

## Poetry Preferences of Secondary School Students - The Case of Trabzon Province

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### ABSTRACT

In this case study which focuses on secondary school students (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grades), the goal was to investigate students' preferences in poetry. In this study, the singular research designs have been employed. The context of the study was Trabzon city, and the participants were students in secondary schools in Ortahisar, Akcaabat and Yomra provinces in 2018-2019 academic year. The study was conducted with 490 students. Frequency and percentage calculations were made on the data obtained from opinion surveys and the results were analyzed. The study showed that in all three levels, three themes stood out: War of Independence and Atatürk, National Culture, and Reading Culture. Based on the findings, it was concluded that secondary school students like these three themes more and therefore prefer them more. Students prefer poems with 19-22 lines, both with rhythm and free verse and they prefer mostly rhyming poems. Also, title was found to be an important factor in poem preference and that students love and prefer poems with words they know, and lastly knowing the poet and that they know the poem beforehand also affected their preference positively.

**Key words:** Turkish Education, Poem Preferences, Secondary School Students

### INTRODUCTION

The word "poem", which is of Arabic origin, according to the Merriam-Webster, means "a composition in verse" and the word "poetry" means "writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm".

Ahmet Hasim, a famous Turkish poet, likened poem to the "word of the messengers" (Hasim, 1928, p. 6) and it has been described in different forms by many people to this day. Valery (n.d.) likens prose to a walk, and poetry to a racket (as cited in Birinci, 2015). According to Yahya Kemal Beyatli, another famous Turkish poet, "Poetry is a completely different identity from prose" (1971, p. 32). According to Cahit Sitki Taranci (2003), "Poetry is the art of creating beautiful forms with words" (p. 21). According to Tanpınar, poetry is an art in which the most complex manifestations of the human mind and soul are expressed in a special language (Yener, 2023, p. 205). Aktas and Gunduz (2016) state that "Words are dismantled from the environment in which they unite under natural conditions and lose their initial meaning given to them and become an element of music. Then poetry is nothing but a mysterious and insoluble composition" (p. 350). Akyol (2016, p. 139) on the other hand, says that "Poems are expressive software that combines feelings and sounds in lines". As for Kavcar et al. (2015, p. 351) poetry

is a "kind of literature that arises from rich dreams, rhythmic words, and harmonious use of sounds". Parlâtir and Sahin (2011, p. 233) also add that "Poetry is a kind of expression that is different from prose, decorated with unique elements of harmony such as rhythm; it is a unique language and narrative fiction that is different from the everyday colloquial language aimed at sharing the products of the world of thought, feelings and imagination with someone else, that is, with the reader". To Sever (2013, p. 146), poetry is "an aesthetic act based on understanding and describing the reality of man and life in the language of words".

Most of the genres in Turkish literary literature have been taken from Western literature in the last few centuries (Toraman and Unal, 2022, pp. 445-446). On the contrary, the genre of poetry was created by the bards who were the first creators of Turkish literature during the period when the Turks had not yet used writing. In the oral period, poetry was born in religious ceremonies and developed more in non-religious ceremonies. These poems were composed in a simple language, away from foreign influences. The syllabic meter in verse was usually four feet, and half a rhyme was most often used.

When evaluating poems in terms of form and content, elements of mentality, harmony, language, structure, and theme are also considered.

The Arabic equivalent of the word "mentality" in literature is a certain style of thinking and outlook formed by

religious, political, social, economic, civil, administrative, judicial, commercial, cultural, and military elements that prevailed during the period when the poet wrote his poem. Most poets are influenced by the conditions of their era when writing their works and reflect this to a certain extent in their work. Harmony is one of the elements that make poetry a poem. Harmony is also provided with measure, wake, repeated words, alliteration, and resonance. The most important feature of poetry is that it has a special expression language. This particular language is called the “language of poetry” and has a very expressive and layered structure, different from the everyday language. Structure is one of the elements that make up poetry. The structure of the poem is the formative features of the poem and contributes to the content of the poem. It is formed by verse units (the system used to write poems) and different verse forms. The theme is the main emotion that dominates the poem. The event, situation, thought and imagination that are emphasized in the poem are initially abstract themes.

Poetry is of great importance as a means of learning and teaching in the education and training of children. Kesik and Polat (2023, p. 319) emphasize that poetry is the literary genre that attracts children’s attention the most, with its features such as being rhyming and harmonious, containing many language games, and enriching children’s personal lives. According to Erdal (2011, p. 179) “Poetry can be used as an important tool for children to develop their language skills, grasp the power of words and their different uses”. “Poetry is one of the important text types used in language teaching and aims to attract the attention of children with its melodious singing, emotional, short and concise expression and to give them a love of language” (Cevik, 2017, p. 144).

