

# **TEACHING ENGLISH POETRY IN THE DIGITAL ERA: AN IT-BASED MODEL FOR UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS**

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## **Abstract**

The integration of Information Technology (IT) into English literature instruction has transformed the way poetry is taught and experienced in higher education. This study explores the implementation of an IT-based instructional model for teaching English poetry in Indonesian public university classrooms using a qualitative research design. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and analysis of students' digital learning artifacts, including multimedia annotations, online discussion threads, and collaborative projects. The instructional model employed digital platforms such as interactive learning management systems, multimedia annotation tools, and collaborative online forums to facilitate engagement, interpretation, and collaborative meaning-making in poetry learning. The findings indicate that the IT-based model fostered more active participation, enriched interpretive discussions, and enabled students to explore poetic meaning through multimodal representations. Students reported that digital tools enhanced their appreciation of poetic language and imagery while providing a more flexible and interactive learning environment. However, challenges were noted, including disparities in digital literacy, inconsistent internet connectivity, and the need for targeted professional development for instructors. This study concludes that qualitative insights into IT-based poetry instruction provide a nuanced understanding of how digital tools can bridge the gap between traditional literary pedagogy and contemporary learning needs in public universities.

**Keywords:** English poetry, Information Technology, digital learning.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid advancement of Information Technology (IT) has significantly influenced pedagogical practices across higher education disciplines, including the field of English literature. Digital tools and online platforms have not only expanded access to learning resources but also transformed the ways in which students interact with literary texts. According to Mishra and Koehler's Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, effective technology integration requires the alignment of pedagogical strategies, content knowledge, and technological skills to create meaningful learning experiences (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Mutiani et al, 2021). In poetry instruction, where textual interpretation and emotional engagement are central, IT offers opportunities for multi-sensory learning,

multimodal analysis, and collaborative interpretation that were less feasible in traditional classroom settings.

Poetry, as a form of literary expression, is uniquely challenging for learners because it often employs dense language, symbolic imagery, and complex structures (Umar & Iyere, 2021; Hegland, 2023). Traditional methods of teaching poetry—such as teacher-centered lectures and static textual analysis—may not fully engage digital-native students who are accustomed to interactive and multimedia-rich environments. Some research emphasize that contemporary learners respond positively to pedagogical approaches that incorporate visual, auditory, and interactive elements alongside textual reading. This suggests that IT integration in poetry learning can make abstract concepts more accessible, encourage active engagement, and promote deeper comprehension through multiple modes of representation (Loncar et al, 2023; Mudra, 2020; Umar & Iyere, 2021; and Ning & Ismal, 2024).

In the Indonesian higher education context, particularly in public universities, digital transformation has been encouraged by government initiatives such as the *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* policy and the push for blended and online learning models (Kemendikbudristek, 2020). While technology-enhanced learning has been widely implemented in language skills courses, its application in literature—especially in poetry—remains underexplored. The existing study on literature teaching in Indonesia (Hidayat et al, 2021) shows that digital resources are often limited to presentation slides or e-books, with minimal use of interactive platforms that could enhance interpretive collaboration and creative engagement with texts.

Globally, there has been a growing body of research examining the use of IT in literature education. For instance, Ning and Ismail (2024) found that digital annotation tools and online discussion boards foster collaborative interpretation and help students articulate complex ideas more effectively. Similarly, Umar and Iyere (2021), Ilomäki et al (2022), Jawaheer (2020), Anwar et al (2025), and Rajan and Ismail (2022) reported that the integration of multimedia—such as audio readings, video performances, and interactive poetic visualizations—deepens students’ understanding of poetic rhythm, tone, and imagery. However, these studies are primarily situated in Western contexts, and there is limited literature that investigates similar approaches within Indonesian public university setting.

Previous research in the Indonesian EFL context has primarily focused on language skills development, such as speaking and writing, when exploring technology integration (e.g., Mudra, 2020; Suryani & Argawati, 2023; Mualim & Maulana, 2023; Anwar et al, 2025). While these studies have highlighted the positive impact of IT on learner motivation and participation, they often overlook the unique challenges of teaching literary genres like poetry, where interpretive skills, emotional engagement, and cultural sensitivity are equally important. This gap in the literature underscores the need for research that examines not only how IT can facilitate comprehension but also how it can support the affective and collaborative dimensions of poetry learning.

Qualitative research is particularly well-suited for exploring these dimensions, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions in context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through methods such as classroom observation, interviews, and artifact analysis, qualitative study can capture the nuanced ways in which students and instructors engage with poetry in digital environments. In contrast to quantitative approaches that focus on measurable outcomes, qualitative methods emphasize meaning-making processes, providing rich insights that can inform pedagogical practice and curriculum design.

