015).

Studies conducted with university EFL students have shown that the use of poetry-based activities might help to strengthen the writing skills. Research has shown that students are able to express their emotions easily after having worked with poetry as they increase their language repertoire and motivation (Iida, 2012; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Kirkgöz, 2008); in addition, their creativity to write poetry is more visible, and they grow a sense of cultural awareness of the language they are using (Liao, 2012; Ilankumaran & Deepa, 2018; Widodo, Budi & Wijayanti, 2016). Moreover, students learn new vocabulary and improve their writing abilities in English through collaborative learning based upon sharing their analysis of poems and answering questions that were proposed after reading poetry (Gönen, 2018; Manurung & Gulyanto 2018, Cronin & Hawthorne 2019, Mahmud, 2017). Likewise, Liao (2012) explains that students perceive to have improved in the writing skill through the idea that writing poetry favors them to finally own the target language; consequently, students also became better at developing paragraphs since they acquire more fluency at the moment of expressing their feelings (Mahmud, 2017). Moreover, regardless of some initial anxiety and resilience towards poetry, students are able to enrich their vocabularies, reflect their creativity and imagination in their poems, and better their perceptions towards poetry and the creation of it (Iida, 2012; Kirkgöz, 2008; Liao, 2012).

Different empirical research has demonstrated that EFL/ESL students find difficulties in expressing themselves; especially, due to frustration and confusion at the moment of using the target language (Chamcharatsri, 2013). However, Ali et al. (2019) mention that poetry can reflect



our inner thoughts and give our ideas a voice. Research has shown that students feel more confident to share their thoughts orally when they are encouraged to participate in discussions and share their ideas freely inside a group that is not looking for *correct* interpretations of the poems (Iida, 2012; Liao, 2012; Khatib, 2011). Additionally, students tend to be willing to share their ideas when the topics of the poems are related to real-life situations that students have experienced (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Aladini et al., 2015); this leads to improve their perceptions towards poetry, more active participation in group discussions, and to accomplish oral development close to native speakers (Widodo et al., 2016; Manurung & Gulyanto, 2018; Srisermbhok, 2017). Furthermore, the available empirical research has shown that discussing poetry helps students to express and explain more abstract ideas as they enhance their linguistic knowledge (Hanauer, 2001; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Ilankumaran & Deepa, 2018) this leads to more effective communication and an increase of motivation that helps students to express themselves in the target language in any context outside the classroom (Widodo et al., 2016; Srisermbhok, 2017).

In the Ecuadorian context, the English as a Foreign Language National Curriculum (2016) has proposed the use of the CLIL methodology to integrate English language learning and cultural aspects of language through the implementation of the four Cs (Content, culture, communication, and cognition) and the integration of the curricular thread ‘Language through the Arts’. Notwithstanding, preliminary research has revealed that there is no available empirical evidence, in the Ecuadorian context, showing the benefits that poetry may have in the EFL classroom.



## 1.2.Statement of the problem

Learning a new language, English in this case, should be a part of education that promotes self-esteem and intellectual growth, but there is no much attention paid to what motivates students to learn and how to engage them in meaningful learning (Srisermbhok, 2017). The ideal environment in which students can learn involves interaction, where they can discover their potential to acquire knowledge, and a teacher who provides enough and various materials to develop that potential (Samanik, 2018). According to Khatib, Rezaei, and Derakhshan (2011) literature is an appropriate tool to create this kind of environment in which students can learn aspects of the language that cannot be found in non-literary texts. Nonetheless, Santillán and Rodas (2020) note that in Latin America, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the use of literature in the EFL classroom, specifically for poetry. Furthermore, the authors explain that teachers and students are still strangers to the advantages of the use of poetry in the EFL classroom due to them being unknowledgeable of the very little yet available empirical evidence. Khatib (2011) has noted that in many countries poetry has been taught; however, it has always been taught through the use of traditional methods (Khatib, 2011). The author states that using these methodologies only give students a grammatical knowledge of the poem, yet it leaves aside any mention of emotional content. One of the issues that constrain EFL teachers from using literature is that they are obliged to follow curricular plans in which grammar and vocabulary are the focus (Khatib, 2011); additionally, teachers like to follow the guide of grammar textbooks which are easy to study yet that have little to none literary content (Kırkgöz, 2008). Following this idea, Kırkgöz (2008) and Liao (2012) have commented that traditional grammar textbooks are still relevant in EFL classrooms because they facilitate the making of guides for complementing the content; notwithstanding, this type of instruction neglects the emotional



expression of students. Panavelil (2011) has explained that the first step to introduce poetry in the language classroom is that teachers should be fond of the poems they are using. Nonetheless, Povey has commented that one of the reasons why students view poetry with a negative mentality is because the teachers who use it do not like poetry either, which is usually a result of past bad experiences with verse (as cited by Khatib, 2011). Therefore, when students are asked to participate in class, they lack confidence and fret to share their ideas because they have not had a proper model of how to handle poetic content (Bjelland, 2016); thus, teachers need to be involved in the process of learning with poetry because an only grammar-based program does not encourage self-expression (Liao, 2012). Moreover, Hanauer expresses that poetry should help learners to understand and give new meanings to the real world with a different perspective (as cited by Hanauer, 2011). Notwithstanding, Iida (2012) explains that students are urged to learn how to use the language in an academic context rather than a creative one. Consequently, excessive grammatical accuracy taught to reduce errors leads to problems at the moment of using English in the real-world context (Iida, 2011).

In addition, according to Kramersch, another factor that constrains the use of literature in the EFL classroom is that the actors involved, have lost their humane quality; students are not conceived as humans with needs but rather as recipients of content (as cited in Hanauer, 2012). As an illustration of the effects that these situations have on the development of language learning, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education has claimed that students present an important decrease in their academic performance in the foreign language area (Calle et al., 2012). This, as a result of the lack of pedagogical methodologies that reinforce communicative competence rather than grammatical knowledge through traditional methods and drill exercises (Calle et al., 2012). Ali et al. (2019) have stated that English language instructors utilize a vast variety of



teaching materials to present the language to students, some of these include grammar books, excerpts from newspapers or magazines, realia, videos, etc.; additionally, they mention that, even though these materials contribute with important exercises for language learning, their focus is primarily put upon memorization and learning for academic purposes. Therefore, their lack of emotional content cannot motivate students, nor give them freedom of expression at the moment of using English in real-life encounters (Ali et al., 2019; Iida, 2010).

In response to this problem, this study seeks to analyze the use of poetry as an English language learning material to develop the productive skills. As mentioned before, in other contexts, experimental studies have been carried out in order to examine the benefits of using poetry in the ESL/EFL classroom. These studies have been published in different journals and online platforms, notwithstanding, secondary research based on this topic has not been conducted. Therefore, this research synthesis recollects various studies to analyze and synthesize the most important findings found in published research.

### **1.3. Justification**

Teaching a language is an evolving matter and teachers are obliged to evolve and embrace new techniques for the benefit of their students (Gandhi, 2012). This is not an easy task. Mohseniasl (2014) has mentioned that one of the factors that constrain students during language learning is anxiety. Rico (2014) notes that many students believe that a good development of the target language is challenging and unachievable; hence, they do not feel confident to ‘produce’ and improve their learning (Rico, 2014). The writing and speaking skills tend to be more difficult for students (Jani & Sarmiento, 2015); consequently, the lack of confidence to write their own material or anxiety to speak in public constrains them from communicating (Gandhi, 2012).



However, these issues might be addressed and surpassed in a better way if motivation is present to help students (Sahoo & Sinha, 2020). Moreover, Gandhi (2012) mentioned that literature, poetry in this context, provides tools that boost students' feelings and allows them to understand semantics, syntax, vocabulary, and the different language skills.

The creativity of literature and poetry enables students to foster their self-esteem and confidence to reflect their feelings, experiences, and cultural background in the production of language through oral or written means (English as a Foreign Language National Curriculum, 2016). Using poetry-based activities in the classroom encourages students to convey more complex emotions and engage in learning activities regardless of how much literary background they may have (Cronin & Hawthorne, 2019; Srisermbhok, 2017). Poetry helps students to create meaningful connections between content and the target language and to keep using the language, not only within the classroom, but also in the world outside school. (Manurung & Gulyanto, 2018; Eastman, 2015, Gandhi, 2012; Patel & Laud, 2015)

Unfortunately, regardless of the many advantages that poetry has on the development of the productive skills in language learning, research on this area in the Ecuadorian context can be said to be nonexistent. Consequently, there are no guidelines regarding the use of poetry in the Ecuadorian EFL classroom. Nevertheless, this synthesis is not only directed to the use of poetry as a material for teaching, but also as a means to develop and increase a sense confidence in students which motivates students to learn and improve their language skills as they interact with literature and contact the emotional aspects of language. The study follows the subjectivity of poetry that allows students connect with their learning and improve their abilities to perform in the productive skills (Roh, 2016). This, due to the fact that poetry favors spontaneity and the



crossing of expressions that do not fit the strict syntax of the language, but highlight the use of vocabulary and creative expressions which generate enjoyment while producing speech with the elements of the second language (Roh, 2016; Mahmud, 2017). Thus, the following work synthesizes available research on the subject of using poetry in the ESL/EFL classroom.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

- What is the effect of poetry on the development of the productive skills, according to the available empirical evidence?
- What are the students' perceptions towards the use of poetry to develop their productive skills, as reported on the available literature?

#### **1.5. Objectives**

##### **1.5.1. General Objective**

To describe the effects of poetry as a tool to develop the productive skills in ESL/EFL students.

##### **1.5.2. Specific Objectives**

To determine the poetry elements which might develop and enhance the productive skills.

To determine ESL/EFL students' perceptions in relation to the use of poetry to develop their productive skills.



## Chapter II

### Theoretical Framework

This section of the research synthesis conceptualizes important terms and theories that support the use of poetry and literature; consequently, the following information presents the necessary background for the understanding of the readers.

#### 2.1. Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a learner-centered approach which involves meaningful communication, language reflection, and connections with the topics that interest students in order to achieve meaningful communication (Richards, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Richards (2005) explains that the CLT aims to teach communicative competence and help students to foster the various aspects of this competence such as: using the language for different purposes, understanding the various genres of texts, communicating despite certain limitations, and so forth.