The main advantage of teaching with poetry is that the poem has the power to give the message it wants to give to the child by intuition, not directly. According to Kibris (2006), poetry is more impressive than plain writing in terms of endearing the mother tongue and using it consciously in bringing students the love of homeland, nation, and humanity; taking an attitude in favor of the beautiful and the good and making them love their mother tongue.

The poem is very important for the development of the child just like the lullabies, fairy tales, children’s games, nursery rhymes, riddles, legends, epics, heroic tales, proverbs, idioms, jokes, poems, folk songs to which the child is exposed to since birth. Poems make an important contribution to the education of the native language and the good learning of the mother tongue. Thanks to the poems, children get acquainted with the verbal presence of their native language, develop basic language skills, and explore the language.

In the Primary Turkish Language Course Curriculum prepared in 2006 (for sixth, seventh and eighth graders), in the 2015 Turkish Course Curriculum (from the first to eight grades) and in the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum, poetry was highlighted as a genre that should be included in the textbooks of each grade level.

When choosing poems to be included in Turkish textbooks, children’s interests, needs and language universes should be taken into account. Terry’s study (1972); Ingham’s study (1980); Fisher and Natarella’ study (1982); Kutiper’s

study (1985) and DaVanon’s study (2005) all focused on investigating children’s poetry preferences. The fact that a study has not yet been conducted in Turkish context that identifies the interests and needs of children related to poetry and explores children’s poetry preferences reveals the originality of this study. It is thought that the results of the study will shed light on both the teachers and the authors of the books and the curriculum, ensuring the formation of a more efficient educational environment in Turkey.

## Research Questions

Poetry, the oldest literary genre, is educational as well as artistic. It is an important tool for children to develop their language skills, understand the magic of words, and improve their creative thoughts and literacy skills. In almost all Turkish language teaching programs, poetry is emphasized as a genre that should be included in the textbooks of every grade level. Although many studies have been conducted abroad investigating children’s poetry preferences; the fact that there is no study investigating the poems that children are interested in and need in our country has necessitated this study.

The aim of the research is to reveal the poetry preferences of secondary school students (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students) studying in Trabzon.

In order to achieve the purpose of the research, the following objectives were addressed, respectively:

- 1) Creating a pool of poems to be used in practice, based on the opinions of teachers and experts.
- 2) Implementation of the poetry pool in the pilot school in order to select poems to be used in the main application.
- 3) Preparation of the measurement tool based on the selected poems.
- 4) Application of the measurement tool to the Trabzon sample in different sessions.

In order to achieve the purpose of the research, the following research questions were tried to be answered:

- 1) Does gender affect poetry preferences?
- 2) Does the settlement unit (province, district) have an effect on poetry preferences?
- 3) Does the service area have an impact on poetry preferences?
- 4) Does liking to read/listen to poetry affect poetry preferences?
- 5) Does the preference for reading/listening to poetry affect poetry preferences?
- 6) Does the frequency of reading poetry affect poetry preferences?
- 7) Do the characteristics of poems (theme, title, poet, meter, rhyme scheme and length) have an impact on poetry preferences?

## METHODOLOGY

### The Research Model

In this study, which aims to reveal the poetry preferences of secondary school students studying in Trabzon, the singular

screening model was used. Research models that are performed to determine the formation of variables individually, as a type or quantity, are called singular screening models. In this type of approach, the event of interest, the substance, the individual, the group, the institution, the subject, etc.; the variables belonging to the unit and the situation are tried to be described separately. This description may be limited to the past or the present, or it may also be developmental as a function of time (Karasar, 2006, p. 79).

In this study, the following operations were performed in accordance with this method:

- 1) Asking teachers of Turkish and children's literature experts to provide poetry suggestions that are suitable for various poetic characteristics (theme, title, poet, moderation, rhyme scheme and length of the poem) to be used.
- 2) Based on the opinions of teachers and experts, creation of a poetry database to be used in practice.
- 3) Testing the poems in the database at the pilot school to select the poems to be used in the main application.
- 4) Preparation of a measurement tool based on selected poems.
- 5) Application of the measurement tool to the Trabzon sample in different sessions.
- 6) Determination of students' poetry preferences.

### Research Sample and Participants

The population is secondary school students in Trabzon, while the sample is secondary school students studying in Akcaabat, Ortahisar and Yomra districts of Trabzon in the 2018-2019 academic year of the 92 schools in the 3 districts mentioned, 10 schools were selected by sampling through stratification. According to Cepni (2010, p. 47) "In the stratification sampling, the characteristics and qualities of the population are aimed to be represented in the sample group without disturbing the defined proportion".