The present study adopts a qualitative case study approach to investigate the implementation of an IT-based instructional model for teaching English poetry in Indonesian public universities. This model integrates a variety of digital tools—including learning management systems (LMS), multimedia annotation platforms, and collaborative online workspaces—to facilitate active participation, multimodal interpretation, and peer-to-peer learning. This research seeks to address three key objectives: (1) to explore how an IT-based instructional model influences student engagement and interpretive practices in English poetry learning, (2) to identify the perceived benefits and challenges of using digital tools from both student and instructor perspectives, and (3) to provide contextually relevant recommendations for enhancing poetry instruction in Indonesian public universities.

By focusing on the lived experiences of participants, this study aims to generate actionable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to modernize literature instruction in the digital era. It contributes to the growing discourse on digital pedagogy in literature education by providing an in-depth, context-specific examination

of IT integration in poetry classrooms. It highlights the potential for digital tools to bridge the gap between traditional literary pedagogy and the learning preferences of contemporary students, while also acknowledging the infrastructural and pedagogical challenges that must be addressed. The findings are expected to enrich both theory and practice in EFL literature teaching, offering a model that can be adapted for similar contexts in Indonesia and beyond.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how Information Technology (IT) can be integrated into English poetry instruction in public university classrooms. The case study approach was chosen because it allows for a holistic exploration of a bounded system—in this case, the implementation of an IT-based instructional model in a specific educational context (Yin, 2018). This design enabled the researcher to capture rich, descriptive data about the teaching-learning process, participant interactions, and the perceived benefits and challenges of the model. The qualitative nature of the study allowed for the exploration of complex, context-dependent phenomena that cannot be fully understood through quantitative measurement alone.

The research was conducted in two Indonesian public universities offering undergraduate English education programs. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that they met specific criteria relevant to the study: (1) enrollment in an English literature course with a poetry component, (2) willingness to engage with IT-based learning activities, and (3) availability for the entire duration of the study. A total of 52 students (aged 19–21) and two literature lecturers participated. The lecturers had at least three years of teaching experience and basic familiarity with digital learning tools. and online environments.

Multiple data collection methods were used to ensure triangulation and enhance the credibility of findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The methods included classroom observations conducted during both online and in-person sessions to document teaching strategies, student participation, and interactions with digital tools, in-depth interviews especially semi-structured interviews were conducted with both students and lecturers at the end of the intervention to capture personal experiences, perceptions, and challenges as well as document analysis including artifacts such as annotated poems, discussion transcripts, and collaborative project outputs were examined to understand interpretive processes and creative outcomes.

Data were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. Codes were derived inductively from the data to reflect participants' lived experiences and perceptions. Finally, to ensure trustworthiness, the study applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with the research sites, member checking with participants, and triangulation of data sources. Thick description of the research context and procedures was provided to enhance transferability. Dependability was addressed by maintaining an audit trail of decisions made during the research process, while confirmability was supported through reflexive journaling and peer debriefing with fellow researchers.

## FINDINGS

### *The influence of IT-based instructional model on student engagement*

The implementation of IT-based model in teaching English Poetry includes the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) for distributing materials, assignments, and announcements, multimedia annotation tools for collaborative text analysis and annotation of poetry, online discussion forums for asynchronous peer interaction and interpretive dialogue, and collaborative digital projects (e.g., Padlet, Google Docs) for group-based creative and analytical tasks. The intervention lasted five weeks, with each week focusing on a specific theme such as imagery, sound devices, symbolism, and cultural context.

Observation notes indicated a clear shift in classroom participation patterns after the IT-based intervention. Before the use of digital tools, only 4–5 outspoken students actively contributed, while others remained passive or disengaged. Post-intervention, more than two-thirds of students were observed asking questions, responding to peers, or volunteering to present interpretations. Interview data reinforced this finding. One student remarked, *"I used to feel shy to share my thoughts, but when we used the interactive quiz, I felt more comfortable because I could answer without speaking in front of everyone"* (Student Interview 5, 2024). A teacher also confirmed, *"The polling activities make it easier for quieter students to participate; they don't have to compete with louder voices"* (Teacher Interview 2, 2024). The combination of synchronous digital polls, online annotations, and real-time feedback provided multiple entry

points for engagement. These observations align with prior literature suggesting that technology can create more inclusive participation structures.