In order to do this, it is important to clarify how CLT perceives teaching and language. First, Larsen-Freeman (2000) highlights that to work with CLT language must be used with a communicative purpose in which students can become acquainted with the different language functions. Therefore, students need to learn content, form, and functions to carry out effective communication (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In terms of teaching, the students mostly work in small collaborative groups and the teacher performs as a facilitator who encourages meaningful communicative activities (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Morrow describes a real communicative activity as a three-step process, as it is explained by Larsen-Freeman (2000):





- Information gap: this occurs when in a communicative exchange one of the parties possesses information that the other party does not.
- Choice: the speaker can choose how and what to say during the conversation.
- Feedback: the speaker has the opportunity to receive feedback to check if the communicative purpose has been achieved.

Moreover, in terms of literature CLT promotes the use of authentic text that can capture students' attention and a real example of what language looks like (Richards, 2005); additionally, Richards and Rodgers (2014) mention that the principles of the CLT are compatible with the theory of the Whole Language which highlights the use of literature to teach a language. Equally important, Maley and Duff mention that using literature in the class stimulates students to participate actively in the completion of tasks as they use and analyze the language (as cited by Hirvela, 1996).

## **2.2.Approaches that promote the use of literature**

Lazar (1993) explains that studying literature in the language classroom helps students with their understanding of the English language; similarly, Ali (1994) notes that literature does not promote extremely difficult objectives to obtain, rather literary texts endorse experiences of enrichment for the learners. Therefore, it has been acknowledged that regular structurally-based texts are enough to suffice EFL/ESL learners' academic needs (Amer, 2003). Consequently, two approaches have been selected to explain the influence of literature in the language classroom; the *Reader-response Approach* and the *Language-based Approach*.



### 2.3. Reader-Response Approach

The Reader-Response Approach exists to oppose the absolutist interpretations of a text that are proposed by figures of authority, and the traditional imposition of the meanings and understandings of texts (Hirvela, 1996). Consequently, the approach was introduced to redirect the focus of the texts from the authors to the readers to help them produce in the target language after having created meanings from the texts (Kelleem, 2009; Hirvela, 1996).

In addition, the Reader-Response Approach came to be known as an important tool in language learning due to its intimate relation with the use of literature (Hirvela, 1996); in this light; Ali (1994) notes that the Reader-Response Approach tries to obtain a mature response which is produced after a thorough process of reflection about the relationship that the learner is forming with the reading. As a result of such process, a meaningful experience with literature is not created while reading, rather, this experience is perceived in the information that is retained and kept for long after the student has finished the text (Amer, 2003).

To illustrate the process of how the Reader-Response Approach works, Ali (1994) explains a six-level developmental model based on Thomson's ideas:

- **Level 1, Literal understanding:** Students summarize the content of the story.
- **Level 2, Empathy:** Students identify the aspects and characters of the story that make them feel sympathy.
- **Level 3, Analogy:** Students relate aspects and characters of the story with their own experiences.
- **Level 4, Interpretation:** Students reflect on the meanings of the story.



- **Level 5, Evaluation of fiction:** Students distinguish between fiction and reality and are able to evaluate and critic the author's intentions.
- **Level 6, Recognition:** Students revise their self-understanding and become aware of their reading process.

Thomson illustrates that students should use literature to create meanings, to critic the author's values, to make a distinction between reality and fiction, and evaluate the content of the text (as cited in Amer, 2003). In order to achieve what Thomson proposes, students need a safe environment where their creativity and reflective thinking can flow without constraints (Ali, 1994). Hence, the Reader-Response Approach encourages students to think reflectively and to study literature for the purpose of creating meanings and experiences, rather than studying it just for improving skills (Ali, 1994; Amer, 2003); considering this, Rosenblatt mentions that texts are nothing more than mere ink until they are reflected and analyzed by readers (as cited in Ali, 1994). Accordingly, the Reader-Response Approach turns into a useful tool to teach and learn a language through the use of poetry or any of the other genres of literature as learners provide authentic responses and engage themselves with literature (Kellem, 2009; Hirvela, 1996).

#### **2.4. Language-Based Approach**

Lazar (1993) comments that the Language-Based approach has different objectives and procedures; however, the author mentions that in a general sense, a fusion between language and literature will help students develop proficiency in English, as well as gaining knowledge. Van (2009) notes that these approach is interconnected with the CLT since the study of literature promotes a development of the four language skills as well as collaborative work. Lazar (1993) notes that the Language-based Approach encourages the study of literature as a means to



understand the authentic background of the text to develop well thought and reflected opinions and judgments about the readings. In regard to this idea, Dhillon and Mogan (2014) state that the Language-Based Approach is a student-centered perspective that promotes sensitivity and language production through the use of enjoyable activities that permit the students to understand literature and practice their language skills. In this sense, the Language-Based approach provides a wide range of activities such as brainstorming, cloze questions, story rewriting, reading puzzles, among others (Van, 2009). Van (2009) explains that during the development of these activities, teachers guide students and help them to clarify information without the necessity of imposing them a preconceived knowledge.

Lazar (1993) conceives literature as a useful resource which provides various topics and appealing possibilities for learning activities. In the same light, Duff and Maley comment that literature offers a vast diversity of styles and contents that open a door to a great number of interpretations, discussions, new interests, and motivations (as cited in Lazar, 1993). Van (2009) remarks that students are able to enjoy and understand more literary genres as they develop their language skills and communicative competence in the target language. The author also suggests that this is possible thanks to the constant support and guide that teachers provide to the students as they form a relationship between their personal experiences and literature.

Dhillon and Mogan (2014) use McRae's words to explain some of the linguistic features that can be addressed through the Language-Based Approach to the inclusion of literature in EFL/ESL contexts:

- **Lexis:** the choice of words in the text.
- **Syntax:** how words are organized in the text.



- **Cohesion:** the verbal, pronominal or temporal links.
- **Semantics:** the way meaning is portrayed within the text.
- **Dialect:** language variations.
- **Register:** the level of formality.
- **Period:** the time in which the story was written (it also includes tone, style, and audience)
- **Function:** how the message and intention of the author influence the reader.

It's important to remark that these features are used to carry out the analysis of actual literary pieces and they may or may not be reflected at the same time by the students (Dhillon & Mogan, 2014)

In addition, to understand how a Language-Based class is carried out authentically with the analysis of poetry, Fauziah (2016) explains three phases of teaching that are taken into account in the process:

1. **Initial/Preparation phase:** the teacher provides activities to catch the interest of students; these activities include translations, discussions, questionnaires, getting to know the author, among others.
2. **Exploration phase:** students and teacher discuss the storyline of the poem to identify the key features that stand out in the poem; additionally, the teacher provides comprehension questions to check the understanding of students.
3. **Evaluation phase:** students are assessed without being aware of it. Students are mostly provided cloze questions, re-writing activities, fill the gap exercises, etc.; these with the intention of evaluating students without stress.



## 2.5. Approaches that promote the use of poetry

### 2.5.1. Meaningful Literacy

This theory which advocates for the use of poetry and poetry writing in the language classroom as an attempt to give back to the students their condition of humans and create a student-centered environment, has been proposed by Hanauer (2012); nonetheless, to provide a better understating of the implications of this type of instruction it is important to define meaning, in the way Hanauer interprets it; Joseph Maxwell defines it as the understanding that learners have of the world based on their personal experiences (as cited in Hanauer, 2012). In this light, Hanauer (2012) explains that learning a language should involve humanity and depth more than just scholar traits; however, the author notes that traditional language teaching erases these human qualities to focus on communicative competence. Following this idea, Kramsch has stated that the language classroom has lost its humane quality to focus on *bureaucratic* learning (as cited by Hanauer, 2012). Moreover, Hanauer (2012) uses Kramsch's words to explain that this type of teaching leads to apprehensive learning situations for students; therefore, Kramsch suggests that appreciation of subjectivity and the emotional side of students is paramount for language learning (as cited in Hanauer, 2012). Therefore, a new language teaching approach needs to be humane and recognize learners as beings who can connect themselves with the language and the world that surrounds them (Hanauer 2012). Consequently, the Meaningful Literacy instruction as explained by Hanauer (2012) is applicable in language learning because it deals with the personal perceptions, longing to explore meaning, and the experiences of learners which allow them to broaden and express their feelings and multiple understandings of the world as they flourish as unique individuals who are valued for their conceptions of what is real for them.



Accordingly, Hanauer (2012) mentions that the Meaningful Literacy theory is constituted by four basic principles which constitute the process that prompts Meaningful Literacy as the core of the instruction; these principles are described as follows:

- **Autobiographical writing:** learners make use of their personal history, memories and creativity to conduct a thorough exploration of their being.
- **Emotional writing:** encourages the expression of emotions and personal feelings through writing.
- **Personal Insight:** promotes a self-reflection operation to understand and value the personal experiences.
- **Authentic public access:** display of one's emotions, beliefs, and meanings to peers.

Hanauer (2012) argues that writing poetry can be considered one of the many manifestations of Meaningful Literacy due to the fact that poems involve emotional and personal self-expression; furthermore, Widdowson (1994) comments that learners can consider themselves proficient in a language once they shape it at their will and use it to express themselves and not only reflect the form of it.

### 2.5.2. Social-Expressivist Pedagogy

Iida (2010) declares that the Social-Expressivist is an approach that helps students find their singular perspectives about the world. The author explains that it is possible to understand the Communicative Language Teaching and the Social-Expressivist Approach as similar practices since the latter connects language learning with communicative activities in which students can show their voice. In order to understand the definition of voice, Matsuda (2001) defines it as a distinct quality that helps readers identify a certain author.



Additionally, Iida (2010) remarks that voice cannot exist alone without the idea of an audience; otherwise, it would be one-sided communication. As a matter of fact, Vygotsky explains that the idea of self comes to life thanks to social and external factors which influence its constructions (as cited in Iida, 2010). Therefore, Iida (2010) considers that is not plausible to separate these two concepts since they need one another to function.