The research was carried out with a total of 490 students, 233 of whom were girls and 257 were boys of the students participating in the study, 146 were 5<sup>th</sup>, 145 were 6<sup>th</sup>, and 199 were 7<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### Data Collection Procedures

The pilot application of the research was carried out in Ardahan at a school. The pilot application lasted 16 days and 10 students from 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades participated. Students read and evaluated at least 2 and at most 5 poems belonging to 1 theme every day. As a result of the pilot application, the 2 highest rated poems (3 poems if the score is equal) in each theme were determined for expert opinion and sent to 8 experts in their field for their evaluation. Experts were asked to give each poem a score between 1 and 5.

The poems with the highest average score in each theme were determined and examined according to various poetic characteristics (theme, title, poet, state of moderation, rhyme scheme and length of the poem). If the poems with the highest average score are concentrated on certain poetic characteristics, the 2<sup>nd</sup> with the highest average score or different poems

from the poem database were selected by the researcher and data collection tools were created.

The data collection tools of the study, which were created based on the pilot application and expert opinions, were taken to the designated schools, and delivered by the researcher. During the process, the voluntary Turkish teachers in the mentioned schools were frequently contacted. Teachers taught 16 poems which were thematically determined for each grade level and asked students to evaluate them in 3, 4 or 5 sessions according to the length of the poems. It was considered appropriate to have 1 session every week. When the data collection process was completed, the data collection tools were personally delivered from the teachers by the researcher.

### Data Collection Tools

Within the scope of the research, an "Opinion Questionnaire for Poems" was prepared as a data collection tool. The application was completed in 5 weeks, with 1 session every week. A special booklet is designed for each session for students to answer. The booklet consisted of 2 parts. The first part was the "Personal Information Form", which every student answered once. This form contained questions about the personal information of students. In the second part of the booklet, there was an "Opinion Questionnaire" consisting of 6 questions located next to the poems.

### Data Analysis

In this study, quantitative data obtained from 490 returning questionnaire forms were transferred to the SPSS program. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage calculations) were performed on the obtained data and the results were interpreted.

## FINDINGS

### Fifth Grade Students' Views on Poems

Participants from the fifth grade were asked five Likert-type 3 questions through "Opinion Questionnaire for Poems". Table 1 shows the averages of the answers given by the students.

As can be seen from Table 1, in accordance with the answers of fifth grade students to the question of "How much did you like this poem?":

- For 10 poems, the resulting answer was 'I liked',
- For 6 poems, the resulting answer was 'I loved'.

According to the students answers to the question of "Would you like to read this poem again?":

- For 13 poems, the answer was 'Yes' and,
- For 3 poems, the answer was 'Of Course'.

In accordance with students answers to the question of "Can this poem be one of your favorite poems?":

- For 1 poem, the result was 'Not sure',
- For 15 poems, the result was 'maybe'.

Fifth grade participants in the study were asked the question of "Why did you like this poem?" through "Opinion

Questionnaire for Poems” and they were informed that they could select more than one option. The frequencies and percentages prepared with the answers given by the students are listed in Table 2.

As can be seen from Table 2, according to the answers of the 146 fifth grade participants in the study to the question “Why did you like this poem?”:

- For the poem “Search for Knowledge”; 27 stated that they liked as it is long, 50 students liked it as it is short, 9 liked as they know the poet, 19 as they know the poem and 39 liked this poem as they knew all the words in it. 16 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- For the poem “My Book”; 25 stated that they liked as it is long, 50 said it is short, 89 liked the title, 21 as

**Table 1.** Fifth grade students’ views on poems

Title of the poem	How much did you like this poem?	Would you like to read this poem again?	Can this poem be one of your favorite poems?
	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>
Search For Knowledge	4.17	4.21	3.54
My Book	4.30	4.26	3.84
Childhood	4.17	4.05	3.58
Health	4.34	4.28	3.76
To the Sleeping Beautiful Mother	3.99	3.89	3.45
Actually	3.89	3.84	3.59
Mustafa Kemal’s Cart	4.28	4.13	3.87
Universal Brother and Sister	4.26	4.13	3.76
Child Rights	4.23	4.10	3.69
Migration	3.93	3.84	3.38
Whose Homeland Is This?	4.38	4.10	3.91
Environmental Awareness	4.13	4.02	3.72
The Bird in My Child Heart	4.09	3.97	3.69
The Nameless Fountain	4.13	4.07	3.67
Art	4.01	3.95	3.58
Communication	3.93	3.77	3.61