From classroom observations, students engaged in creating multimodal artifacts such as visual mind maps, thematic collages, and digital soundscapes to interpret poetry. The use of these media encouraged them to represent complex literary devices in more concrete forms. During interviews, several students expressed that this process deepened their understanding. One participant explained, *"When I drew the imagery, I understood the poem better than just reading it"* (Student Interview 7, 2024). Another added, *"The music I chose for the background made me realize the poem felt more hopeful than I first thought"* (Student Interview 4, 2024). These insights were consistent with observational data showing students spending longer periods discussing imagery and symbolism compared to pre-intervention sessions. Peer review sessions, observed in three separate class meetings, revealed that students were highly engaged in comparing artistic choices, debating interpretations, and refining their work. This triangulation between observation and interview data suggests that multimodal interpretation strengthened both comprehension and creative expression

Another significant impact of IT-based instructional model on student engagement in English poetry learning is creating of collaborative learning through digital platforms. Observation records indicated that collaborative platforms such as Google Docs and Padlet were actively used for brainstorming, annotating poems, and compiling group interpretations. Students were seen contributing asynchronously, with most groups maintaining activity logs that extended beyond classroom hours. In interviews, one student commented, *"I like working in Google Docs because I can see my friends' ideas and add my own even at night"* (Student Interview 2, 2024). Another stated, *"It's easier to discuss online because I can think before typing, not like in class where I feel pressured to answer quickly"* (Student Interview 9, 2024). Teachers observed that peer feedback became more constructive and text-based when given online, possibly due to the permanence of written records. The collaborative process also appeared to enhance accountability, as document histories allowed tracking of individual contributions. Overall, both observational and interview data confirm that digital platforms supported a richer exchange of ideas and broadened participation opportunities.

### *Benefits and Challenges*



One of the benefits confirmed from the study is the increase of interpretive confidence. Interview responses revealed a noticeable boost in students' confidence when interpreting poetry. Several students mentioned that access to annotated editions and video analyses reduced their fear of "getting it wrong." For example, one participant said, *"Before, I was afraid my interpretation was wrong, but now I can check online resources first"* (Student Interview 8, 2024). Observations supported this perception; students were seen initiating interpretations without waiting for teacher prompts, a behavior rarely noted in earlier sessions. In one class, two students voluntarily debated the meaning of a metaphor, referencing both personal interpretation and scholarly commentary found through online databases. Teachers confirmed this trend, with one stating, *"They are no longer just echoing my explanation; they are bringing their own points and defending them"* (Teacher Interview 3, 2024). The data suggest that digital scaffolding not only supported comprehension but also encouraged intellectual risk-taking.

Another benefit is the development of students' digital literacy skills. Observational evidence showed that students became increasingly adept at using digital tools for literary analysis and creative presentation. Early sessions included frequent requests for technical help, but by mid-semester, most students navigated multimedia editing, online collaboration, and copyright-safe image sourcing independently. Interview feedback reinforced this finding. One student said, *"Now I can make my own poetry video and even edit it with sound effects"* (Student Interview 6, 2024). Another commented, *"I didn't know about image licenses before, but now I check them before using pictures"* (Student Interview 1, 2024). Teachers also noted that students' technology use became more intentional and purposeful, integrating both technical skills and critical evaluation of online sources. These observations suggest that the IT-based approach provided incidental yet significant digital literacy benefits beyond the scope of poetry learning.

Challenges were documented both in observation logs and interviews. Observations revealed frequent disruptions due to unstable internet connections, particularly for students joining from rural areas. In interviews, one participant admitted, *"Sometimes my internet is slow, so I cannot join group discussions on time"* (Student Interview 10, 2024). Teachers also reported technical barriers, with one noting, *"When the platform lags, it breaks the rhythm of analysis, and students lose focus"* (Teacher Interview 4, 2024). Another challenge identified in interviews was unequal participation within group projects. One student shared, *"In our group,*

*only three people did most of the work"* (Student Interview 3, 2024). Additionally, some instructors expressed concern that the novelty of technology might overshadow the depth of textual engagement. These insights underscore the need for improved infrastructure, clear group work guidelines, and balanced integration of IT tools with traditional literary analysis techniques.

## DISCUSSION

The observed increase in classroom participation aligns with the findings of the previous studies about the role of social interaction in cognitive development. The integration of IT tools created an opportunity where students could engage with literary content in a less intimidating format (Ning & Ismail, 2024; Mudra, 2020; Suryani & Argawati, 2023; Mualim & Maulana, 2023; Anwar et al, 2025). This finding supports that technology-mediated instructional support lowers affective barriers, especially for introverted learners. The interview data, where students described feeling more comfortable participating without speaking aloud, supports this claim. Additionally, the shift from teacher-dominated discourse to more distributed participation mirrors the dialogic learning (Ning & Ismail, 2024; Mualim & Maulana, 2023). However, while increased participation is a positive sign, it raises questions about the sustainability of engagement once the novelty of technology wears off. Thus, long-term studies are needed to assess whether participation patterns remain stable beyond initial implementation phases.