### **2.5.3. Methodological basis for including poetry in language lessons**

In order to present an example on how to introduce poetry in a language course, Hanauer (2012) explains the three stages that he follows in a poetry-based methodology which tries to explore the individuality and emotional side of students who are trying to learn a new language:

- **Stage 1: Generating personal motivation for self-exploration:** the teacher generates an environment in which students can reflect about their past experiences and are willing to listen to the personal stories of their peers.
- **Stage 2: Process of autobiographical exploration:** extensive process in which students travel across their memories and try to make them as vivid and descriptive as possible to their classmates in order to gather emotional data that will later be written down.
- **Stage 3: Poetic expression of autobiographical memory:** students transcribe all their memories into poetry. In this stage, it is important that they are as accurate as possible with the descriptions of their personal moments and feelings; therefore, it is an exhaustive process which requires various analysis and upgrades at the moment of writing.





Additionally, to provide more insight on the use of poetry in the classroom Hanauer (2012) explains his scheme as follows:

1. Introduction to poetry writing, and reading others' poetry.
2. Thinking about a meaningful moment in life.
3. Researching the poetry genre.
4. Reflecting on personal experience.
5. Experimenting with poetry writing.
6. Poetry reading in the classroom.
7. Production of a complete poetry book.

Further, Santillán and Rodas (2020) explain a 5-stage lesson plan proposal which integrates poetry composition for young adults:

- **Stage 1, Introducing the topic:** the lesson starts with short activities to catch students' attention and introduce the main topic of the selected poem.
- **Stage 2, Engagement:** students start reading and discussing the poem with some interventions of the teacher to explain new vocabulary and remarkable parts of the poem.
- **Stage 3, Sensorial stimulus:** students are asked to reflect and answer questions related to the topic of the poem; this with the purpose of making them use grammatical structures and specific words to respond to the questions.
- **Stage 4, Composition:** students are required to work in a first draft of their poem for the next session, preferable with a topic related to the questions they worked



in during the class. The teacher must assist the students and help them shape their final draft.

- **Stage 5, Publication:** the poems are collected and displayed around the classroom. Students walk around reading the poems and choosing one to discuss with the author.

## 2.6. Definition of poetry

Shelley et al. (1969) asserts that poetry is as old as the humans and it can be defined as a manifestation of the imagination. Nonetheless, Ribeiro (2007) comments that the various understandings and worldwide traditions regarding poetry make it inviable to define a real concept. Therefore, for the purpose of this research synthesis, the definition of poetry that has been selected is the one proposed by Hanauer (2004):

[A] literary text that presents the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the writer through a self-referential use of language that create for the reader and writer a new understanding of the experience, thought, or feeling expressed in the text. (p.10)

Additionally, Hanauer (2004) argues that the real understanding of a poem is reflected in the language used on it because this language is not a mere carrier of messages, rather, the language utilized in a poem is the message of the author.

### 2.6.1. Formal Verse

Burroway, (2011) and Addonizio and Laux, (1997) declare that formal verse is the one that follows a certain pattern and rhythm. Therefore, the elements of the formal verse are described below:



## Meter

According to Youman (2008) meter is the organized disposition of stressed and unstressed syllables inside a poetry line. Similarly, Fussell (1979) illustrates that meter comes from the Greek word for ‘measure’ and that there are four types of ways in which poetry can be ‘measured’. The author states that these four types of meter are *syllabic*, *accentual*, *accentual-syllabic*, and *quantitative*.

Fussell (1979) defines these types of meter as follows:

- **Syllabic:** Takes into account the number of syllables in a line regardless of the stress.
- **Accentual:** The number of accents are taken into account; this meter is the one present in most Germanic poetry.
- **Accentual-syllabic:** This is the metric system that has been used in the poems of Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, among others; Fussell (1979) explains that in this system syllables and accents need to be counted, and their measure is developed in *feet*. Fussell mentions that a poetic foot is “a measurable, patterned, conventional unit of poetic rhythm” (p. 19). As explained by Addonizio and Laux (1997) these are some of the common types of poetic feet in English:
  - a) **Iamb:** stressed syllable follows unstressed syllable, as in the word *tonight*.
  - b) **Trochee:** unstressed syllable follows stressed syllable, as in the word *miracle*.
  - c) **Anapest:** unstressed syllable follows unstressed syllable, as in the phrase *in the end*.



d) **Dactyl:** a stressed syllable precedes a pair of unstressed syllables, as in the word *miracle*.

- **Quantitative:** Measures the duration of the feet rather than the accent; therefore, there can be long and short syllables.

## Rhyme

In the words of Youman (2008) the termination of a pair or more sentences in similar phonemic sounds is known as rhyme; the author suggests that this is a modern name since it is also known as *end-rhyme*. Additionally, Addonizio and Laux (1997) note that the foundation of rhyme is similar sounds which convey a meaning a musicality; they also mention that in some poems, rhyme is utilized to give emphasis to certain words.

### 2.6.2. Free Verse

Fussell (1979) asserts that the free verse appeared as a display of the liberalist wave present in the nineteenth century; moreover, the author states that free verse could be conceived as prose with rhythm rather than verse. In a similar way, Burroway (2011) notes that free verse does not follow a pre-set pattern; thus, she claims that this verse establishes its own pattern. Consequently, even if the free verse does not adopt a traditional form, it is still a singular piece of poetry with a unique and modern form (Addonizio & Laux, 1997).

## 2.7. Language Skills

Hossain (2015) notes that in language development humans need to develop certain language skills to achieve complete communication. The author argues that these skills are can be divided into receptive skills in which learners receive language through listening and reading and productive skills where students will produce language in oral or written ways. Regardless of



the importance of these four language skills; only the productive skills will be conceptualized in a deeper manner for the sake of keeping the information within the limits set by the research questions and the proposed topic.

### **2.7.1. Receptive Skills**

Harmer (2001) mentions that these skills act when a people receive meaning from the language they hear or see. Additionally, the author declares that people use a selection of receptive skills which will vary depending on the purpose.

#### **2.7.1.1. Reading Skill**

The process in which the learner interprets and understands a series of symbols to transform them into words, sentences, and paragraphs that will enable them to read and give meaning to a text (Goel & Chauhan, 2020; Hossain, 2015).

#### **2.7.1.2. Listening Skill**

This process occurs thanks to the identification of the different sounds of speech and to the codification of these sounds into understandable words which allow learners to create meanings of the language they are hearing (Goel & Chauhan, 2020; Hossain, 2015).

### **2.7.2. Productive skills**

Harmer (2001) states that students can achieve a better understanding of the receptive skills when they dominate the productive ones. Nonetheless, the productive skills involve complex processes which may inflict pressure upon students since they are aware of their performance being judged (Brown, 1994). Students tend to perceive the writing skill as difficult because they cannot receive immediate feedback from the receptor of the message (Lazaraton, 2001). Likewise, in the speaking skill learners feel that they will never master the language



regardless of how much grammar or vocabulary they know; they believe that the lack of authentic opportunities to produce language diminishes their opportunities to become better (Thornbury, 2005). Notwithstanding, real-life learning purposes, motivation, and different types of interactions may help students improve and show their proficiency in both skills (Brown, 1994; Scrivener, 2017).

### 2.7.2.1. Writing Skill

Coulmas (2003) mentions that writing has been in use for thousands of years and that it is the access key to great amounts of information throughout history. Nonetheless, in the educative field, Harmer (2007) advocates for the differentiation of two types of writing, *writing for learning*, and *writing for writing*. On one hand, writing for learning makes reference to the written practice of the language that students have been learning (Harmer, 2007); on the other hand, the author explains that writing for writing provides students with real-life reasons to write and develop themselves as authentic writers. For this reason, Hossain (2015) argues that in an educative context, writing is the skill that presents physical and factual evidence that students are learning, and that language and content is being acquired by them.

Moreover, Harmer (2007) comments that in order to achieve authentic success in writing, the written piece needs to be cohesive and coherent in order to present its whole meaning to others. Therefore, in order to achieve this success, students need to follow a process to develop a final product; Harmer (2004) suggests a writing process that most of the times is taken into account to develop written pieces:

- **Planning:** which includes the purpose for writing, the audience, and the structure of the content.



- **Drafting:** production of a first attempt of the written piece.
- **Editing:** the draft is checked to make changes, rearrange information, and delete or add information.
- **Final version:** presentation of the edited version of the draft which already contains all the changes.

### 2.7.2.2. Speaking Skill

Oral communication is considered one of the most important aspects of language because it expresses opinions, emotions, knowledge, and above all, it demonstrates the ability that a person has to listen to others and respond appropriately (Ahmad, 2016). Thus, to achieve correct communication, people are required to use a system of sounds and transform them into coherent and effective messages for their listeners (Goel & Chauhan, 2020; Hossain, 2015). Additionally, the speaking skill requires real time decisions and instant production of language which reflects a good level of fluency (Hossain, 2015; Brown, 1994). To understand fluency in this context, Nunan (2015) asserts that fluency is “the extent to which the learner can speak at an acceptable speed with few false starts and hesitations” (p. 55). Therefore, as Chastain explains, speaking is perceived to be the most difficult skill because it involved a wide variety of language elements that must work simultaneously to achieve correct language constructions (as cited in Hossain, 2015).

Additionally, Thornbury (2005) comments that there are some aspects that should be taken into account at the moment of speech production:

- **Articulation:** which is defined as the use of the organs of speech that produce sound; allowing the conveyance of more than forty phonemes.



- **Automaticity:** where students achieve a level of fluency that allows them to produce language without the need of checking for grammatical structures.
- **Fluency:** the mastery of the language with the appropriate use of pauses and fillers that compensate for the lack of knowledge.

On the whole, Harmer (2007) assures that the more students use and practice these aspects, they will become more proficient, automatic, and successful at the moment of expressing their ideas orally.

## Chapter III

### Literature Review

Poetry is constantly perceived as a complex and unachievable part of literature (Aladini et al., 2015). In fact, many students believe that they do not possess the abilities nor the knowledge to use and understand poetry because it is a genre available only to the gifted ones (Liao, 2017). Therefore, the present work presents remarkable information that provides insight to the different aspects in which poetry can impact the development of the productive skills. For the purpose of answering the research questions, this chapter will describe how poetry affects the development of the writing and speaking skills. Also, this section reports the various findings on the perspectives that students have towards the use of poetry in the classroom.