**Table 2.** Reasons why fifth grade students liked poems

Title of the poem	Why did you like this poem?													
	It is long		It is short		I liked its title		I know the poet		It is a poem that I read/ know before		I know all the words in the poem		No answer	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Search For Knowledge	27	18.5	50	34.2	84	57.5	9	6.2	19	13	39	26.7	16	11
My Book	25	17.1	50	34.2	89	61	21	14.4	22	15.1	46	31.5	17	11.6
Childhood	48	32.9	27	18.5	86	58.9	25	17.1	48	32.9	34	23.3	15	10.3
Health	71	48.6	24	16.4	87	59.6	11	7.5	27	18.5	47	32.2	18	12.3
To the Sleeping Beautiful Mother	56	38.6	22	15.1	89	61	14	9.6	11	7.5	29	19.9	28	19.2
Actually	46	31.5	40	27.4	73	50	15	10.3	15	10.3	43	29.5	28	19.2
Mustafa Kemal’s Cart	92	63	8	5.5	89	61	29	19.9	23	15.8	29	19.9	17	11.6
Universal Brother and Sister	60	41.1	20	13.7	87	59.6	15	10.3	12	8.2	41	28.1	24	16.4
Child Rights	72	49.3	11	7.5	85	58.2	10	6.8	20	13.7	33	22.6	23	15.8
Migration	81	55.5	9	6.2	77	52.7	15	10.3	14	9.6	27	18.5	30	20.5
Whose Homeland Is This?	82	56.2	13	8.9	94	64.4	17	11.6	21	14.4	27	18.5	22	15.1
Environmental Awareness	66	45.2	20	13.7	91	62.3	16	11	7	4.8	30	20.5	28	19.2
The Bird in My Child Heart	81	55.5	14	9.6	79	54.1	13	8.9	13	8.9	33	22.6	26	17.8
The Nameless Fountain	81	55.5	8	5.5	92	63	22	15.1	26	17.8	26	17.8	20	13.7
Art	63	43.1	24	16.4	93	63.7	11	7.5	10	6.8	32	21.9	27	18.5
Communication	59	40.4	28	19.2	86	58.9	13	8.9	17	11.6	24	16.4	32	21.9



they know the poet and 46 students knew all the words. 17 did not answer this question.

- For the poem "Childhood" 48 students liked as it is long and 27 as it is short. 86 liked the title while 25 knew the poet. 48 knew the poem and 34 knew all the words. 15 students did not answer this question.
- The poem "Health" was liked by 71 students for it is long and 24 students for it is short while 87 like the title and 11 knew the poet. 27 knew the poem and 47 knew all the words and that was the reason why they liked this poem. 18 students did not answer this question.
- For the poem "To the Sleeping Beautiful Mother", 56 students said they liked it as it is long while 22 liked it because of the opposite reason. 14 liked it as they knew the poet while 11 liked it as they knew the poem before and 29 liked it as they knew all the words in it. There were 28 students without an answer.
- The poem "Actually" was liked by 46 students as it is long and 40 as it is short and 73 liked the title. 15 liked it as they knew the poet while 15 knew the poem before and 43 liked it as they knew all the words. 28 students did not answer this question.
- For the poem "Mustafa Kemal's Cart", 92 students liked it as it is long while 8 liked as it is short. 89 liked the title, 23 knew the poet and 29 knew all the words in it. 17 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Universal Brother and Sister" was liked by 60 students as it is long while 20 liked as it is short. 87 students liked the title, 15 knew the poet, 12 knew the poem and 41 students liked this poem as they knew all the words in it. 24 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- For the poem "Child Rights" 72 of the students like it as it is long while 11 said the opposite. 85 students liked the title, 10 knew the poet, 20 knew the poem and 33 students knew all the words in it. 23 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Migration" was like by 81 students as it is long and 9 for it is short while 77 liked the title, 15 knew the poet, 14 knew the poem and 27 students liked it as they knew all the words in it. 30 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- For the poem "Whose Homeland is This?" 82 students liked it as it is long and 13 as it is short while 94 liked the title, 17 knew the poet, 21 knew the poem and 27 knew all the words in it. 22 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Environmental Awareness" was liked by 66 students as it is long and 20 as it is short while 91 liked the title, 16 knew the poet, 7 read this poem before and 30 knew all the words in it. 28 students did not answer this question.
- For the poem "The Bird in My Child Heart", 81 students liked it as it was long and 14 as it was short; 79 as they liked the title and 13 as they knew the poet, and finally 33 as they knew all the words. 26 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- For the poem "The Nameless Fountain", 81 students stated that they liked it as it is long and 8 said they liked

as it is short while 92 liked the title, 22 liked as they knew the poet and 26 as they knew the poem before and 26 liked it as they knew all the words in it. 20 students did not answer this question for this poem.