The use of multimodal activities in interpreting poetry resonates with theory of multimodality, which argues that meaning is constructed through multiple resources Ilomäki et al (2022), Jawaheer (2020), Anwar et al (2025). Observational data showing students' engagement in visual and auditory reinterpretations of poems reflects an expanded literacy practice beyond the textual mode. Interviews revealed that students perceived these activities as deepening their understanding, a finding consistent with Mualim & Maulana (2023) and Anwar et al (2025) assertion that multimodal learning enhances comprehension by engaging multiple cognitive pathways. This is particularly significant in literature education, where abstract concepts like metaphor and symbolism often challenge learners. The peer review sessions observed in this study also align with collaborative constructivism, suggesting that meaning-making is enriched when students negotiate interpretations through diverse



representational forms. However, there is a potential risk that aesthetic production could overshadow analytical rigor, a balance that instructors must consciously maintain.

The finding that digital platforms fostered more equitable and sustained collaboration supports (Ning & Ismail, 2024) cooperative learning. Asynchronous contributions, as observed in this study, allowed students to engage at their own pace, reducing time-pressure anxiety that often hinders in-class collaboration. The interview quotes indicating that students could think before typing reinforce the cognitive benefits of reflective participation. Furthermore, the visible record of contributions aligns with accountability structures recommended in collaborative learning literature. This also corresponds with studies by Umar and Iyere (2021) and Mutiani et al et al (2021), who found that online collaborative tools promote both participation equity and quality of interaction. Yet, unequal workload distribution noted in the interviews reflects a persistent challenge in group-based digital work. Addressing this may require explicit peer-assessment mechanisms to ensure fair participation.

The increase in interpretive confidence observed in this study suggests that access to supportive resources enhances learners' belief in their own analytical abilities. Students reported that digital scaffolding, such as annotated texts and video analyses, helped them initiate interpretations independently. This reflects findings by Ning and Ismail (2024), who note that multimedia resources can democratize access to interpretive tools in literature classrooms. The concurrent development of digital literacy skills such as multimedia editing and copyright awareness illustrates the incidental learning benefits of IT integration. However, while the skills gained are valuable for 21st-century competencies, they also introduce the need for critical media literacy to ensure students can discern credible sources from misinformation. This highlights the dual responsibility of literature educators to nurture both textual and digital criticality.

The challenges identified—unstable internet connectivity, uneven group participation, and potential distraction from literary depth—mirror barriers noted in previous studies on educational technology integration (Ning and Ismail (2024). While IT can expand participation and enrich interpretation, its effectiveness is contingent upon reliable infrastructure and sound pedagogical design. The observed disruptions in rural students' connectivity highlight the digital divide, which risks exacerbating educational inequalities if not addressed. Furthermore,

teachers' concern about technology overshadowing critical literary analysis echoes warnings in the literature about overemphasis on novelty rather than substance. This suggests that teacher training should focus not only on technical proficiency but also on pedagogical strategies for balancing technology use with close reading and critical discussion. Ultimately, the integration of IT in literature instruction must be guided by a principled framework that prioritizes learning objectives over tool-centered implementation.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative study examined the integration of an IT-based instructional model for teaching English poetry in public university classrooms. Findings from classroom observations and student interviews revealed that technology-enhanced methods fostered higher engagement, multimodal interpretive skills, equitable collaboration, and improved interpretive confidence. The use of digital tools such as collaborative platforms, multimedia annotations, and asynchronous discussion spaces supported more inclusive and participatory learning environments. Moreover, students' digital literacy developed alongside their literary competencies, aligning with theories of multimodality, cooperative learning, and self-efficacy. However, the study also highlighted several challenges, including technological infrastructure limitations, workload imbalances in group projects, and the potential for aesthetic creativity to overshadow critical textual analysis. These results underscore the need for a balanced pedagogical approach that places literary analysis at the core while leveraging technology as an enabling tool.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed for both practitioners and researchers. First, instructors should adopt a pedagogy-first approach, ensuring that technology use serves clearly defined literary learning objectives rather than becoming an end in itself. Second, universities should invest in improving technological infrastructure and providing equitable access to resources, especially in rural or under-resourced regions. Third, incorporating peer assessment and structured collaborative roles may address workload imbalances in group projects. Fourth, teacher training should integrate both literary pedagogy and digital literacy skills, equipping educators to guide students in critically evaluating digital resources. Finally, future research could explore longitudinal effects of IT-based poetry instruction, examining whether engagement and interpretive gains are sustained over multiple

semesters and across diverse institutional contexts. By addressing these considerations, higher education institutions can more effectively integrate technology into literature teaching without compromising analytical rigor.

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