#### 3.1. Poetry and the development of the writing skill

Brumfit and Carter have stated that the use of poems can be a valuable tool to present students with authentic materials and portrayals of real language (as cited in Kirkgöz, 2008). Studies on the use poetry for developing writing skills in students show that poetry is indeed a positive resource for such purposes. Most research conducted in this area has been qualitative





since this type of methodology presents the diversity of responses and perspectives of the participants (Liao, 2012). Among the authors that present qualitative evidence on their results it is possible to cite the studies conducted by Kirkgöz (2008), Iida (2012), and Gönen (2018). These authors conducted similar studies with 28 Turkish university EFL major students, 20 Japanese EFL college freshmen, and 21 Turkish university students respectively. These three authors aimed to prove how poetry can positively affect the performance of students in the writing skills. They decided to work with journals written by the students to gather information about their perceptions and details about their poems; however, only Kirkgöz (2008) and Iida (2012) added interviews to their data collection methods.

In particular, Kirkgöz (2008) and Iida (2012) worked with students for a range of time of 6 to 15 weeks in which students were presented with different poems with their respective meanings; the researchers also gave them some group activities to discuss the various interpretations that the poems could depict. Later, students were involved in poetry writing activities where they had to write their own pieces and present them either to their classmates or the researcher. Similarly, Gönen (2018) conducted a 10-week research in which the *Poetry Teaching Framework* (POT), an own teaching methodology created for the purposes of the study, was introduced to the participants. In this research, students went over the analysis of the poems, basic comprehension discussions about the poems, and *bridging* activities, where they had to connect the contents of the poem with their personal experiences to create their own poetic piece. Findings presented by the three authors suggest that the various activities performed during the research allowed participants expand their grammatical and vocabulary knowledge at the moment of writing. Gönen (2018), Kirkgöz (2008), and Iida (2012) explained that the creative and motivating influences of poetry on the students gave them the opportunity to express



their ideas with a better selection of vocabulary and awareness of the people who were going to read their poems; therefore, students bonded with their creations and displayed an improved writing style which was not only present in their poetry but also visible in other writing genres.

In the same line of qualitative research, Liao (2012), Chamcharatsri (2013), Iida (2016a; 2016c), Widodo et al. (2016), and Mahmud (2017) developed research to incentivize the use of poetry for teaching writing skills and reflecting emotions and identity in students' poems. Liao (2012) performed a research with 18 American graduate students. The author used the interview to gather information about the personal points of view of the participants, and a rating scale to compare the responses of students about whether they could write poetry. Chamcharatsri (2013) conducted a case study with 4 Thai university students. The methodology in this research was focused on writing prompts to create poems in Thai and English, and an additional interview with the students. Widodo, et al., (2016) conducted a research with interviews as well; notwithstanding, these authors worked with 37 Indonesian junior high schoolers and made use of social media posting to appeal to their interest. The three authors worked in similar ways with their methodologies; they presented the topics and future activities and later engaged the participants in actual poetry writing where they had the freedom to express their ideas and write about anything they wanted.

The most remarking findings reported by Liao (2012) and Chamcharatsri (2013) showed that, through poetry writing, students were able to improve their writing skills and increase their language repertoire as they made use of figurative language. The results also show that students were able to own the target language through their writings because of all the memories that they remembered and emotions that they were able to display in the poems. Additionally, one



important finding that was noticed is that most participants found it feasible to express deep emotions in English since it was an easier way to make their ideas being understood. Equally important, Widodo et al., (2016) remark that through the use of visual artifacts, such as photos, students became more creative and it was easier for them to write poems since they had a source of inspiration and topics. These authors findings are especially important since they worked with high school students, and figurative language is perceived to be too challenging for their level; nonetheless, the results show that with appropriate criticism and motivation, students were able to accept comments positively and keep writing poems individually and within community-writing activities in which they make progress along with their classmates.

Furthermore, research conducted by Iida (2016a) and Iida (2016c) has demonstrated the influence of poetry in the writing skill, particularly in these two studies which were focused only on one student. In the first research, Iida worked with 23 Japanese university students, but results are mostly drawn from one of them. In Iida (2016c), results are obtained from the poems written by 1 Japanese female college junior. Both research studies aimed to immerse students in a writing workshop that would lead them to create their own poetic pieces. After having analyzed the various poems written by the participants, Iida's studies concluded in similar findings which demonstrate that writing poetry helped students to enhance their writing abilities to express different feelings, expand their knowledge of the target language, to express certain ideas, and to discover their voices and unique style.

Moreover, Mahmud (2017) conducted research with 30 Indonesian university students for a single semester. The author worked with one control and one experimental group throughout the semester; further, the research also counted with a pre and post-test which were



taken at the beginning and at the end of the program. Both groups were asked to write paragraphs about analysis of different themes such as love, childhood, friendship, etc.; however, only the experimental group worked with poetry writing prior to the analysis (this group worked with poems that dealt with the mentioned themes). The research findings reveal that the experimental group had a tendency to write better quality poems (which were graded based on four aspects: theme, sound devices, rhythm, and imagery). Additionally, the paragraphs written by the experimental group were considered better since they developed theirs after having written their poems; thus, having dealt with their emotions prior to the analysis helped them to define their ideas clearer. In addition, the experimental group also proved an increase in the scores of their post-test after having worked with poetry; nonetheless, the control group who had no contact with poetry writing had lower grades and less development in their writing skills. It is also important to mention that students who missed fewer class sessions and were more motivated to participate were part of the experimental group, as it is reported in the results obtained by Khatib (2011) who also worked with an experimental and control group.

In addition to the qualitative studies that were carried out by the abovementioned authors, some researchers also opted for a multiple method research which involved quantitative methodology. Howe explains that using multiple quantitative methods provides more insight into the interpretation of qualitative data (as cited in Iida, 2011); therefore, in Iida (2011) and Iida (2016b) it is possible to appreciate both methodologies in order to obtain more specific data that could statistically explain the influence of poetry in the development of the writing skills. Iida (2011) designed a research to determine the potential contribution that writing English haiku can have in L2 academic writing. The study was developed with 20 Japanese university students for a period of six 6 weeks in which data was collected through the use of a pre and post-test, and a



pre and post-interview. Contrastively, in Iida (2016b) the research was conducted with 78 Engineering students for a period of 15 weeks in which they received classes about poetry and time to write their poems in order to create a book of poetry related to the events they lived during an earthquake in 2011. Regardless of the differences in the methodologies of the studies, both drew similar results. In the two cases, the author found that writing poetry served as a tool to express deep emotion in a written way, participants were able to convey highly descriptive situations and increase the quality of their writings. Both studies suggested that students tended to use a wide variety of words to explain their ideas, and remarkably, in Iida (2011) it was noted that students increased the number of words in their written academic paragraphs after having worked with poems for the whole duration of the research.

### **3.2. Poetry and the development of the speaking skill**

One of the values of poetry is that it gives students opportunities to practice speaking and express themselves in English regardless of the amount of vocabulary they know (Srisermbhok, 2017). Research conducted in the use of poetry for developing the speaking skill has shown positive results. To illustrate the findings, Pushpa and Savaedi (2014) and Srisermbhok (2017) carried out studies with 60 Iranian university students and 20 Thai university students correspondingly. Pushpa and Savaedi (2014) conducted their research with a control and experimental group and collected their data through a pre and post-test. Both groups worked with poetry; although, only the experimental group studied poetry through the use of task-based activities and authentic communicative situations with their peers. The results deduced from the test demonstrate that students tend to communicate effectively in the target language if they are engaged in a real communicative situation, such as discussions about poems and their various interpretations. Additionally, Pushpa and Savaedi (2014) have explained that poetry can indeed



foster students' proficiency level if they have reasonable and authentic communicative goals to achieve in their classes.

In contrast, Srisermbhok (2017) collected data through oral presentations, interviews, and questionnaires. The author first presented poems to the students and taught them how to extract meanings from them; afterwards, students were asked to communicate the meanings they found in the verses and even write poems themselves. The data was analyzed based on the improvement of the students in the oral skills. Despite the difference in methodologies, Srisermbhok (2017) obtained similar results as Pushpa and Savaedi (2014). Findings show that through poetry students learned about the aesthetics of language and felt that they even improved in grammar. Furthermore, students were able to participate in oral discussions in which they expressed their ideas freely and practiced their oral skills while they talked about poetry.

Equivalently, Khatib (2011) and Aladini et al. (2015) also worked with control and experimental groups; with 200 Iranian university students and 80 Iranian university students correspondingly. Both authors made use of a pre and post-test to evaluate the level of proficiency and motivation of the students at the beginning and end of the program. In both cases, the methodological procedures were similar and the participants in the experimental group had more contact with poetry and analyses of the different topics and interpretations. In the end, the most notable findings show that the experimental group presented more willingness to participate in poetry discussions and to share their emotions orally. Aladini et al. (2015) also noted that the activities performed during the program such as recording audios, listening to discussions and conversations among peers allowed students to improve their speaking skills and to feel motivated to keep debating poetry.



Interestingly, Kirkgöz (2008) and Widodo et al. (2016) have also presented results on the development of the speaking skill despite their primary focus being writing. The authors explain that poetry aided students to face authentic communicative situations which granted them opportunities to find inspiration to write their poems. Students found in oral discussions a chance to share their ideas with their peers, forge a comfortable bond with the target language and form an active community which provided them with enough input to improve their poems and accept constructive criticism at the moment of displaying their poems or engaging in conversations.

### **3.3. Positive perspectives of students towards the use of poetry in the classroom**

In regard to the positive perceptions that students claimed to have experienced during the research studies, authors made use of different instruments to describe these results. Kirkgöz (2008), Iida (2012), and Gönen (2018) urged their participants to write reflective journals in which they had the freedom to write about their reflections or experiences with the use of poetry in the classroom. Kirkgöz (2008) collected these journals every two weeks during the whole program and the results were analyzed based on the common points that were present in every journal. Overall, the author's findings showed that through the use of poetry writing, students improved their English level from low-intermediate to intermediate after participating in the research program. These results were visible through the improvement that students demonstrated in their way of writing in the journals. Further, in Iida's research, the data from the journals were collected after the 6 weeks that the program lasted. The reflections of students displayed positive reactions towards the creation of poems and the possibility of learning new features of English; additionally, participants showed interest, enjoyment, and a great sense of achievement after writing their own poetry (Iida, 2012). Finally, in Gönen's (2018), research, students had to develop 7 reflective diaries in which they showed their thoughts and emotions



towards poetry; the analysis of the journals show that students were able to engage in communicative activities with other participants, they were able to foster their creativity and motivation, and they perceived that poetry was a beneficial tool to develop all four language skills.