- The poem "Art" was liked by 63 students as it is long and 24 as it is short while 93 liked the title, 11 knew the poet, 10 knew the poem before and 32 knew all the words in it. 27 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- For the poem "Communication", 59 students liked the poem as it is long and 28 as it is short while 86 liked the title, 13 knew the poet, 17 knew the poem and 24 knew all the words in it. 32 students did not answer this question for this poem.

### Sixth Grade Students' Views on Poems

Participants from the sixth grade were asked five Likert-type 3 questions through "Opinion Questionnaire for Poems". Table 3 shows the averages of the answers given by the students.

As can be seen from Table 3, in accordance with the answers from sixth grade students to the question of "How much did you like this poem?":

- For 1 poem, the resulting answer was 'Not sure',
- For 10 poems, the resulting answer was 'I Liked',
- For 5 poems, the resulting answer was 'I Loved'.

According to the students answers to the question of "Would you like to read this poem again?":

- For 3 poems, the resulting answer was 'Not sure',
- For 10 poems, the resulting answer was 'Yes',
- For 3 poems, the resulting answer was 'Of Course'.

In accordance with students answers to the question of "Can this poem be one of your favorite poems?":

- For 7 poems, the resulting answer was 'Not Sure',
- For 9 poems, the resulting answer was 'Maybe'.

Sixth grade participants in the study were asked the question of "Why did you like this poem?" through "Opinion Questionnaire for Poems" and they were informed that they could select more than one option. The frequencies and percentages prepared with the answers given by the students are listed in Table 4.

As can be seen from Table 4, according to the answers of the 145 sixth grade participants in the study to the question "Why did you like this poem?":

- The poem "The Science Garden" was liked by 24 students as it was long and 35 as it was short while 97 liked its title, 13 knew the poet, 12 knew the poem before and 30 knew all the words in the poem. 36 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 68 as it was rhymed and 93 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 4 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Bees" was liked by 40 students as it was long and 20 as it was short while 67 liked its title, 9 knew the poet, 12 knew the poem before and 36 knew all the words in the poem. 35 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 58 as it was rhymed and 83 liked

**Table 3.** Sixth grade students' views on poems

Title of the poem	How much did you like this poem?	Would you like to read this poem again?	Can this poem be one of your favorite poems?
	M	M	M
The Science Garden	4.13	3.98	3.42
Bees	4.16	4	3.43
I Want a Hometown	4.26	4.13	3.70
Birds on The Moon	3.86	3.77	3.35
Communication Tools	4.06	3.94	3.57
My Books	4.47	4.21	3.95
Being a Toy of The Toys	3.4	3.16	2.95
None Left – Owner of Justice	3.60	3.37	3.01
Mama	4.31	4.23	3.83
Ataturk Smiled	4.33	4	3.69
I am Listening to Istanbul	3.89	3.64	3.31
Flag	4.57	4.51	4.17
Honesty	3.91	3.68	3.35
A Little More Patience	3.62	3.44	3.14
Dreams and Succeeding	3.90	3.73	3.42
See What Happens	3.41	3.31	3.04

the poem as they liked the theme. 18 students did not answer this question for this poem.

- The poem “I Want a Hometown” was liked by 50 students as it was long and 16 as it was short while 76 liked its title, 35 knew the poet, 28 knew the poem before and 34 knew all the words in the poem. 27 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 64 as it was rhymed and 80 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 14 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “Birds on the Moon” was liked by 46 students as it was long and 20 as it was short while 79 liked its title, 7 knew the poet, 7 knew the poem before and 29 knew all the words in the poem. 33 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 53 as it was rhymed and 63 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 25 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “Communication Tools” was liked by 41 students as it was long and 15 as it was short while 66 liked its title, 5 knew the poet, 8 knew the poem before and 29 knew all the words in the poem. 33 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 78 as it was rhymed and 80 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 15 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “My Books” was liked by 48 students as it was long and 20 as it was short while 89 liked its title, 13 knew the poet, 9 knew the poem before and 30 knew all the words in the poem. 38 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 86 as it was rhymed and 86 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 7 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “Being a Toy of the Toys” was liked by 56 students as it was long and 9 as it was short while 71 liked its title, 7 knew the poet, 5 knew the poem before and 17 knew all the words in the poem. 20 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 42 as it was rhymed and 89 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 44 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “None left – Owner of Justice” was liked by 51 students as it was long and 9 as it was short while 51 liked its title, 3 knew the poet, 8 knew the poem before and 12 knew all the words in the poem. 23 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 51 as it was rhymed and 60 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 36 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “Mama” was liked by 58 students as it was long and 13 as it was short while 98 liked its title, 13 knew the poet, 19 knew the poem before and 37 knew all the words in the poem. 40 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 61 as it was rhymed and 89 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 12 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “Ataturk Smiled” was liked by 70 students as it was long and 5 as it was short while 90 liked its title, 15 knew the poet, 31 knew the poem before and 28 knew all the words in the poem. 37 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 58 as it was rhymed and 87 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 17 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “I am Listening to Istanbul” was liked by 73 students as it was long and 5 as it was short while 76 liked its title, 23 knew the poet, 30 knew the poem before and 18 knew all the words in the poem. 35 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 46 as it was rhymed and 63 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 29 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem “Flag” was liked by 80 students as it was long and 15 as it was short while 106 liked its title, 24 knew the poet, 52 knew the poem before and 34 knew all the



