

Integrating Poetry in ELT: Enhancing Linguistic and Aesthetic Appreciation - A Systematic Literature Review

Rahman Efendi

Universitas Muhammadiyah Pare-pare, Indonesia

Wiwin Suriani

Universitas Muhammadiyah Pare-pare, Indonesia

Nurul Izzah

Universitas Muhammadiyah Pare-pare, Indonesia

Amaluddin

Universitas Muhammadiyah Pare-pare, Indonesia

Abstract

This article aims to review the literature on integrating poetry in English language learning (ELT) and evaluate how this can enhance linguistic and aesthetic appreciation among students. It seeks to identify the benefits, challenges, as well as best practices in the use of poetry as a pedagogical tool in ELT. This review used a systematic literature search method with databases such as Google Scholar, Mendeley, Science Direct, Taylor & Francis Online and other academic journals, using keywords such as “poetry in ELT”, “linguistic appreciation”, and “aesthetic appreciation”. Articles were selected based on strict inclusion and exclusion criteria and then analyzed qualitatively to identify key themes and findings. The findings show that integrating poetry in ELT provides some significant benefits, including increased vocabulary, grammatical understanding, and phonological awareness. In addition, poetry also enriches students' aesthetic experience, enhances cultural appreciation, and promotes emotional engagement and creativity. However, challenges such as teachers' lack of preparedness and limited teaching materials require further attention. The use of poetry in ELT has great potential to enrich students' learning experiences both linguistically and aesthetically. The practical implications for teaching and curriculum development are extensive, and further research is needed to address the existing challenges and explore more effective teaching strategies.

Key words : Aesthetic Appreciation, English Language Learning (ELT), Linguistic Appreciation, Literature Review, Poetry

Corresponding author:

Rahman Efendi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Pare-pare, Pare-pare, Indonesia

Email: rahmanefendi.id@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language (ELT) continues to evolve with various innovative approaches to improve learning effectiveness. One approach that is receiving increasing attention is the use of literature, particularly poetry, in the ELT curriculum. Poetry, with its richness of language and emotional power, offers unique opportunities to deepen students' language skills and aesthetic appreciation. Research shows that integrating poetry into language learning can enrich students' learning experiences, both linguistically and emotionally.

Poetry has great potential to enrich English language learning. Linguistically, poetry helps students expand vocabulary, understand complex grammatical structures, and improve phonological awareness (Kamala & Abdul Aziz, 2020). Moreover, poetry also develops students' critical thinking skills and creativity, which are often difficult to achieve with traditional teaching methods (Zamzami et al., 2023). In terms of aesthetics, poetry allows students to explore feelings and emotions, and provides a deeper understanding of different cultures and perspectives (Fithriani, 2021). Thus, poetry is not only a tool for language learning, but also a medium for developing cultural and aesthetic appreciation.

This article seeks to answer several key questions: What are the linguistic benefits that can be derived from integrating poetry in ELT? How can poetry enhance aesthetic appreciation among students? What are the challenges and limitations faced in integrating poetry into the ELT curriculum? And what are the most effective teaching strategies for using poetry in English language learning?

This study is important because it provides an in-depth insight into the potential use of poetry as a pedagogical tool in ELT. The use of poetry can not only improve students' language skills, but also enrich their overall learning experience. By understanding the associated benefits and challenges, educators can develop more effective and enjoyable strategies for teaching English. In addition, this study also provides a foundation for further research in the same area, opening up opportunities for a broader exploration of the use of literature in language education.

In this review, we will explore a range of relevant literature to answer the above research questions, provide a critical analysis of the existing findings, and offer practical recommendations for the application of poetry in English language teaching. We hope that this review will make a meaningful contribution to the academic community and English language education practitioners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of poetry in language education has a long and rich history. Since the classical era, poetry has been used as a tool to teach rhetoric and language. In the 20th century, with the development of language teaching methodologies, poetry began to be recognized as an effective pedagogical tool in foreign language learning. The communicative approach that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s underlined the importance

of authenticity and emotional engagement in language learning, which is in line with the benefits of using poetry in ELT (Sirico, 2021).

1) Benefits of Using Poetry in ELT

a) Linguistic Benefits

The use of poetry in ELT provides a range of significant linguistic benefits. Studies by Jamal et al., (2019) show that poetry can help students in vocabulary development and grammatical understanding. Poetry often uses dense and metaphorical language, which encourages students to explore and understand new words and structures in meaningful contexts. In addition, rhythm and rhyme in poetry help students hone their phonological awareness, which is an important component in second language acquisition (Gardihewa, 2022).