Moreover, Srisermbhok (2017), Widodo et al. (2016), Liao (2012), and Iida (2011) collected the data about students' perceptions through the use of interviews; which were mostly carried out at the end of the research. During the interviews participants commented that they improved their self-esteem and not in one moment felt bored to be studying poetry, they felt happy to be participating in the activities and inspired to write their poems (Srisermbhok, 2017). Widodo et al. (2016) conducted their interviews for 30 minutes with each student, the questions asked to the participants aimed to extract information on how students perceived poetry and how it helped them. Consequently, students commented that they found themselves being receptive to new learning approaches in which they were able to express their emotions and to create a beneficial negotiation between what they wanted to express and poetry (Widodo et al., 2016). In addition, the responses collected from Iida's (2011) post-interview showed that students were accepting and positive towards writing poetry in English; participants felt eager to keep writing poetry after the program concluded and they perceived a sense of achievement after they finished their poems. Other interviews which also aimed to obtain the perceptions of students towards poetry demonstrate that students felt free and joyful to be working with poetry, they acknowledged the benefits of poetry writing, became more confident, and grew their sense of ownership of the target language (Liao, 2012).





Likewise, similar positive perceptions were presented in Iida (2016b) and Iida (2016c). The author in both of his studies prompted students to develop a final written project in which they analyzed their experience during the program and writing poetry. Students perceived poetry as a tool which allowed them to connect with their memories and emotions (Iida, 2016c). They found that regardless of the difficulty of the topics, they were able to reevaluate their knowledge of writing and also be more positive towards poetry not only during the duration of the research but also for future encounters with poems (Iida, 2016b). The effectiveness of poetry was also positively perceived in the participants who worked with Khatib (2011) and Pushpa and Savaedi (2014). Both authors developed a post-test at the end of the program in which they aimed to measure the attitude that students had towards poetry and what they were able to learn. Participants mentioned that writing poetry was an experience that allowed them to develop and think about their reflective skills (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014); further, students perceived that they gained the ability to participate actively in discussions since there were no right or wrong answers in poetry interpretation (Khatib, 2011).

### **3.4.Negative perspectives of students towards the use of poetry in the classroom**

Despite the positive perspective that most participants experienced by the end of the studies, authors like Iida (2011), Iida (2012), and Liao (2012) report that participants also experienced some negative moments at the beginning and at the middle of the studies. In Iida's (2011) research, one of the first steps of the methodology was carrying out a pre-interview in which he aimed to gather data on the students' perceptions towards writing in English; contrariwise, Iida (2012) carried out an interview with the participants after the 6-week program had ended, the purpose of this interview was to gather data on the perceptions of the students. The reported findings from both interview processes reflected that students encountered



difficulties with the number of syllables they needed to fit the metric of the poems, they felt anxious since they found themselves unable to write a poem that could communicate their feelings effectively, and some students even felt reluctant to present their poems because they were hesitant of the quality of their writing (Iida, 2011, 2012). Likewise, one of the major difficulties was thinking of an appropriate topic to write about in their poems (Liao, 2012). In Liao's (2012) research, an interview to know and students the students' background regarding writing in English, and their perspectives towards creative writing was conducted. Each interview lasted 40 minutes and the responses were transcribed for further analysis. The results were later drawn and coded into various categories showing the negative and positive sides. Liao (2012) stated that students felt anxious and hopeless when they could not fulfill their own expectations no matter how many times they tried. In addition, Liao (2012) explained that students perceived poetry writing as unachievable since they could not write a poem in their native language; therefore, writing one in English could be even harder. Notwithstanding, it is paramount to remember that these negative perceptions shifted once participants received feedback and activities where they could practice and improve their skills through the use of poetry (Aladini et al., 2015).

## **Chapter IV**

### **Methodology**

For the purpose of this exploratory and bibliographical research synthesis; which was defined by Norris and Ortega as “the systematic secondary review of accumulated primary research studies” (Norris & Ortega, 2006, p. 4), various published studies were collected and analyzed thoroughly in order to respond to the proposed research questions that prompted this



study. The studies were selected based on a set of inclusive and exclusive criteria such as date, participants, research focus, etc. (see below).

The databases chosen to search for the appropriate information were ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and Cite Seer X. Further, some of the journals in the field of education that were consulted are *Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences*, *International Journal of Innovation in English Language*, *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *International Journal of Language Education*, *Sino-US English Teaching*, *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *The Japan Association of College English Teacher (JACET)*, *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *The New English Teacher*, *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*.

The key terms used to look for the articles were composed of combining the following (a) poetry, (b), development, (c) EFL/ESL students, (d) productive skills, (e) effects, (f) writing, (g) speaking, (h) perceptions.

### **Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The selected studies for this research synthesis were thoroughly analyzed to check their pertinence and relevance to answer the research questions. Consequently, the studies to fit within the following criteria were considered:



- Studies published between 2005 and 2020. This range of time was selected due to the lack of empirical information on the field of poetry; therefore, a wider span of time was needed to select the information.
- The methodological approach of the research papers was not exclusive; thus, qualitative, quantitative, or mix-methods were accepted.
- The research focus of the studies had to be directed towards the writing and speaking skills. These two skills were chosen to research the effects that poetry has on the production of language.
- The participants of the studies were either high school or university students. This factor was taken into account due to the higher level of English that these students manage.
- Master theses were included as part of the criteria due to the lack of published empirical articles.

Conversely, the following statements marked the exclusion of certain studies.

- Studies focused on literary genres different from poetry were not considered because they do not provide information related to the focus of this research.

Studies focused on the reading and listening skills were excluded because they do not address the research questions.



## Chapter V

### Analysis

The analysis of this study was distributed into two sections to deliver more context of the selection of the studies.

#### 5.1. Section I

The fifteen articles used in this worked were coded in various categories; however, this segment presents information on the methodological features of the studies.

Table 1

*Dates of publication of the primary studies.*

Year	No. of studies	%
2008 – 2011	3	20.0
2012 – 2015	5	33.33
2016 – 2018	7	46.67

N= 15

Table 1 shows that 12 (80%) of the 15 articles have been conducted in the period between 2012 and 2018. The data indicates that the amount of research focused on poetry has increased through the years. Poetry is being considered as a material inside the language classroom; moreover, it is considered as a valuable tool for language learning since it promotes the use of literature in the ELF classroom (Antika, 2016). Therefore, this validates the fact that the number of published research has progressively increased every three years approximately.



Table 2

*Research design of the studies*

Design	No. of studies	%
Qualitative	10	66.67
Quantitative	3	20.0
Mixed-method	2	13.33

N= 15

As it is notorious in Table 2, 10 (66.67%) out of the 15 studies have a qualitative design. Some researchers argue that qualitative research is unreliable since it does not allow the proper synthesis of large amounts of data and opens the possibility to present vague descriptions of the results (Norris & Ortega, 2006; Heyink & Tymstra, 1993). Notwithstanding, qualitative research prioritizes amplification and explanation of the uniqueness of the subjects of the research (Heyink & Tymstra, 1993). Therefore, the incidence of qualitative research is imperative in this study that mostly revised articles that followed this design to explain the effects of poetry on the development of the productive skills and the perceptions of students formed towards this literary genre. Accordingly, the validity of qualitative research can also be corroborated by Hammarberg, Kirkman, and Lacey (2016) who mention that this type of methodology permits to obtain information about experiences, perspectives, attitudes or beliefs through the use of discussions and interviews. It is worth mentioning that 3 (20%) of the articles conducted a quantitative study; which is chosen for those researchers who find the need to present unbiased data about their findings (Hammarberg et al., 2016). This design was only chosen by those researchers who attempted to present a statistical difference between two groups and display their progress through the use of tests which could quantify said development as Aladini et al., (2015) noted.



Finally, only 2 (13.33%) of the studies worked with a Mixed-Methods design. Norris and Ortega (2006) state that the use of these methods allows the quantification of detailed data that cannot be summarized qualitatively; additionally, the goal of Mixed-Methods is to coexist to strengthen results and minimize ambiguity through a balanced combination of qualitative and quantitative data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Hashemi & Babji, 2013). Therefore, the authors that chose this design present both types of information to provide deeper insight on their results; especially since they are working with a topic such as poetry. Iida (2010) mentions that research about poetry should be led through technical and explanatory means. Hanauer (2004) states that while working with multiple methods, the use of quantitative means provides a view of the quantity and quality of lexicon or the degrees of expression that writers may have as they work with poetry; meanwhile, qualitative resources are critical to comprehend the emotional and social matters that emerge with the use of literature in the classroom (Hall, 2005). Consequently, these studies aim to present both types of information to express a clear explanation of their results and display the whole range of available evidence.

Table 3

*'Skill' focus of the studies*

Skill	n	%
Writing	9	60
Speaking	1	6.67
Both	5	33.33

N= 15



Table 3 presents information about the characteristics of the participants along with some data about the background of the studies. First, 60% of the studies are covered by the 9 articles focused on the writing skill; the papers which researched the influence of poetry on the writing skill try to present literature as a source of inspiration for students to start developing their writing abilities (Kirkgöz, 2008). Interestingly, only 1 (6.67%) of the studies was completely focused on the development of the Speaking skill; this, despite of the fact that poetry has appeared in history as one the oldest ways to transmit stories and messages through oral ways (Gandhi, 2012). Following, the remaining 5 (33.33%) studies conducted research on both of the skills; however, despite of the fact that these studies work with oral and written abilities, once again more importance is put upon the writing skill. It is paramount to remark the incidence of research in the field of the writing skill. Thane (1999) comments that history demonstrated that oral tradition and individual memory became more neglected as years passed and people needed to put every record of history and literature into paper. This is what made the printing press a great actor of change in the spread of literature among people (Eisenstein, 1980); therefore, oral tradition became scarce, and printed books became available only to the privileged classes of society (Sitter, 2001). Nonetheless, in modern days, literature is once again available for anyone who wants it. However, most literature is found in written form in technological platforms that mostly translate their works into English, and do not seek the attention of a live audience which will listen to the story (Patel & Jadeja, 2016). Consequently, it is possible to say that due to these and various historical changes about the access to any form of literature, and to the attention that written literature receives, most researchers try to study the effects and influence that literary pieces have on the writing abilities, rather than putting more emphasis on the communicative skills.