words in the poem. 43 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 74 as it was rhymed and 95 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 5 students did not answer this question for this poem.

- The poem "Honesty" was liked by 68 students as it was long and 6 as it was short while 82 liked its title, 11 knew the poet, 14 knew the poem before and 23 knew all the words in the poem. 40 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 54 as it was rhymed and 79 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 20 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "A Little More Patience" was liked by 67 students as it was long and 6 as it was short while 65 liked its title, 21 knew the poet, 7 knew the poem before and 24 knew all the words in the poem. 32 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 38 as it was rhymed and 71 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 33 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Dreams and Succeeding" was liked by 64 students as it was long and 7 as it was short while 85 liked its title, 8 knew the poet, 6 knew the poem before and 23 knew all the words in the poem. 37 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 59 as it was rhymed and 81 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 22 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "See What Happens" was liked by 62 students as it was long and 5 as it was short while 59 liked its title, 8 knew the poet, 16 knew the poem before and 19 knew all the words in the poem. 35 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 44 as it was rhymed and 73 liked the poem as they liked the theme. 44 students did not answer this question for this poem.

### Seventh Grade Students' Views on Poems

Participants from the seventh grade were asked five Likert-type 3 questions through "Opinion Questionnaire for Poems". Table 5 shows the averages of the answers given by the students.

As can be seen from Table 3, in accordance with the answers from seventh grade students to the question of "How much did you like this poem?":

- For 16 poems, the resulting answer was 'I liked'.

According to the students answers to the question of "Would you like to read this poem again?":

- For 1 poem, the resulting answer was 'Not sure',
- For 15 poems, the resulting answer was 'Yes'.

In accordance with students' answers to the question of "Can this poem be one of your favorite poems?":

- For 11 poems, the resulting answer was 'Not sure',
- For 5 poems, the resulting answer was 'Maybe'.

Seventh grade participants in the study were asked the question of "Why did you like this poem?" through "Opinion Questionnaire for Poems" and they were informed that they could select more than one option. The frequencies and percentages prepared with the answers given by the students are listed in Table 6.

As can be seen from Table 6, according to the answers of the 199 seventh grade participants in the study to the question "Why did you like this poem?":

- The poem "The Book is a Treasure to Us" was liked by 21 students as it was long and 38 as it was short while 100 liked its title, 11 knew the poet, 11 knew the poem before and 35 knew all the words in the poem. 40 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 123 as it was rhymed, and 108 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 12 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Abroad" was liked by 29 students as it was long and 30 as it was short while 62 liked its title, 28 knew the poet, 14 knew the poem before and 21 knew all the words in the poem. 27 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 65 as it was rhymed, and 79 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 56 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Art" was liked by 36 students as it was long and 30 as it was short while 77 liked its title, 18 knew the poet, 15 knew the poem before and 27 knew all the words in the poem. 39 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 95 as it was rhymed, and 99 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 40 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Learn Knowledge Learn Science" was liked by 56 students as it was long and 24 as it was short while 96 liked its title, 9 knew the poet, 15 knew the poem before and 31 knew all the words in the poem. 53 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 109 as it was rhymed, and 102 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 29 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Tree Says That" was liked by 47 students as it was long and 22 as it was short while 96 liked its title, 7 knew the poet, 14 knew the poem before and 33 knew all the words in the poem. 34 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 74 as it was rhymed, and 102 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 42 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Human Rights" was liked by 48 students as it was long and 26 as it was short while 95 liked its title, 9 knew the poet, 14 knew the poem before and 33 knew all the words in the poem. 32 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 83 as it was rhymed, and 113 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 36 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Time in Bursa" was liked by 83 students as it was long and 10 as it was short while 77 liked its title, 14 knew the poet, 12 knew the poem before and 16 knew all the words in the poem. 36 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 77 as it was rhymed, and 85 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 61 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Sports" was liked by 38 students as it was long and 32 as it was short while 89 liked its title, 25 knew the poet, 25 knew the poem before and 22 knew all the words in the poem. 24 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 64 as it was rhymed, and 92 students