Research by Ismuwardani et al., (2019) confirms that poetry can also improve reading and writing skills. By analyzing poetry, students learn to notice details and nuances in language, which can improve their ability to comprehend and produce more complex texts (Idrus et al., 2013). The use of poetry also encourages students to play with language, which can enhance their creativity and critical thinking ability (Cronin & Hawthorne, 2019).

b) Aesthetic Benefits

In addition to linguistic benefits, poetry also provides significant aesthetic benefits in language learning. Response aesthetics theory Hartung et al., (2021) suggest that engagement with literary texts can enhance students' aesthetic appreciation. Poetry, with its emotional richness and visual appeal, allows students to experience language in a more profound and meaningful way. This can increase students' motivation and engagement in language learning (Lee, 2020).

The use of poetry also helps students to understand and appreciate different cultures. Poetry often reflects the values, beliefs and experiences of different cultures, which can open students' minds to the world beyond their environment. Studies by (Pattiwael & Id, 2019) show that learning through literature, including poetry, can increase intercultural understanding and tolerance among students.

2) Challenges and Limitations

Despite its many benefits, the use of poetry in ELT also faces several challenges and limitations. One of the main challenges is teachers' lack of preparedness and skills in teaching poetry. Many teachers feel less confident in teaching poetry due to a lack of training and available resources (Moea Kananelo Sylvester, 2008). In addition, students may also find it difficult to understand the language and structure of poetry which is often complex and abstract (Cronin & Hawthorne, 2019).

Another limitation is the limited teaching materials available. Many ELT textbooks and curricula do not give enough attention to poetry, which makes it difficult for teachers to find appropriate and interesting materials for students. The

study by Sigvardsson, (2020) shows that to overcome this challenge, it is necessary to develop more creative and interactive teaching materials that can help students understand and enjoy poetry.

3) Case Studies and Practical Applications

a. Case Study 1: Using Poetry to Improve Speaking Skills

According to research conducted in an English class by Suhadi (2023), using poetry can greatly enhance pupils' speaking abilities. Students were requested to use poetry in discussion exercises for this study. The poetry was then examined using Hughes' speaking rubrics, which cover vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, flow, and details or understanding. The findings show that using poetry as a conversational tool affects students' speaking abilities, especially in the areas of vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. To sum up, this research presents an intriguing approach that can be extensively used in ELT courses, such as basic English.

b. Case Study 2: Integrating Poetry in the Writing Curriculum

In research by Bintz & Monobe (2018), graduate education students from various subject areas integrated writing and reading across the curriculum by using an instructional technique centered on poetry. It illustrates the figurative tug-of-war between disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives on curriculum and talks about the significance of integrated curricula.

c. Case Study 3: Intercultural Learning through Poetry

Inda et al.,(2018) According to the research, using poems can be beneficial as well as difficult. To effectively teach the content, teachers must prepare and plan. Students can learn by speculating on the meanings of unfamiliar words found in poetry and by fostering cross-cultural understanding, which can foster reciprocal communication in EFL contexts.

Research shows that students' reactions to the use of poetry in ELT are generally positive. Students report that poetry helps them to enjoy language learning more and feel more connected to the material they are learning. For example, in a study by Suhadi, (2023), using poetry can greatly enhance pupils' speaking abilities, make them feel freer to express themselves and more engaged in English language learning.

However, it is important to ensure that the poems chosen are appropriate for the language level and interests of the students (Amin, 2020). Poems that are too complex or abstract can make students feel frustrated and lose interest. Therefore, teachers need to select poems that are relevant and interesting to students, and provide adequate support to help them understand and appreciate the poems (Sigvardsson, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Literature Search

This review used a systematic literature search method to identify and analyze relevant studies on the use of poetry in English language teaching (ELT). The literature search was conducted through several major academic databases, including Google Scholar, Mendeley, Science Direct, Taylor & Francis Online and other academic journals. The keywords used in the search included “poetry in ELT”, “linguistic appreciation”, “aesthetic appreciation”, “teaching strategies”, and “challenges in ELT”. The search was conducted on articles, books and dissertations published in English and Indonesian to ensure the relevance and actuality of the data obtained.

B. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the quality and relevance of the literature reviewed, several inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. The inclusion criteria included:

- 1) Studies that address the use of poetry in ELT contexts.
- 2) Articles that focused on the linguistic and aesthetic benefits of using poetry.
- 3) Studies published in peer-reviewed journals, academic books, or recognized dissertations.

Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included:

1. Articles that do not specifically address the use of poetry in ELT.
2. Studies that only cover the use of poetry in a literary context without any connection to language learning.
3. Studies that are not available in full text or only as abstracts.

C. Data Selection and Analysis Process

After conducting the initial search, all articles found through relevant keywords were downloaded and saved for further selection. Each article was then abstracted to determine its relevance based on the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Articles that met these criteria were read in their entirety for further analysis. The data analysis process was conducted using a thematic approach, similar to methods described by Braun & Clarke (2006). The selected articles were analyzed to identify the main themes related to the use of poetry in ELT, including linguistic and aesthetic benefits, challenges faced, and proposed teaching strategies. Data from each study were codified and organized in thematic tables, as outlined by Nowell et al., (2017) to facilitate the synthesis and interpretation process.