Table 4

*Description of the participants of the studies*

Setting	n	%	Context	N	%	Level of English
University	14	93.33	EFL class	2	26.67	Low-intermediate
				2		Not specified
			English writing class	1	6.67	Intermediate
			English major	3	60.0	Intermediate
				6		Not specified
High school	1	6.67	EFL class	1	6.67	Not specified

N= 15

*Note: Participants' information is represented by the exact number of studies that mention such data, rather than by the number of participants per se.*

Table 4 presents information about the features of the participants that took part in the studies. It is possible to find the academic setting of the students, the course or major that they taking at the moment of the research, and their level of English. Unfortunately, most of the studies do not present information regarding the level of English of their participants. Nonetheless, taking into account that all the participants of the study have a common background of being studying an English major or taking an English as a Foreign Language course, it is possible to infer that they are already acquainted with the language both in second and third level education. In addition, out of the two studies that work with low-intermediate level students, only one of the articles explains that the participants were cataloged within this rank due to their results in TOEFL paper-based test (Iida, 2016b). However, the four articles that report their participants as having an intermediate level are corroborated by their authors when they explain



that these participants achieved higher results in the TOEFL paper-based test that was applied before starting their research (Iida, 2011, 2012, 2016a; Liao, 2012)

Table 5

*Geographical location of the studies*

Location	n	%
Asia (Japan, Thailand, Indonesia)	9	60.0
Middle-East (Iran, Turkey)	5	33.33
America (United States)	1	6.67

N= 15

Table 5 displays information about the countries where the research studies were conducted due to the fact that some of the articles had participants from various countries which are not specified. As it is notorious, 9 (60%) of the 15 studies were conducted in Asian countries; interestingly, the articles developed in this location noted that learning and developing the target language through the use of literature helps students to gain cultural awareness and a deeper understanding about the language as they gain more motivation and fulfill their emotional needs (Iida, 2012; Widodo et al., 2016; Srisermbhok, 2017; Mahmud, 2017). However, authors from this area noted that it is important to implement changes and start using more literature in classrooms since most English classes are centered on the grammatical features of language and development of mechanical exercises (Widodo et al., 2016; Iida, 2011, 2012, 2016a, 2016b). In addition, 5 (33.33%) of the articles were conducted in Middle-East countries. The research in this location also brings to light the fact that most English learning programs make use of traditional mechanical learning through the use of grammar textbooks and nonfiction excerpts



(Kirkgöz, 2008; Khatib, 2011; Aladini et al., 2015). Additionally, Gönen (2018) mentions that when literature is taught, programs oblige students to take literature courses; however, they are not focused on the creative side. Consequently, research about poetry and language learning in the Middle-East is increasing since researchers are trying to promote the use of poetry in language classrooms to encourage creativity, motivation, and reflection (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014). Finally, only 1 (6.67%) of the found studies was conducted in the American continent. Despite the notorious difference in quantity, this data ought to be used as motivation to further research in the field of poetry within the continent; specifically, in Latin America.

Table 6

*Data collection instruments*

Instrument	No. of studies	%
Interview	6	25.0
Pre/Post- test	5	20.83
Reflective journal	4	16.70
Writing project	3	12.5
Questionnaire	2	8.33
Rating scale	1	4.17
Written prompts	1	4.17
Online posting	1	4.17
Oral presentations	1	4.17

N= 15



*Note: Some studies are counted in more than one instrument-category because certain studies worked with a combination of two or more instruments.*

Table 6 reflects information about the instruments that were used in the 15 studies analyzed in this work. Since most of the studies were qualitative, the results were obtained from a vast range of subjective information provided by the students and processed by the researchers according to adequate criteria. The table shows that interviews were the most preferred instrument being present in 6 (25.0%) of the 15 studies; this method was mostly used because it provides a narrative insight of the emotional responses of people (Hanauer, 2003). Journals were also used to gather data in 4 (16.70%) of the 15 articles; Gallego mentions that reflective journals serve as a tool to reflect perceptions and feelings (as cited in Gönen, 2018). Therefore, these diaries were used to obtain information on the perceptions that students had towards poetry. Following, another of the main instruments is pre/post-test which was used in 5 (20.83%) of the 15 studies. These types of tests were selected in those studies that wanted to show a change or development in participants from their initial condition to their state at the end of the research; this method was also selected to demonstrate the homogenous treatment to all participants (Khatib, 2011). The last influential instrument was the writing project that was present in 3 (12.5%) of the 15 studies. This instrument is used as a way to gather data about the understanding that participants get from the content of the program, and also to analyze the emotional responses that the subjects have during the whole research experience (Iida, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c).

Finally, the remaining instruments — questionnaire, rating scale, written prompts, online posting, and oral presentations — (25.01%) were only chosen by few researchers or used along



with three of the instruments mentioned before. Questionnaires, online posting, and oral presentations were respectively used along with the instruments of journals and pre/post-tests. Questionnaires and oral presentations were mostly used to gather data about the motivations and knowledge of the participants (Aladini et al., 2015; Srisermbhok, 2017); meanwhile, Widodo et al., (2016) note that online posting is an instrument that allows to see actual social interactions among participants who are experiencing a same task. Finally, the rating scale and written prompts were selected by those authors who worked with interviews as their main instrument. Cohen et al. mention that rating scales are advantageous instruments when gathering data about perceptions (as cited in Liao, 2012); furthermore, Chamcharatsri (2016) comments that written prompts present a wide range of possibilities for students to compose on any topic that they feel attachment. Even though the authors present their reasons for choosing these specific instruments, their qualitative and free-to-interpretation, nature make them lack standardized parameters, as it is noted by Plonsky and Derrick (2016). They argue that in the field of L2 research the type of instruments that are used to gather information in a qualitative environment need to be thoroughly explained and described to avoid misunderstandings. The authors explain that research in the field of language acquisition lacks data collection instruments that contain well-based methodological characteristics; therefore, results and conclusions can become arbitrary pieces of information that do not reflect a well-established analysis (Plonsky & Derrick, 2016).

Concerning standardization, Yilmaz (2013) explains that the greatest benefit of standardized procedures relies on their ability to permit the generalization of data and present information based on proven theory. However, these same standardized procedures lack the openness that qualitative instruments present while collecting information from participants (Yilmaz, 2013). Following the line of instruments in L2 research environments, Atkinson (2017)



notes that qualitative instruments, such as interviews, can be standardized and put under specific procedures to gather specific data; nonetheless, the author comments that these instruments are mostly used within the field of the subjective to get a wider range of information. Qualitative instruments, permit researchers to create their sense of credibility that comes from well-described procedures that assure the effectiveness of the instruments (Yilmaz, 2013).

Notwithstanding, Atkinson (2017) argues that when researchers handle non theory-based data, standardized procedures create a monotonous tone to the research which does not reflect all the range of answers that can be collected from participants. Consequently, the author notes that it is possible to miss some important information while working without the aid of pre-established measures; thus, it is necessary to specify the categories in which the information is being analyzed as well as a thorough description of the process that is being held to avoid biased results (Atkinson, 2017; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Therefore, in relation to research linked to the field of poetry and information connected to the students' perceptions towards this learning tool, qualitative instruments such as interviews, journals, or writing projects aid researchers to obtain an emotional and/or personal response from the participants (Gönen, 2018; Iida, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). In addition, it is important to mention that pre/post-tests are important instruments that when used properly, can lead to reliable findings because these tests ensure a homogenous environment in which the participants are put under the same variables and contexts, they assess the achievements of participants, and demonstrate the development of the participants' abilities during the research (Bloomer & Heitzman, 1965; Khatib, 2011; Mahmud, 2017). Furthermore, additional instruments such as questionnaire, rating scale, written prompts, online posting, and oral presentations (Liao, 2012; Aladini et al., 2015; Iida, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Widodo et al., 2016; Srisermbhok, 2017) give



researchers the opportunity of complementing the information that the main data collection tool gathers as it is mentioned by Chamcharatsri (2013). These various resources allow researchers to use them in an isolated manner or along with other instruments which help to gain complete understanding and a deeper explanation of the experiences of participants as they are compared and contrasted to present mere complete results (Liao, 2012; Widodo et al., 2016).

## 5.2. Section II

This section focuses on the major findings of the research. These results are analyzed and discussed within the premise of the research questions proposed in this synthesis.

### 5.2.1. What is the effect of poetry on the development of the productive skills, according to the available empirical evidence?

In order to provide a clear explanation of the effects of poetry on the productive skills, this section has been divided into two parts. The first part presents the discussion regarding the effects of poetry on the speaking skill, and the second part contains the discussion regarding the effects on the writing skill.

#### 5.2.1.1. Effects of poetry in the speaking skill

Table 7

*Positive effects and constraints of poetry on the development of the speaking skill*

Positive effects	No. of studies	%
Freedom of expression	5	45.45
Connections between students and content	2	18.18
Increase of motivation	2	18.18



Increase of vocabulary	1	9.10
Constraints	No. of studies	%
Difficulties to understand new vocabulary.	1	9.10
N= 6		

*Note: The number of primary studies is 6 because only the studies that focus on the speaking skill or both speaking and writing skills are being taken into account.*

*More than one effect can be present in the revised studies.*

In terms of the speaking skill, table 7 was constructed with 6 of the 15 studies available. These were analyzed taking into account the single study that was entirely focused on the speaking skill, and the five studies focused on both writing and speaking; despite providing information on both productive skills, their data about the oral abilities are still valuable and pertinent. All of the six studies presented the various positive effects that poetry can have upon the development of oral communication (Gönen, 2018; Widodo et al., 2016; Khatib, 2011; Aladini et al., 2015; Srisermbhok, 2017; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014). Srisermbhok (2017) and Widodo et al. (2016) state that working with poetry encourages students to share their ideas orally and with enough freedom to communicate effortlessly with their peers in authentic discussions. The authors claim that students are able to develop their oral skills because they are motivated to participate comfortably in a space where all their ideas are received without hoping for a unique *correct* answer. Khatib (2011) argues that students receive immense encouragement to express their understandings and found meanings in the poems instead of waiting for the teacher's interpretations. Hence, discussions allow students to share their personal interpretations and form a dialogue with their peers (Gönen, 2018; Aladini et al., 2015).