**Table 5.** Seventh grade students' views on poems

Title of the poem	How much did you like this poem?	Would you like to read this poem again?	Can this poem be one of your favorite poems?
	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>
The Book Is a Treasure to Us	4.15	4.07	3.55
Abroad	3.60	3.46	3.14
Art	3.78	3.76	3.35
Learn Knowledge Learn Science	3.96	3.84	3.43
Tree Says That	3.82	3.61	3.22
Human Rights	3.85	3.65	3.33
Time in Bursa	3.57	3.39	3.14
Sports	3.67	3.46	3.25
Children Living in Cities Also Like to Play Games	3.63	3.41	3.24
A Painting a Poem	3.54	3.42	3.16
Generosity Is a Branch of Tree in Heaven	3.88	3.66	3.49
I Got a New Letter	3.75	3.59	3.40
My Turkey	4.16	4.01	3.74
Sharing	3.80	3.61	3.35
Support-Shackle	3.63	3.59	3.34
I am Thinking of Mustafa Kemal	4.14	4.04	3.86

liked the poem because they liked the theme. 54 students did not answer this question for this poem.

- The poem "Children Living in Cities Also Like to Play Games" was liked by 53 students as it was long and 14 as it was short while 89 liked its title, 10 knew the poet, 8 knew the poem before and 17 knew all the words in the poem. 30 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 62 as it was rhymed, and 91 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 56 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "A Painting a Poem" was liked by 90 students as it was long and 9 as it was short while 77 liked its title, 17 knew the poet, 9 knew the poem before and 18 knew all the words in the poem. 36 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 64 as it was rhymed, and 84 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 57 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Generosity is a Branch of Tree in Heaven" was liked by 51 students as it was long and 22 as it was short while 109 liked its title, 11 knew the poet, 11 knew the poem before and 22 knew all the words in the poem. 36 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 89 as it was rhymed, and 103 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 43 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "I Got a New Letter" was liked by 45 students as it was long and 17 as it was short while 93 liked its title, 96 knew the poet, 20 knew the poem before and 22 knew all the words in the poem. 37 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 67 as it was rhymed, and 96 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 36 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "My Turkey" was liked by 93 students as it was long and 14 as it was short while 131 liked its

title, 12 knew the poet, 14 knew the poem before and 22 knew all the words in the poem. 44 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 77 as it was rhymed, and 113 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 29 students did not answer this question for this poem.

- The poem "Sharing" was liked by 39 students as it was long and 30 as it was short while 112 liked its title, 6 knew the poet, 8 knew the poem before and 28 knew all the words in the poem. 37 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 75 as it was rhymed, and 113 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 36 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "Support-Shackle" was liked by 31 students as it was long and 40 as it was short while 91 liked its title, 12 knew the poet, 10 knew the poem before and 19 knew all the words in the poem. 33 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 64 as it was rhymed, and 106 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 49 students did not answer this question for this poem.
- The poem "I am Thinking of Mustafa Kemal" was liked by 82 students as it was long and 14 as it was short while 123 liked its title, 22 knew the poet, 53 knew the poem before and 19 knew all the words in the poem. 44 students liked as it was written in syllabic meter, 82 as it was rhymed, and 127 students liked the poem because they liked the theme. 29 students did not answer this question for this poem.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, through an "Opinion Questionnaire for Poems", 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were asked the questions of "How much did you like this poem?", "Do you want



to re-read this poem?" and "Can this poem be one of your favorite poems?" for each poem they studied. When the averages of the answers were examined, it was found that 3 common themes came to the fore at each grade level: War of Independence and Atatürk, National Culture and Reading Culture. Based on this result, it can be said that students like and prefer these three themes more. The poems belonging to these three themes at all three grade levels were examined in terms of their characteristics, and it was observed that the number of verses was variable, they were both measured and free measured, rhymed, and non-rhymed poems. In the light of these data, it can be considered that the role of the subject/theme of the poem is of great importance in the poetry preferences of the students. This finding supports the views of Oktay (2001) about the fact that poetry has an effective function in terms of infusing national, religious, human, and moral values in the child. According to Bayat (2012), the subject or theme of the poem is not a unit that is at the forefront by its nature, but the data in this study have shown that the subject/theme is of great importance in the poetry preferences of students.