In conducting this literature review, we ensured that all sources were appropriately credited through proper citation, adhering to guidelines suggested by the American Psychological Association (APA). No data or information from other studies was misused or taken without proper authorization. With this methodology, modeled after comprehensive literature review techniques recommended by Machi and Machi et al., (2020), we aim to provide a reliable and insightful review of the use of poetry in ELT, offering valuable insights for educators and researchers in this field.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This article has reviewed various studies and theories that support the use of poetry in English language teaching (ELT). The findings from the literature review show that poetry can provide a variety of linguistic and aesthetic benefits. Linguistically, poetry helps to enrich vocabulary, deepen grammatical understanding, and improve students' phonological awareness. Aesthetically, poetry allows students to explore their feelings and emotions, and enhances their appreciation of the beauty of different languages and cultures.

Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition and Rosenblatt's (1978) theory of response aesthetics provides a strong theoretical basis for the use of poetry in ELT. Krashen states that input that is meaningful and slightly outside the learner's comfort zone can promote effective learning. Poetry, with its often complex and metaphorical language, provides this form of input. Meanwhile, Rosenblatt emphasizes the importance of emotional and intellectual engagement with literary texts, which goes hand in hand with the aesthetic benefits of using poetry.

Based on the findings from the case studies and practical applications, several teaching strategies can be applied to integrate poetry in ELT:

- 1) **Group Reading and Discussion:** This strategy encourages students to share their understanding and interpretation, which can enrich their learning experience.
- 2) **Poetry Writing:** This activity allows students to express themselves in a creative and personalized way.
- 3) **Use of Technology:** Technology can be used to create videos, podcasts, or poetry blogs, which can increase students' motivation and provide them with a wider audience.

Although the benefits of using poetry in ELT have been proven, some challenges need to be overcome. One of the main challenges is teachers' lack of preparedness and skills in teaching poetry. To address this, training and professional development for teachers is essential. Teachers need to be given adequate resources and support to teach poetry with confidence.

Another challenge is the limited teaching materials available. The development of more creative and interactive teaching materials can help overcome this problem. For example, poetry anthologies tailored to students' language levels can be compiled, complete with teaching guides and relevant activities.

While this review provides useful insights, some limitations need to be acknowledged. First, most of the studies reviewed are from educational contexts in English-speaking or developed countries, so they may not fully illustrate the challenges and conditions in developing countries. Secondly, most of the studies used qualitative research designs, so the results may not be widely generalizable.

Further research is needed to explore the use of poetry in various educational and cultural contexts. Broader and more in-depth studies on the effectiveness of poetry teaching strategies at different levels of education and in different language contexts can provide more comprehensive insights. In addition, more rigorous quantitative research is

needed to measure the impact of using poetry on students' language skills more objectively.

CONCLUSION

The use of poetry in English language learning (ELT) offers numerous significant benefits for students. This literature review highlights how poetry can enhance language comprehension, foster aesthetic appreciation, and boost student engagement in learning. Theoretical perspectives from linguistic and aesthetic approaches advocate for the inclusion of poetry in second language learning contexts. Practically, this study suggests that poetry can be effectively integrated into the ELT curriculum through creative and innovative teaching strategies.

Despite these proven benefits, challenges such as teachers' lack of skills and preparedness and limited relevant teaching materials must be addressed. However, with adequate support, these obstacles can be overcome, allowing poetry to make a substantial contribution to holistic and sustainable language learning.

Based on the findings in this literature review, several recommendations for ELT practitioners and researchers are proposed. Firstly, implementing training and professional development programs is essential to enhance teachers' skills in teaching poetry. These programs can equip educators with the necessary tools and techniques to effectively integrate poetry into their language lessons. Secondly, the creation and distribution of creative and interactive teaching materials are crucial. These resources can help teachers to incorporate poetry into their lessons more effectively, making the learning experience more engaging for students. Lastly, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of poetry teaching strategies across different educational and cultural contexts. This research can provide valuable insights into how poetry can be adapted to suit various learning environments, ensuring its benefits are maximized for students worldwide.

For ELT practitioners, integrating poetry into English language learning can significantly improve students' language skills and deepen their understanding of language and culture. By incorporating poetry into the curriculum, teachers can create a more engaging, dynamic, and student-centered learning environment.

Theoretically, using poetry in ELT underscores the relevance of second language learning and literary aesthetics theories. Utilizing linguistic and aesthetic approaches can enrich students' learning experiences and foster a deeper engagement with language.

In conclusion, poetry has great potential to enhance the quality of students' language learning experiences. Through creative and innovative teaching approaches, teachers can offer meaningful and enriching learning experiences. With proper support and ongoing research, the use of poetry in ELT can continue to expand, providing significant benefits to language learners worldwide.

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