Furthermore, Gönen (2018) notes that poetry allows students to learn new vocabulary and amplify their already known repertoire as they look for the words to comprehend the meanings of the stanzas and convey their ideas or interpretations based on this newly acquired knowledge. Aladini et al. (2015) mention that poems allow students to be more motivated at the end of the research, participants expressed that they had a new a positive perception towards poetry because they were excited to participate actively in their classes and share their ideas with their classmates. Nonetheless, it is also important to note that working with poetry also brought some difficulties for students at the moment of participating orally. The main and only problem reported in the articles regarding speaking was related to vocabulary. Results show that some poems presented vocabulary that was completely new to the students; thus, they had to spend time looking for the new words and understanding them within the context of the poem (Aladini et al., 2015). Notwithstanding, the mostly positive effects reported on the studies open the possibility to perceive this only constraint as temporary. Aladini et al. (2015) explain that even though participants struggled with some of the poems, modifications in the program and materials that were used during the research helped students to overcome the difficulties. They mention that simple variations such as exploring different poems with gradual levels of difficulty and from different cultural backgrounds allowed students to be comfortable and experience the tasks with a different perspective because understanding the poems was easier for them. Consequently, students were able to keep working with poetry and express their satisfaction at the end of the study. Therefore, since the articles focused on the speaking skill only comment this single constraint, it is plausible to assert that it is indeed a temporary difficulty that can be surpassed with effort and adjustments to the programs — or classroom plans in the case of



working with poetry during regular language classes— in order to make the process feasible for students and achievable at the moment of setting objectives.

**5.2.1.2. Effects of poetry in the writing skill**

In regard to the writing skill, the analysis is presented in two tables related to the positive effects and the constraints that participants experienced while working with poetry.

**5.2.1.2.1. Positive effects of poetry in the writing skill**

Table 8

*Positive effects of poetry on the development of the writing skill*

Effects	No. of studies	%
Freedom of expression	12	35.30
Visibility of voice	8	23.53
Increase of vocabulary	5	14.71
Increase of motivation	4	11.80
Connections between students and content	3	8.82
Conveyance of abstract ideas	1	2.94
Ownership of the language	1	2.94

N= 14

*Note: The number of primary studies is 14 because only the studies that focus on the writing skill or both writing and speaking skills are being taken into account.*

*More than one effect can be present in the revised studies.*

Table 8 shows information about the positive effects of poetry present in the 14 studies related to the writing skill. Aladini et al. (2015) comment that poetry writing helps students to



show and describe the emotional moments they have faced in their lives. They mention that students can foster their writing abilities and exercise freedom of expression when they portray their feelings, either positive or negative ones into written poetic pieces. Therefore, the moment students connect with poetry and start developing their own compositions, they are able to reflect their personal lives in the poems and also understand a wide range of poetry through connections with what they have lived (Iida, 2016b, 2016c; Gönen, 2018; Bjelland, 2016; Mahmud, 2017). Additionally, the freedom that students experience while working with poetry allows them to experience language on a different level while they play with words and expressions. This new approach to language gives students the opportunity to own the language and mold it to their own necessities (Liao, 2012), and as Widodo et al. (2016) mention students can use the language to express thoughts not directly but rather, on an abstract manner which reflects their uniqueness and creativity.

Moreover, poetry also helps students to display their *voice* in their creations as they use a wide range of different vocabulary to express ideas that motivate them. Iida (2016b) explains that students' voices are expressed as a reflective connection between poetry and their personal experiences. Consequently, participants' voice is reflected in the way they explain emotions, show their personalities, construct their creativity, and find ways to motivate themselves (Iida, 2012, 2016a, 2016c; Gönen, 2018). Therefore, each poem which is created by the students emerges from a reflective process in which they decide on a topic to write about, and develop all their ideas freely expressing every hint of their minds, as it is suggested by different methodological basis to work with poetry in class, such as the one proposed by Hanauer (2012). Moreover, Aladini et al. (2015) and Widodo et al. (2016) explain that at the moment of writing



their poems, students become the masters of their own ideas and they grow aware of the benefits that poetry can bring to their learning.

#### 5.2.1.2.2. Constraints of poetry in the writing skill

Table 9

*Constraints of poetry on the development of the writing skill*

Effects	No. of studies	%
Difficulties to write poems	4	40.0
Difficulties to understand the new vocabulary	3	30.0
Student's reluctance about the quality of their poems	2	20.0
Difficulties to express emotions in the poems	1	10.0
N= 5		

*Note: The number of primary studies is 5 because only these out of the 14 studies that focus on writing present data about the constraints.*

*More than one effect can be present in the revised studies.*

Equally important, it is necessary to mention that some constraints were also reported in the articles. Table 9 portrays detailed information about the constraints that were part of the effects of poetry; nonetheless, all of them can be summarized as *difficulties to write poems*. While working with poetry students can encounter challenges at the moment of creating their own compositions. Liao (2012) comments that students had a hard time finding the right words for their poems; this happens thanks to the limited amount of vocabulary known by the students; thus, sometimes it is hard to understand poems or compose their own (Iida, 2012). Lastly, not all bad emotions surge from writing poems, Iida (2016b) explains that participants felt anxious



while writing their poems; nonetheless, he mentions that this stress was not a product of the writing activity, rather, it was a result of the stressful memories that emerged in the writer's mind while they were performing the activity.

### 5.2.2. What are the students' perceptions towards the use of poetry to develop their productive skills, as reported on the available literature?

Table 10

*Students' perceptions towards the use of poetry in the classroom*

Results	Perceptions	No. of studies	%
Positive	Self-expression	12	38.71
	Increase of confidence	5	16.13
	Motivation	5	16.13
	Sense of achievement	2	6.45
Constraints	Perceptions	No. of studies	%
	Anxiety	3	9.68
	Frustration	2	6.45
	Reluctance	1	3.23
	Discomfort	1	3.23

N= 15

*Note: More than one effect can be present in the revised studies.*

The nature of this work and this research question claims for results and information that can reflect the emotional side of the participants of the studies. Consequently, Table 10 and its analysis present data on the perceptions that students have towards poetry. As it is visible, the



majority of studies display positive perceptions; however, it is worth acknowledging that some constraints were also present in the students' experiences.

In regard to the positive perceptions, the results drawn by Iida (2012) note that students perceived poetry as a valuable tool to help them develop self-expression; they felt encouraged to express their ideas and engage in authentic communication with their peers, thanks to writing and discussing poetry inside the classroom (Khatib, 2011; Kirkgöz, 2008; Mahmud, 2017). This encouragement to permit ideas flow without restrictions give students the opportunity to feel confident while learning the language. Students acknowledge and mention that using poetry helped them to improve their confidence since they started to get better results at tests and improve their productive skills (Iida, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Gönen, 2018). Participants recognized feeling more motivated thanks to poetry since they were able to feel pride in their work, became more creative, and even better their self-esteem (Kirkgöz, 2008; Liao, 2012; Srisermbhok, 2017). Significantly, these findings complement the information in Table 6 which shows that most researchers chose data collection instruments such as interviews or journals (41.7% together) because those could give the opportunity to reflect very subjective and broad answers from the students.

Nevertheless, some constraints were also reported by the participants. Even though the number of studies that deal with negative perceptions is little, it is noticeable that the most recurrent perceptions are anxiety and frustration. This once again can be compared with the fact stated in Table 9 where it was mentioned that students had difficulties writing poetry. However, Iida (2012) and Liao (2012) mention that these constraints go further from difficulties with writing; the authors mention that some apprehension can appear in students when they do not



receive the feedback or results that they were expecting while working with poetry. This was a result of participants having unreal expectations that were much higher than what they could give at the moment. Nonetheless, the peak of these constraints happened at the beginning of the programs or during the process of working with poetry (Iida, 2011); thus most of them were corrected and deviated into positive perceptions as Table 10 portrays.

## Chapter VI

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 6.1. Conclusions

This research synthesis endeavored to describe the effects of poetry as a tool to develop the productive skills in ESL/EFL students. These skills were taken into account since they involve the production of language, and, as Brown (1994) argues, these skills comprise complex processes that can lead students to feel great pressure when try to learn them. Therefore, the study also analyzed the various perspectives that students formed towards the use of poetry. These perspectives were examined because poetry was presented to them as a resource to work with authentic language. Notwithstanding, in order to improve and develop the productive skills, authentic, motivating, and varied learning objectives and activities can direct students to be more proficient in English (Scrivener, 2017; Brown, 1994). Moreover, the conclusions take into account relevant concepts that were described in the theoretical framework; moreover, this section presents a specific discussion for each of the research questions proposed in this work.

As a whole, the results derived from the various research papers help reach the conclusion that literature is indeed a valuable tool for learning a foreign language. This happens as a result of using literature as an authentic language which helps students understand the



English language deeper (Lazar, 1993). Highlighting this statement, one of the theories that support this claim is the Reader-Response Approach. This pedagogical approach promotes the creation of intimate relationships with literature (Hirvela, 1996). Furthermore, the Reader-Response Approach attempts to eliminate the authoritative ideas of teacher, to give space to the meanings that students create on their own (Hirvela, 1996; Kellem, 2009). In addition, findings show that working with literature allows students to create meaningful relationships between their lives and the text they are working with during the programs. Thus, the Reader-Response Approach advocates for the creation of these significant relationships which also encourage reflective thinking and skill improvement (Ali, 1994; Amer, 2003).

Taking this assumption into account, the first research question is discussed. This question was related to the effects of poetry in the development of the productive skills. The 15 published studies that were analyzed in this work have contributed with valuable data that suggest that poetry can have mostly positive effects in the development of writing and speaking. In general terms, working with poetry gives students the possibility to increase their motivation and become active members during classes as they exploit their expression, linguistic awareness, and positive attitudes towards the language (Kirkgöz, 2008; Khatib, 2011; Iida, 2012, 2016a; Liao, 2012, Chamcharatsri, 2013; Aladini et al., 2015; Mahmud, 2017).

The positive effects that are derived from the use of poetry in the language classroom can be corroborated by the greatest presence of these beneficial effects in both of the productive skills in the analysis section. Primarily, most findings indicate that working with poetry allows students reach authentic communication and constraint-free sharing of their ideas with their peers as they reach enough confidence to produce language, either orally or in a written manner





(Gönen, 2018; Widodo et al., 2016; Khatib, 2011; Aladini et al., 2015; Srisermbhok, 2017).