In the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum the preparation of which was based on a thematic approach, it was envisaged that 8 themes will be processed for each grade level out of the 16 themes identified. Of these, the themes of "Virtues", "Our National Culture", "War of Independence and Atatürk" are mandatory themes to be processed at all grade levels. Based on the results of the research, it can be said that the themes that are required to be processed are largely appropriate to the interests and needs of students.

When the characteristics of the poems with the highest average were examined, it can be said that 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students prefer rhymed poetry. Gurbuz (2006) emphasizes that the poem feeds the sense of rhythm that exists in every normal child with its rhyme, stop, inner harmony, and usually brevity, and that it also meets the need for music in some way. In this regard, Kaya (2013) states that rhythm, which is the main element of music, is the most important feature that distinguishes poetry from prose and that it is inherent in the child that the child grows up with rhythm. According to him, rhythm is the trait that children look for the most and love. Measured and rhymed poems are poems that primary school students can easily memorize (Sahbaz, 2003). This finding is also similar to Terry's (1972), Fisher and Natarella's (1982), DaVanon's (2005), Kangley's (1939), Ingham's (1980) and Kutiper's (1985) studies in relation to the fact that sound effect and rhythm affect children's poetry choices.

It can be said students prefer both measured and free-measured poems. In the questionnaire, there were 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who answered the question of "Why did you like this poem?" as "it is written in syllabic measure." (6<sup>th</sup> grade –  $f=544$ , 23.4% and 7<sup>th</sup> grade –  $f=582$ , 18.3%). Since the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students were shown a measure, but it was not used as a term, the item "it was written with a syllabic measure" was not included in their questionnaires. According to the opinions of many field experts (Aytas, 2001; Guleryuz, 2006; Sirin, 2000), most of the poems to be presented to the students should be of a measured nature. In the studies of Kucukavsar and Hasirci (2013), it was found that the

messages of poems in Turkish textbooks were 25% appropriate for the child's comprehension level. The theme and title of the poem are important in the poetry preferences of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. In addition, it can be said that students prefer and love rhymed poems more. The poetry preferences of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were found to be like the 6<sup>th</sup> grades as the theme and title of the poem come to the fore, and again, similarly, it can be said that students like and prefer rhymed poems more.

When the quantitative data were examined, the number of the students who gave the answer, "I liked the poems because they were short." ( $f=2750$ , 74.4%) is quite higher compared to the number of students who gave the answer "I liked it because it was long." ( $f=946$ , 25.6%). Based on these findings, it can be said that students mostly like to read short poems and prefer short poems. The reason for this may be aesthetic pleasure as well as students' avoidance of long texts. According to Hadaway et al. (2002, p. 198), the poem, "first of all, increases the student's reading speed, and this ensures fluency in the language, because it is short, it is not daunting even for students who do not want to read, and for beginner students, features of poetry such as rhythm and rhyme positively affect reading". For Collie and Slater (1987, p. 226), "the fact that the poem is in a short form allows it to be easily processed in a single lesson hour". Terry's (1972) study differs with this study in that students do not prefer haiku (a type of Japanese poem which usually consists of three lines) because it is too short and sometimes incomprehensible.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that

- Three common themes come to the fore at each grade level: War of Independence and Atatürk, National Culture and Reading Culture,
- Secondary school students (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades) liked and preferred these three themes more,
- Secondary school students prefer poems with an average verse length of 19-22,
- Secondary school students preferred both measured (50%) and free measured (50%) poems,
- They prefer poems with more rhyme (66.6%).

In addition to these findings, it was also concluded that

- Title plays an important role in poetry preferences in secondary school students,
- They like and prefer poems created with words that they know the meaning of more,
- The fact that they know the poet is also important in their poetry preferences, and
- They prefer poems that they have read and known before.

In the light of the study several implications can be drawn for the future implementation of poetry classes in 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grades such as

- In-service trainings related to the effective use of poetry in the classroom can be given to the teachers within the Ministry of Education.
- Poems can be included in other lessons with an interdisciplinary understanding instead of only using them as part of Turkish lessons.

- Children's taste in poetry can be increased by various activities such as the interpretation of poems through art, music, drama, or movement.
- A study with a wider participation can be conducted throughout the country and at different levels of education.
- Due to the insufficient number of private schools in the province where the research was conducted, a private school public school comparison could not be made; hence, a study focusing on this difference could be done.
- Studies related to other literary genres can be carried out.
- This study was carried out by students' reading the poems themselves, so different studies by making the students listen to the poems can be done.

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