These results coincide with the Language-based Approach which promotes sensitivity and language production through the use of pleasant activities that encourage authenticity from students who no longer expect to receive a correct answer from their instructors (Van, 2009; Dhillon & Mogan, 2014). Likewise, the results from the research articles also point out that there are more positive outcomes with students when the poems are selected and based under elements such as reader-centeredness (Kirkgöz, 2008; Iida, 2011, 2016b, 2016c; Khatib, 2011; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Widodo et al., 2016; Mahmud, 2017; Gönen, 2018); additionally, formal elements of poetry such as meter and rhyme are also considered as components that help students improve their skills because these formal elements of poetry force students to think creatively and look for more words to convey what they want to express (Burroway, 2011; Addonizio & Laux, 1997).

Regarding the speaking skill, the positive findings show that poetry helps students express their emotions and convey a wider repertoire of ideas when they use the target language orally (Khatib, 2011; Aladini et al., 2015; Widodo et al., 2016; Srisermbhok, 2017; Gönen, 2018). These effects have been visible thanks to the motivation and freedom that students experience during poetry classes (Srisermbhok, 2017; Aladini et al., 2015). Equally important, the empirical data shows that the source of this improvement in students' participation can be attributed to motivating tasks and personal connections (Aladini et al., 2015). Therefore, assignments such as discussions about poems and conversations about the personal poetic creations help students convey their ideas with their unique style, encourage authentic communication, and find similarities between the poetry they are working with and their own experiences (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Aladini et.al, 2015; Gönen, 2018). In this sense, the



Social-Expressivist Pedagogy explains this phenomenon more clearly. Iida (2010) asserts that this theory connects communicative activities with language learning in order to convey meaning and voice through the use of poetry. Hence, it is possible to suggest that motivating poetry-related communicative activities help and encourage students to practice, and therefore develop their oral abilities.

Nonetheless, it is also necessary to remark that students can also face drawbacks when the lack of vocabulary negatively influences the comfortable development and sharing of ideas (Aladini et al., 2015). Little is reported on the constraints present in the development of the speaking skills. However, the empirical evidence suggests that students experience struggle during oral discussions due to the reported lack of vocabulary (Aladini et al., 2015). Additionally, Aladini et al. (2015) comment that the difficulties related to vocabulary were also a result of unpleasant past experiences with poetry. Nonetheless, the findings demonstrate that problems due to the lack of vocabulary can be overcome with sufficient resources, explanation, and overall, with variations in the programs in order to adjust the difficulty of the material that students are using (Aladini et al., 2015).

Further, the findings regarding the effects of poetry on the writing skill illustrate that poetry writing enables students to express ideas and emotions in any form they want since they do not have to worry about strict grammatical constraints (Iida, 2016b; Gönen, 2018). However, this type of comfortability while writing is obtained through meaningful writing tasks which encourage students to practice written language in a pragmatic and personal manner (Iida, 2016a; Iida, 2016c; Chamcharatsri, 2013). Equally important, in order to obtain more beneficial results for the students, it is necessary to adapt the level of difficulty of the poems that are used in the



classroom (Kirkgöz, 2008); furthermore, Iida, (2012) comments that adaptations and reference material are necessary to help students cope with the difficulty of the poems, or new words present on them. He states that reference material opens space for students to get acquainted with new words which will later be their material for further creations.

Moreover, as it was noted in the analysis section, students can increase their vocabulary (Kirkgöz, 2008; Liao, 2012; Aladini et al., 2015; Mahmud, 2017; Gönen, 2018). Furthermore, findings show that poetry give students the opportunity to discover their voices (Iida, 2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Widodo et al., 2016). Ivanič explains that voice is the result of individual experiences and social constructed events (as cited in Iida, 2010); thus, a person's voice is found and developed when they use language and mold it to fit into different situations (Matsuda, 2001). Consequently, Iida (2010) comments that learners of a foreign language develop their sense of voice as they progress and improve their learning. As a result, findings show that poetry give students the opportunity to discover their voices as they work with poems and use them to express themselves (Iida, 2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Widodo et al., 2016).

Furthermore, this is a factor that helps students to finally own the target language and connect their learning with their personal experiences (Liao, 2012); the latter is the most relevant factor that allows students feel comfortable while learning and develop their skills through a humanistic perspective that respects their individuality and motivations to learn (Widodo et al., 2016). The results that were obtained from the effects of poetry and the writing skill are in synchrony with what the Meaningful Literacy Theory states. Hanauer (2012) explains that this theory tries to give back students their condition of humans who feel, inside a classroom. The author notes that the theory focuses on poetry writing that encourages reflection about emotions



and personal self-expression; therefore, these type of approaches and measures should be taken into account while students work with poetry and sometimes find difficulties related to the creation of their poetic pieces (Liao, 2012; Iida, 2012).

In relation to the second research question about the reported perceptions that students have towards the use of poetry to develop the productive skills, the findings from the various studies demonstrate that students formed positive perceptions towards the use of poetry, and negative perceptions, which, in this study, are cataloged as constraints. Findings from most of the studies reveal that students reacted positively towards poetry and reported optimistic attitudes since they found themselves working with student-centered activities that were appropriate to their level and interests (Kirkgöz, 2008; Iida, 2011, 2016b, 2016c; Khatib, 2011; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Widodo et al., 2016; Mahmud, 2017; Gönen, 2018). In this sense, one of the theories that may help to explain the positive nature of these perspectives is the Communicative Language Teaching Theory. In the sense of this study, the theory emphasizes the use of language for communicative purposes; furthermore, the Communicative Language Teaching theory tries to make students create meaningful relationships with the language in order to draw various meanings and understand the various literary genres (Richards, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Consequently, based on the results gathered from the analysis, it is possible to say that the positive perspectives of students can be summarized as the liberty that they felt while expressing with poetry (Kirkgöz, 2008; Iida, 2012; Chamcharatsri, 2013; Gönen, 2018; Srisermbhok, 2017; Mahmud, 2017).

Finally, some students also reported having felt resilient to work with poetry because they considered it a high-class literary genre that they were not able to understand (Aladini et al.,



2015; Widodo et al., 2016). Notwithstanding, Lazar (1993) points out that working with complex literature can grant students a greater sense of achievement. The author comments that this same complexity of literary works is what engages students in the discovery of dilemmas and emotional components that make them see their learning process as meaningful, even if they do not achieve perfect performances. Moreover, Aladini et al. (2015) and Widodo et al. (2016) explain that the emotional responses and creations that were made by the students during and at the end of the research help to prove that poetry is a genre that is accessible to anyone willing to learn and express their emotions. Consequently, derived from this emotional and educational progress that the students faced, more perceptions were drawn. It is noted by the findings that students found great value in poetry as a resource to improve their written and oral abilities which led them to create positive feelings towards the poems (Liao, 2012). Additionally, as a result of freedom of expression, students tend to increase their confidence, motivation, and sense of achievement when they work with poetry (Iida, 2012; Liao, 2012; Khatib, 2011; Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014; Aladini et al., 2015). In fact, making students use poetry to develop their language skills gives them the opportunity to foster their fluency and communication even if it involves the deletion or absence of the formal elements of poetry or common grammatical patterns of the language (Iida, 2010). For instance, even if the formal elements of poetry were not present in the poems composed by students, they still experienced a sense of success by just communicating and reflecting on their ideas freely in their poems (Iida, 2011). Consequently, the beneficial attitudes that students have towards poetry as a resource aids them to find themselves in a position where practicing a language can become an enjoyable activity since they are studying and using authentic communication (Iida, 2012; Kirkgöz, 2008; Srisermbhok, 2017; Mahmud, 2017; Widodo et al., 2016).



## 6.2. Recommendations

Derived from the analyzed studies in this work, some recommendations for future research studies are stated. First pedagogical recommendations are described. These come into light because as the analysis demonstrated, poetry is indeed beneficial for students; however, poetry needs to be taught in a non-traditional way and taking into account the learning necessities of students to obtain constructive and beneficial results (Pushpa & Savaedi, 2014). Additionally, it is important to mention some measures that teachers need to take to teach by using poetry, which has become a highly recommended resource to teach English through the use of literary works (Mahmud, 2017).

Initially, it is recommended to implement poetry as a teaching and learning tool inside the EFL/ESL classroom. The analysis of various research studies demonstrated that poetry has a positive impact on the development of the productive skills. Poetry is also a medium by which students can express themselves and give life to their ideas as they share them with the world within the classroom. Therefore, it does not only help students produce language, it also aids them to use language pragmatically and with enough freedom to overcome the fear and pressure of displaying their handling of the target language.

Next, it is important to consider that working with poetry can bring positive outcomes and help students flourish in the learning process; nonetheless, negative or unpleasant experiences can appear; hence, teachers need to take time to study and select the poems accordingly to the interests and needs of their students without taking out all the elements that make poetry unique and a dynamic tool to teach and learn.



In addition, some research-related recommendations are also included to provide insight on future measures that need to be considered in further research. As it was noted in the analysis section, most of the studies were conducted with a qualitative design due to the nature of the research topic; therefore, most data collection instruments were also of a qualitative origin. Accordingly, there is a need for the use of more standardized data collection instruments. As it has been seen in prior sections, qualitative instruments give researchers the possibility to present a well-detailed description of results; however, these resources are prone to generate a space for open interpretations and possible biased results. Consequently, it is recommended to use standardized instruments that will provide a more objective vision of the results.

Equally important, due to the level of difficulty of poetry most research is only conducted with university students; however, as it was presented by Widodo et al. (2016) teenagers are also able to understand poetry and develop their own. The level of students is not an interference while working with poetry if an appropriate selection of poems is presented to the learners. Thus, it is recommended to conduct research with high school students and present poetry to them as a new way to study English and foster their language skills.

Lastly, it is paramount to recommend further research on this field. Most research about poetry is developed in Asian and Middle-East countries; however, research articles about the uses of poetry in the classroom in a Latin American or Ecuadorian context are scarce. Moreover, the information gathered, analyzed, and described in this work validates the efficiency that poetry has within the language classroom; therefore, implementing and fostering research in the Ecuadorian system may be beneficial especially since the Ecuadorian National Curriculum



promotes the use of the literary arts while studying a foreign language; and further research can serve as a guide to encourage more teachers to implement poetry in their class lessons.





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## Appendix 1

### Primary Studies for the Analysis

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